Gender and Society

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

GENDER AND SOCIETY

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Unit 01: Social Construction of Gender

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Objectives

This unit deals with the concepts of gender and sex and gender role development. After going through this unit, you will be able to understand

- The difference between biology and gender
- The social construction of gender in the context of gender roles and its development
- The theoretical standpoint available and reinforced in the study of sociological analysis of gender construction with special reference to feminist thought
- Forms of gender socialization

Introduction

The term 'sex' and 'gender' are commonly used by feminist scholars, academicians, and researchers to make a distinction between the biologically different 'male' and 'female' and between the socially constructed 'man' and 'woman'. In general, the word 'gender' is used as an analytical tool to explain social realities concerning men and women. So, we could say, the concept of gender is a systematic way of understanding men and women socially and the structured pattern of relationships between them. According to Feminist writings, this aspect of gender and their differences are not biological or natural but are socio-cultural construction of patriarchal society.

Commonly, people believed that the two terms, sex, and gender, are natural and that there is no distinction between these two concepts. It was also considered that the different roles, status, and characteristics or attributes associated with men and women in society are determined by biology i.e. sex; and that is natural and something unchangeable, like God-given.

1.1   Biology v/s Gender

Generally, biology means here sex and, in this unit, both biology and sex will be used interchangeably. In sociology, the terms sex and gender are now fairly standardized to refer to different content areas. Sex refers to the biological/physiological differences between males andfemales. Since men and women possess different genitalia; it was assumed that they are

different in all respects. This definition emphasizes male and female differences in chromosomes, anatomy, hormones, reproductive systems, and other physiological components. Thus, individuals are then socialised according to specific gender expectations and roles provided by society.

Therefore, when a child is born into the family, we leveled the child as a "girl" or "boy" based on their sex. We make this characterization based on the genital differences of an infant. Once they are categorized on the basis of their sex, people started assigning them specific and distinctive roles and attributes. For example, parents dress their girl and boy child in different ways. They buy them different toys, and books, and have different codes of behavior for boys and girls. This is what scholars called 'doing gender'.

Thus, males are expected to perform the masculine roles and females as feminine roles. They are socialised and later internalised to think, talk or act in masculine and feminine ways respectively. One of the feminists, Simone de Beauvoir stated "one is not born a woman but becomes one". Therefore, it is the society that makes the differences between the sexes through gender construction.

Gender identities, unlike sex, are psychological and socially, and culturally determined. The term gender is a constructed meaning and it refers to the "socio-cultural definition of man and woman, the way societies distinguish men and women and assigned them social roles" (ref). According to Oakley Ann, "gender is a matter of culture, it refers to the social classification of men and women into 'masculine' and 'feminine'." Further, she stated, that gender has no biological origin, and that the connections between sex and gender are not 'natural' at all. Thus, each society transforms a male and female into a man or woman, masculine and feminine, with different roles, qualities, attributes, rights and responsibilities, and expectations.

Gender refers to those social, cultural, and psychological traits linked to males and females through particular social contexts. Thus, we could say, sex makes us male or female and gender makes us masculine or feminine. Sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it, but gender is an achieved status because it must be learned.

We know what sex is and what gender is but in reality it is difficult to establish what is natural and what is socially constructed. Scholars have given end number of reasons for this difficulty to establish what is natural and what is socially constructed. As soon as a child is born parents and society begin the process of 'gendering'. The specific process of socialization that teaches children their gender roles is also called gendering or gender indoctrination (Bhasin, 2000). For instance, in Indian culture, the birth of a son is celebrated with love, respect, good food, etc. but the birth of a girl is bemoaned. Not only this, boys are encouraged to be strong, and tough, and girls are encouraged to be modest and homebound and expect to help their mother in the kitchen.

Kamla Bhasin pointed out all these differences are gender norms created by society. This relatively simple distinction masks many problems associated with its usage. It implies that all people can be conveniently placed into unambiguous either-or categories. Certainly, the ascribed status of sex is less likely to be altered than the achieved status of gender. Some people believe, however, that they were born with the "wrong" body and are willing to undergo major surgery to make their gender identity consistent with their biological sex. However, some cultures allow people to move freely between genders, regardless of their biological sex.

1.2 <u>Gender Norms</u>

Every society prescribes different norms for males and females; boys and girls, women and men, which determine almost every aspect of their lives, and their future. Dress- Girls and boys, women and men dress differently in most societies. In some societies these differences are minimal, in others, it is quite stark. Next is Attributes: In some societies, women are expected to have perfect qualities such as caring, nurturing, gentleness, or softness, and obedience; on the other hand, men are expected to be strong, tough, and self-confident, competitive, and rational. When comes to Roles and responsibilities: men are considered to be the heads of households, breadwinners, owners of the property, and active in politics, business or the professions. While, women, are expected and trained to look after their children, family member, look after the aged-old, and do all household activities. These roles vary widely between men and women. And vary from time to time and from culture to culture.

What Is 'Gendering'?

The process of socialization that teaches children their gender roles is called gendering or gender indoctrination. Ruth Hartley defined four processes of gender socialization, namely- 'manipulation', 'canalization', 'verbal appellation', and 'activity exposure'.

According to her, all these four processes are normally differentiated by sex and all are features of the child's socialization from birth on.

Manipulation(also known as molding): This means the way people socialize with their children. For example, boys are treated as strong, autonomous beings right from the beginning. In some cultures, mothers treat the baby girl's hair and dress her in a feminine way. This is an important stage where the physical experience of early childhood shapes the self-perception of girls and boys.

Second,canalization is the second stage that involves 'directing the attention of male and female children to things or objects. E.g. giving dolls or kitchen items to play with to girls, expecting to help their mothers in the kitchen; and on the other hand, encouraging boys to play with toys like cars, guns, or airplanes. Through this kind of differential treatment, the interests of girls and boys are channelized differently and they develop different capabilities, attitudes, aspirations, and even goals and dreams.

Third,*verbal appellations* show choosing of words and complement for boys and girls differently. For instance, to girls like "oh, how pretty you look" and to a boy, "you are looking big and strong". So scholars show that such remarks construct different self-identity of girls and boys, men and women. Through socialization, family members constantly transmit aspects of gender roles directly in the way they talk even to very young children, and they also convey the importance given to each child.

Lastly,in the *activity exposure*, the focus is on activities for boys and girls. For instance, girls are asked to help their mothers in the kitchen or do household chores, while boys accompany their fathers outside. Thus, it is through these processes that children learn the meaning of masculine and feminine activities, and internalise them almost unconsciously.

Interestingly, people are not always aware of what we are doing to our children. People believed that they treat boys and girls differently because they are actually different and are natural.

Social Sanctions (Or Disapproval)

It is also an important form of socialization. Sanctions against children and adults when they deviate from their gender roles is another very powerful way of making everyone conform to expected male-female behavior. And the most common form of sanction is social ridicule (mockery). For example, when a boy played a doll, his parents might scold him as it is not gendered appropriate. Because it is not the prescribed social norms and they are breaking them. Thus, certain characteristics and qualities are also labeled as masculine and others as feminine. A polar opposite has been created between these two, and along with a hierarchy has been created between them. Those qualities or attributes considered for male's (masculine) domain are superior while women's domains are inferior.

1.3   Masculine and Feminine Concepts

Masculinity and femininity are concepts that signify the social outcomes of being male or female; the traits and characteristics which describe men and women give men an advantage over women. The sex/gender differences raise the issues of male-female; masculine and feminine, male associated with masculinity, and female with femininity. With each construction, the biological differences between men and women get translated into social terms and descriptions.

Feminist writers argue that biological differences get heightened through social descriptions of masculinity and femininity. For example, pink and blue are gendered colours, the former regarded as "feminine" and the latter as "masculine".

According to Judith Butler, gender introduces the notion or idea of the performance of gender in terms of masculinity and femininity. Thus the performance of gender becomes involuntary as gender gets internalized through the socialization process within the dominant discourses of patriarchy; gender is performed at different levels within the family and in the society. In fact, we socially enter into our gendered categories of masculine and feminine right from the birth.

In contemporary writings, there is a recognition that these social categorizations of masculinity and femininity are blurring. There is a constant shift in the conceptualization of human beings as controlled by wholly biological or social forces.

Gender Stereotypes:

Gender stereotypes refer to the beliefs people hold about members of the categories of man or woman. They can be viewed as elaborations of commonsense notions. The content of gender stereotypes – which attributes people commonly associate with men or women. Scholars also stated that gender stereotypes minimise individual difference and therefore form the basis of prejudice and discrimination against the group concerned. On the other hand, stereotypes may also be normative; as it is viewed as desirable for a particular category of people. E.g. it may be seen as desirable for women to be caretaker. In this case, stereotypic beliefs will overlap with social norms or the perceived social role of the stereotyped group.

1.4 Gender Socialization

Socialization is the lifelong learning process by which, through social interaction, we learn our culture, develop our sense of self, and become functioning members of society. Each generation transmits essential cultural elements to the next generation through socialization. Gender socialization is the process by which individuals learn the cultural behavior of femininity or masculinity that is associated with the biological sex of females or males. Through socialization, we internalised, or accept as correct, the rules and definitions of the socializing group. The particular content of socialization that we learn is influenced by cultural variations related to the region in which we live as well as other socially significant categories to which we belong (especially racial, ethnic and social class categories).

Agents of socialization

Family: The family is by far the most significant agent of socialization. Children gain their first values and attitudes from the family, including powerful messages and remarks about gender. Learned first in the family and then reinforced by other social institutions, gender is fundamental to the shaping of all social life.

Gender-typing begins in the womb. Parents talk about the fetus in gendered terms. The baby also is welcomed into the home through different messages from friends and family that display consistent gender-stereotyped. As social learning theorists suggest, through the toys and clothes children receive during early childhood, parents send powerful messages about what is or is not gender appropriate.

Peer groups: With family gender role models as a foundation, peer influence on children's gender socialization is even more powerful. Activities, games, and play are strongly related to gender roles and become important aspects of socialization. It is believed that peer play activities socialize children in important ways. With strong gender cognitions about similarity, peer group influence increases throughout the school years, exerting a powerful effect on children. As any playground in the world demonstrates, children quickly gravitate toward same-gender peers.

Schools: Education is the next major agent of continuing socialization. The school will play a critical role in the lives of both parents and students for the next 12–20 years. Teachers who sincerely believe they are treating boys and girls similarly are unaware of how they inadvertently perpetuate sexist notions. In addition, most content and curriculum are also reflected in gendered ways.

Television: is by far the most influential of all the media. Television establishes standards of behavior, provides role models, and communicates expectations about all social life. Children are increasingly using messages from television to learn about gender and sexuality. When television images are reinforced by the other mass media, such as movies, magazines, and popular songs, the impact on socialization is profound. Gender role portrayals in shows that are deemed acceptable for children are highly stereotyped. Television commercials and other forms of advertising reinforce inequality and gender-based stereotypes.

Culture and religion: Cultural and religious beliefs and attitudes have a serious impact on gender identity. In many cases, it promotes stereotypical beliefs against women and leads to gender discrimination. Such an approach of society leads society toward stereotypes.

Theories of Gender Socialization

The major theories of gender socialization are social learning, cognitive development, gender schema theories, and social cognitive theory. Different theories give different weights to each element.

Social Learning

For social learning theorists, socialization is based on rewards (reinforcing appropriate behavior) and punishments (extinguishing inappropriate behavior). According to this theory, gender identity is developed when children associate the label of boy or girl with the rewards that come with the appropriate behavior and then act out gender roles according to that perception. Parents and teachers model gender roles during the primary socialization years and children imitate accordingly. This results in continued reinforcement of the valued gender identity.

Cognitive Development Theory

The theory of Cognitive development theory was developed by Jean Piaget and it explains how children gradually develop intelligence, thinking, and reasoning. According to this theory, the mind matures through interaction with the environment. And behavior depends on how an individual perceives a social situation at each cognitive stage. The cognitive theory stresses a child's active role in structuring and interpreting the social world.

Gender Schema Theory

Schemas are cognitive structures used to understand the world, interpret perception, and process new information. Sandra Bem introduced this theory and contends that once the child learns cultural definitions of gender, these schemas become the core around which all other information is organized (Bem, 1981). Like cognitive development theory, before a schema is created to process gender-related information, children must be at the cognitive level to identify gender accurately. Schemas tell children what they can and cannot do according to their gender. Schemas affect children's behavior and influence their self-esteem.

Social Cognitive thinking

Social cognitive theory is advanced by Albert Bandura in 1986 and posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. The unique feature of SCT is the emphasis on social influence and its emphasis on external and internal social reinforcement. A social-cognitive approach to gender socialization highlights the rapid expansion of knowledge from observations, the self-regulation of behavior once knowledge is gained, and the self-reflection that evaluates the selected behavior.

1.5   Equality v/s Difference

Gender Equality refers to the state or condition that affords women and men equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, and resources, allowing both sexes the same opportunities and potential to contribute to, and benefit from, all spheres of society (economic, political, social, and cultural). Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that women's and men's opportunities, rights, and responsibilities do not depend on whether they are born or they identify themselves as female or male. It implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration.

The debate over difference takes us to the heart of feminist conceptions of equality, and how it might be achieved. It tells us that equality is itself not a straightforward aim in a world riven with inequalities between genders and across ethnicities and social arrangements, and gradually feminists have acknowledged that there cannot simply be one model of equality. Equality was also breaking down traditionally gendered binaries that suggested women were incapable of certain tasks or holding positions of responsibility because of their sex.

'Equality/Difference' debate

The 'equality perspective' concerns the same rights and privileges of women that men have, through identifying the arenas of unequal treatment and eliminating them through legal reforms.

Phillips (1997), for example, argues for 'strict equality' between women and men, because gender equality in the labour market will not be achieved without gender equality in the allocation of household and caring work between women and men. According to this perspective, gender is considered an attribute that should not be significant in the distribution of social value or social rights. Equality is to be achieved through gender neutrality or androgyny.

Unlike the equality perspective, the difference perspective maintains the recognition of and valuing of how women are different from men.

In addition, difference theorists are critical of the standard made for "equality" where the masculine is the norm against which women are judged, and where femininity is positioned as something to be transcended for equality to be achieved.

A third perspective in the equality/difference debate is known as the "diversity perspective" and it involves 'going beyond' the dichotomy represented by the previous two perspectives (Squires 1999). 'Diversity' theorists criticise both the equality and difference perspectives. According to them, the "equality" perspective fails to recognise the socially constructed and patriarchal nature of the criterion of evaluation deemed pertinent to social inclusion. The "difference" perspective also fails to theorise the extent to which "maleness" and "femaleness" are themselves socially constructed and also underplays the significance and plurality of other forms of difference' (Squires 1999: 131). The perspective of 'diversity' involves deconstructing the choice of either equality or difference (Scott 1997).

Diversity theorists, also question the assumption implicit in the equality/difference debate that equality and difference are mutually exclusive opposites. For diversity theorists, 'equality and difference are not incompatible; they only become so if equality is understood to mean sameness' (Lister 1997: 96). To do so is a misrepresentation, however, because 'the whole conceptual force of "equality" rests on the assumption of differences, which should in some respect be valued equally' (Squires 1999: 97).

Summary

In general, the word 'gender' is used as an analytical tool to explain social realities with regard to men and women. It is a systematic way of understanding men and women socially and the

patterning of relationships between them. In sociology, the terms sex and gender are now fairly standardized to refer to different content areas. Sex refers to the biological/physiological differences between males and females. Gender identities, unlike sex, are psychological and socially, and culturally determined.

Every society prescribes different norms for males and females; boys and girls, women and men, which determine almost every aspect of their lives, and their future. The process of socialization that teaches children their gender roles is called gendering or gender indoctrination.

Masculinity and femininity are concepts that signify the social outcomes of being male or female; the traits and characteristics which describe men and women give men an advantage over women

Through gender socialization, we internalised, or accept as correct, the rules and definitions of the socializing group. The particular content of socialization that we learn is influenced by cultural variations related to the region in which we live.

The debate over equality and difference takes us to the heart of feminist conceptions of equality, and how it might be achieved. It tells us that equality is itself not a straightforward aim in a world riven with inequalities between genders and across ethnicities and social arrangements, and gradually feminists have acknowledged that there cannot simply be one model of equality

Keywords

Gender and Sex

Gender Roles

Masculinity and Femininity

Gender socialization

Gender Equality and Difference debate

Self Assessment

1) Sex is _____ determined.

A. Biologically

B. Socially

C. Culturally

D. Educationally

2) 'Gender difference' denotes an analytical framework in which

A. Political and economic differences among women are explained.

B. Social and ideological differences between women are explained.

C. Social and ideological differences between sexes are explained.

D. Biological differences between sexes are explained.

3) Sex is a/an _____ because a person is born with it, and Gender is a/an _____ because it has to be learned through socialization.

A. Achieved; ascribed

B. Ascribed; achieved

C. Master; achieved

D. Achieved; master

4) Gender socialization starts from

A. Society

B. Family

C. Community

D. Office

5) Our ideas of male and female natures derive

A. More from empirical facts and observations

B. Norms and expectations that govern our lives

C. Less from norms and expectations

D. From formal education

6) What are gender norms?

A. Standards set for typical male and female behavior

B. Standards set for similar male and female behavior

C. No standards set for male and female

D. A universal similar behavior of male and female

7) Historically, gender norms and expectations are defined in

A. Similar way in all societies

B. Similar ways in all different societies

C. Different ways in different societies

D. No society

8) Gender roles involve ranking men and women differently in terms of

A. Relationships

B. Fashion

C. Education

D. Style

9) Which of the following is not the ideas classified by V. Geetha for the analysis of sexual differences?

A. Relationship between sex of the human body and human attributes

B. The body and capabilities

C. Between the body and mind

D. Between the human body and human destiny

10) To some people to be unfeminine means

A. to be unnatural

B. to be natural

C. to be supernatural

D. to be accepted

11) Masculine and feminine modes of behavior are relevant in as far as they reflect

A. Society

B. Social changes

C. Social fear

D. Social expectations

12) Gender roles and expectations can be

A. Transformed

B. Cannot be transformed

C. Are fixed

D. Transport

13) How are social expectations expressed and enforced?

A. Throughschool only

B. Does not enforce at all

C. Through watching television

D. Through a variety of practices and institutions

14) According to Sociologists, gender behavior is

A. A given

B. Leaned

C. Achieved through formal education

D. Inborn

15) The domestic roles of women, housekeeper, tend to be _____ in our society.

A. Overpaid

B. Appreciated

C. Under-valued

D. Revered

Answersfor Self Assessment

l.	A	2.	C	3.	B	4.	B	5.	B
6.	A	7.	C	8.	A	9.	C	10.	A
11.	D	12.	A	13.	D	14.	D	15.	C

Review Questions

Q.1 Distinguish between sex and gender

Q.2 Write a short note on masculinity and Femininity.

Q.3 Discuss any three theories of gender socialization.

Q.4 What is socialization? Explain agents of gender socialization.

Q.5. Write an essay on equality vs. debate.

Further Readings

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Unit 02: Gender Roles

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Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Understand the concept of patriarchy
- Learn the concepts of public private dichotomy
- Understand the development of hierarchy between public and private
- Articulate the theorization of patriarchy as ideology and practice
- Understand the concept of sexual division of labour
- Understand feminists debates on gender division of labour

Introduction

Generally, a role is an expected behavior associated with a status. Roles are performed according to social norms that are shared rules that guide people's behavior in specific situations. Gender roles refer to the expectation to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing.

2.1   Public-Private Dichotomy

Generally, the concept of public and private portrays social relations as comprised of two large, separate realms. The public realm is characterized by activities individuals undertake in wider society and in common with others, such as engaging in productive or paid work, and exercising political, democratic rights, under the overall jurisdiction of the government and the state. On the other hand, the private realm is characterized by activities undertaken with particular others, relatively free from the jurisdiction of the state. It is the realm of the household, of personal or family relationships. Private and public also indicate primary and secondary relationships respectively.

This interest in the public-private dichotomy arises from its gendered nature and the gendered spaces that are the association of masculinity with the public and femininity with the private. Women are expected to remain in the private domain while men function in the public, while also controlling the private.

Gender and Society

According to Bhasin (2003), before the industrial revolution, however, this separation between the two was not so marked. Most production took place within the household and all members participated in it. The household was the site of both reproduction and production. And there was co-operation and complementary between men and women.

The advent of the market economy and industrialization dramatically changed the unity between private and public, the harmony between nature and human beings. Consequently, production was no longer a matter of subsistence but it was also intended for the market and the profit. Gradually, production moved out of the household and into factories, commercial farms, and so on, and the market rather than nature became the controlling force in the lives of ordinary people. Thus the "economic man" moved out of the household and the "domestic man" remained in it. However, the distinction between the public and private opens up new horizons and opportunities for men but limits the places and functions of women. In a way, this is the end of the gynocentric order.

With the separation of the two, a hierarchy developed between them. The private or domestic sphere lost all economic, political, and historical significance and became less important. As women remained in the economically insignificant household, they lost their centrality, their value. Men's work became more important, the differences between women and men kept increasing, and patriarchy became more powerful.

The basic values which govern the domestic and public spheres have also been sharply divided; one can almost say they are opposed to each other. While in the private sphere love, caring, selflessness and understanding are appreciated, the public sphere requires and valorised competition, ambition, aggression, and individualism. According to Joan Kelly, "although what constitutes 'domestic' and 'public' varies from culture to culture and lines of demarcation are differently drawn, a consistent pattern emerges when societies are placed on a scale.

Feminist writers have engaged with the public and the private in a variety of ways. Some have undertaken a historical or anthropological analysis of the originand development of the public/private dichotomy.

Another study by Ortner explains women's association with the 'private domestic sphere' in terms of the ways femininity is constructed as being closer to nature and is devalued; whereas masculinity is constructed as closer to the more highly valued culture.

The concept of the public and private has also had a role in the development of theories of women's subordinated status. Some feminist writers adopted Marxist theory to explain women's secondary status in the public sphere. Similarly, theories of patriarchy explain the nature of women's subordination and their activities being confined to the private sphere.

Other feminist writers like Walby use the concepts of public and private to explain the changes in the status of women, especially in Britain. According to Walby, in private patriarchy, the oppression of women is based around the household and involves individual men exploiting individual women. Under this form of patriarchy, women are excluded from participation in wider society. In the public form of patriarchy, the formal barriers to women's participation in paid work and politics make women in a subordinate position to men. Women may no longer be excluded from participation in wider society, but patriarchal segregation (for example in paid work) and subordination of women (for example sexual harassment) means that they face inequality and discrimination within it.

Many other studies have explained the several different ways in which the ideology of the public and the private continues to construct the lived experiences of women and men as gendered beings. For example, notions of public and private are drawn upon by criminal justice professionals in the investigation of domestic violence. Researchers have the viewed that while processing the cases of domestic violence by the police and the courts, notions of the privacy of marriage, home and family mean that violent masculine behaviour is often decriminalised and even condoned because of its occurrence in the private sphere of the home and the family.

Many writers are critical of the constructions of the public and the private in the perpetuation of gender inequalities. The traditional liberal formulation of the public and the private has itself undergone critique. The first criticism is the depiction of the two spheres the public and the private as separate rather than as mutually interdependent realms whose boundaries are fluid and changeable that are defined and redefined in day-to-day social relations and through long-term processes of political struggle. A second criticism arises from its narrow conception of politics as formal and institutional and as taking place only in the public realm. This limited view makes irrelevant all activities and relations in the private realm (of marriage, sexuality, motherhood,

household labour, etc.) and conceals the gendered relations of power and domination that take place in the home and family.

Feminist writers have shown that the private is not free from politics. Laws end policy formulated through formal institutional political processes of the public sphere direct by impacts experiences in the private sphere. The relationship between politics, gender, and public and private clearly explains the nature of dichotomy and the masculine presence in the public sphere and the feminine in the private. The public-private dichotomy thus plays an important role in reproducing gender inequalities.

Lister identifies three main elements to the reconstruction of the public-private dichotomy and the relationship between them. First, it is necessary to deconstruct the gendered qualities and attributes associated with the public and the private, so that the terms are no longer associated with masculinity and femininity; and the relation of power between them. Second, the multiple and complex interpenetrations of the public and the private must be acknowledged, along with their role in structuring gendered inequalities. Third, it is necessary to recognize the changing boundaries of the public-private dichotomy, and the very act of classifying activities as either public or private is an "exercise of power".

2.2   Division of Labour

Gender division of labour or sexual division of labour refers to the allocation of different roles, responsibilities, and tasks to women and men differently based on societal ideas of what men and women should do and are capable of doing. Different activities and responsibilities are assigned to girls and boys, women and men according to their sex-gender roles, and not necessarily according to their individual preferences or capabilities.

The concept of the sexual division of labour explains the division of labour in society based on different sex. Women's work or the work done by women has always been treated as less important or secondary than men. Thus, the concept of the sexual division of labour explains why men do some kinds of work and why women do other kinds of work. Only recently, the concept of the sexual division of labour emerged as a central concern in feminist debates and writings.

The advent of industrialization and modernization brought several changes in the social and economic spheres of activities. Consequently, it had shaped the roles of men and women in society. And thus Feminist writers were focussing on the changing structures of the society, and also the changing patterns of division of labour and its consequences on women. They also attempted to explain the transition from household to factory production and its consequences on the sexual division of labour and the status of women in society.

Feminist writers have highlighted two common points: one, throughout history most of the time, both men and women treated the work done by women as less important than the work done by men. Second, the division of labour was basically categorized on the basis of sex which was different and dependent on the social, cultural economic, and historical context of the society and carried different meanings dependent on the context.

Feminist scholars divided the work or activities into three categories: productive, reproductive, and community activities/work.

*Production*refers to all activity that produces goods and services for consumption and trade. All work done in factories, offices, and farms, fall into these categories, and it is only these activities that are counted as economic. Although both women and men are involved in productive activities the gender division of labour prevails. It is believed that men do jobs that are more skilled and better-paid positions and women's productive activities are often considered an extension of the work they do at home. For example, in the agricultural sector, women's productive work is not reflected in economic

*Reproduction*can bedivided into two kinds- biology and social. Biological production refers to giving birth, an activity that only women can perform. While social reproduction refers to all the caring and nurturing activities necessary to ensure human survival and maintenance. Caring of children, feeding, cooking, washing, and other household activities fall in this category. Despite, being significantly important, they are considered neither work nor an economic activity, and hence they are invisible, unrecognised, and unpaid. The fact is that reproductive work is carried out mainly by women and girls across the world.

*Community*work refers to all those activities necessary to run and organise community life. Governance, the organisation of and participation in social and cultural festivals, social services and facilities like roads, schools health care, etc. are all community activities. Both men and women participate in these but, again, according to the prescribed norms which define "male" and "female" activities.

Gender division of labour, therefore, operates not only in reproductive activities within the household but in productive and community activities as well, most of which take place outside the household. The gender division of labour is now considered a key concept to understand how gender inequalities are constituted and reconstituted.

The answers to the question about the social origins of the sexual division of labour were sought from the existing sociological theories. However, these theories whether evolutionary or positivism, or functionalism explain the sexual division of labour as biologically determined and hence unchangeable. The explanation for an unequal division of labour based on sex as biologically determined is considered a major obstacle to the analysis of the causes of women's oppression and exploitation.

The biological explanation for social inequalities between men and women seen in the sexual division of labour is socially constructed. Thus, the creation and maintenance of life are usually defined as a function of women's biology or nature. Most people considered the gender division of labour natural. Because women give birth to children and breastfeed them, and so they are better equipped for caring and nurturing. It is a physiological fact that women give birth to children which is a part of women's biological makeup, that is a fact of nature.

Feminist activist, Bhasin argued, that apart from bodily processes like giving birth and breastfeeding, women have no extra equipment for caring for, cleaning, or looking after; therefore it is not "natural" for them to be looking after, everyone. She further argued that men manage to sweep and clean and wash and cook when these activities are paid for, so the reasons for doing or not doing reproductive work cannot be biological or natural. It is also very convenient to reduce everything to nature because you don't need to question or challenge the patriarchal privilege.

Secondly, due to the biological explanation of women's interactions with nature her labour does not stop with childbirth. So, child-rearing is also regarded as a part of her biology. Thus, women cook, wash, clean, care for and serve the family as an extension of their biological makeup of childbearing and child-rearing.

In time, this division leads to a gender division of skills. Men and women, boys and girls learn and master only those skills considered appropriate to their gender roles. Thus, different skills and aptitudes are created in women and men, girls and boys, and are then ascribed solely to one or the other. The sexual division of labour in societies is categorized on the basis of female biology and male biology. Women stay at home give birth to children, rear children, and undertake all the domestic chores. Men, on the other hand, undertake strenuous work as a part of their biology.

In addition, gender division of labour also leads to hierarchies and inequalities because men's and women's labour is not valued or rewarded equally. Even now, equal pay for equal work is not the norm in most countries; housework is unpaid; and women are the first to be fired when the recession hits the workplace. Feminist writers explain this as the dominance of the (male) human being over the (female) nature. They further state that the biologically determined concept of nature is a relationship of domination of men over women and exploitation of women.

The allocation of certain tasks to men and women in productive processes (especially in household production) also leads toissues of command and control over resources and the products of labour. Thus, because of a gender division of labour, men assume control over land, technology, credit, cash from the sale of products, and so on. Normally, women produce for subsistence and men for exchange or cash.

Like gender and gender relations, the gender division of labour is also not the same everywhere.It is specific to culture, location, and time.

2.3 **Patriarchy as Ideology and Practice**

Generally, patriarchy means rule by the male head of a social unit. The patriarch, typically a societal elder, has legitimate power over others in the social unit, including other (especially, younger) men, all women, and children. It is also used more generally to refer to male domination,

to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in several ways.

When we say the subordination it is how women are experiencing at a daily level, regardless of their social background and it takes various forms say discrimination, disregard, insult, control over them, less independence, exploitation, oppression, violence within the family, at the place of work or in society. The details may be different, but the theme of experience is the same.

However, since the early twentieth century, feminist scholars have used the concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. According to Bhasin, anyone who has experienced even slight discrimination, bias or non-acceptance feels and knows it, even though they may not be able to name it.

Norms and practices which define women as inferior to men, and impose controls on women, are present everywhere in most families, social relations, religious space, laws, education, textbooks, media, factories, and offices.

The concept of patriarchy is used and like all other concepts, it is a tool to help us understand our realities. No doubt, it is defined by different people in different ways. For instance, Juliet Mitchell, a feminist psychologist, uses the word patriarchy to refer to kinship systems in which men exchange women, and to the symbolic power that fathers exercise within these systems. This power, she says, is responsible for the "inferiorised" psychology of women.

Another scholar,Sylvia Walby in her book, Theorising Patriarchy calls it "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". For Bhasin, it is important to understand patriarchy as a system because this helps us to reject the notion of biological determinism (which says that men and women are naturally different because of their biology or bodies and are therefore assigned different roles) or the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one. Linked to this system is the ideology that men are superior to women, that women are and should be controlled by men and that women are part of men's property.

Nature of patriarchy

The nature of patriarchy is different in different classes in the same society; in different societies, and in different periods in history. However, the general principles remain the same, i.e., men are in control, but the nature of this control may differ. For example, the experience of patriarchy was not the same in our grandmothers' time as it is today; it is different for tribal women in tribal society and upper-caste Hindu women; for women in the USA and women in India. Each social system or historical epoch shows up its variations on how patriarchy functions, and how social and cultural practices differ.

Bhasin has highlighted the following areas of women's lives that can be said to be under patriarchal control.

i) Women's productive or labour-power: According to her, men control women's productivity both within the household and outside, in paid work. Within the household, women provide all kinds of free services to their children, husbands, and other members of the family, throughout their lives. Men also control women's labour in public places in several ways. This control over and exploitation of women's labour means that men benefit materially from patriarchy; they derive concrete economic gains from the subordination of women. In other words, there is a material basis for patriarchy.

ii) Women's reproduction: Men also control women's reproductive power. In many societies, women do not have the freedom to decide for their own children like how many children they want, when to have them, whether they can use contraception, terminate a pregnancy, etc. Apart from individual male control, male-dominated institutions like religion and politics also lay down rules regarding women's reproductive capacity. This is known as institutionalised control.

iii) Control over women's sexuality: Women are obliged to provide sexual services to their men according to their needs and desires. A whole moral and legal regime exists to restrict the

expression of women's sexuality outside marriage in every society, whereas customarily, a blind eye is turned towards male promiscuity. Rape and the threat of rape is another way in which women's sexuality is dominated through an invocation of "shame" and "honour". In order to control women's sexuality their dress, behaviour and mobility are carefully monitored by familial, social, cultural and religious codes of behaviour.

iv) Women's mobility: Apart from women's sexuality, production and reproduction, men also control women's mobility. The imposition of *parda (veil)*, restrictions on leaving the domestic space, a strict separation of private and public, limits on the interaction between the sexes; and so on, all control women's mobility and freedom in ways that are unique to them-that is, they are gender-specific because men are not subjected to the same constraints.

v) Lastly, property and other economic resources: Most property and other productive resources are controlled by men and they pass from one generation to other, usually from father to son. Even where women have the legal right to inherit such assets, a whole array of customary practices, emotional pressures, social sanctions and, sometimes, emotional violence, prevent them from acquiring actual control over them. In other cases, personal laws curtail their rights, rather than enhance them. In all cases, they are disadvantaged.

Thus, patriarchy has been a fundamentally important concept in gender studies, leading to the development of a number of theories that aim to identify the bases of women's subordination to men.

Three of the most important theories in which patriarchy is a central concept are those commonly labeled as 'radical feminist', 'Marxist feminist' and 'dual systems theory'.

According to '*radical feminists*', patriarchy is regarded as the primary and fundamental social division in society. In some radical feminist analyses, the institution of the family is identified as a key means through which men's domination is achieved (Millet 1977). In other radical feminist accounts of patriarchy, the control men have over women's bodies is regarded as important.

For '*Marxist feminism*', patriarchy is argued to arise from the workings of the capitalist economic system which requires and benefits from women's unpaid labour in the home. The subordination of women to men in society, therefore, tends to be regarded as a by-product of capital's subordination of labour. Class inequality is argued to be the central feature of society and is seen to determine gender inequality (Barrett 1988).

A third grouping of feminist perspectives gives theoretical priority to two systems that are capitalism and patriarchy which is often referred to as '*dual systems theory*'. This perspective in many ways represents a synthesis of Marxist and radical feminist accounts of gender relations. Indeed, the dual systems approach can be seen to have emerged out of the critiques levelled at Marxist theories, which may over-emphasize class and capitalism, and the critiques levelled at radical feminist theories, which may over-emphasise patriarchy and/or biology. In some versions of dual systems theory, capitalism and patriarchy are understood as interdependent, mutually accommodating systems of oppression, whereby both systems structure and benefit from women's subordination (Hartmann 1979). While patriarchy has long been important in feminist analyses, it has also been the subject of considerable debate.

Summary

The concept of gender roles refers to the expectation to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. The concept of public and private portrays social relations as comprised of two separate realms. The public realm is characterized by activities individuals undertake in wider society and such as engaging in productive or paid work, and participating in other public activities. On the other hand, the private realm is characterized by activities undertaken with particular others, relatively free from the jurisdiction of the state. It is the realm of the household, of personal or family relationships. Private and public also indicate primary and secondary relationships respectively.

Most importantly, the interest in the public-private dichotomy arises because of the gendered nature and the gendered spaces that is the association of masculinity with the public and femininity with the private. Women are expected to remain in the private domain while men function in the public, while also controlling the private.

The gender division of labour or the gender inequality in a society depend on its socio-cultural beliefs about the nature and social value of gender differences in competencies and traits. Such taken-for-granted beliefs allow an individual to be reliably categorized as men and women in all contexts and understood as more or less appropriate candidates for different roles, responsibilities, and positions in our society. For such cultural beliefs to persist, people's everyday interactions must be organized to support them, for instance through socialization.

Keywords

- Gender roles
- Norms
- Public private dichotomy
- Division of labour
- Patriarchy

Self Assessments

1. Which factor is responsible for the low status of women in India?

A. Changes in the family system

B. Patriarchal system of society

C. Female foeticide

D. Women liberation movement

2. Marxist Feminists explain patriarchy in terms of

A. Lack of equal opportunities for men and women

B. Double oppression of capitalism and male domination

C. Oppression of women economically, politically, and sexually

D. The exploitation of women through domestic labour.

3. Marxist feminists attempt to explain how

A. Gender relations do not operate in society.

B. Gender relations are universal.

C. Gender relations are connected with processes of production and reproduction.

D. Gender relations are crucial for the property.

4. The societies created by patriarchal thought are

A. Egalitarian, repressive and exploitative

B. Inegalitarian, repressive and exploitative

C. Egalitarian, equity and domination

D. Egalitarian, subordination and super-ordination

5. Gender role traits mean...

A. One's sense of oneself as a man or a woman

B. Beliefs about the differences between men and women

C. Personality Characteristics in the masculine and feminine domains

D. One's cognitive representation of gender

6. One's cognitive representation of gender is

A. Gender Schema

B. Gender role traits

C. Gender identity

D. Gender role stereotypes

7. What is the gender division of labour?

A. It negates the 'double burden'

B. It is based on gender-structured conceptions of appropriate work.

C. It has led to an increase in women's compensation worldwide.

D. It characterises men as protectors and women as protected.

8. Sex-role stereotypes describe what we think the sexes are like, but also

A. The future career choices

B. How the media should portray the sexes

C. How we think they should act

D. How we should interact with the other sex.

9. Gender is not merely a methodological category

A. But a way of signifying the relationship of caste.

B. But a way of signifying the relationship of elder and young people.

C. But a way of signifying a relationship of power.

D. But a way of signifying the relationship of class.

10. Descent and inheritance in India are usually traced _____.

A. Through men, not women

B. Through women, not men

C. Through children, not women

D. Through humans, not men

11. 'Doing Gender' requires working with

A. Women only

B. Women and men also

C. Women and men separately

D. Women and men together

12. Which of the following is reflected the statement that "history is interpreted in the light of biology."?

A. Naturally, men are always active and dynamic

B. Throughout history, men and women are treated in an equal manner.

C. Naturally, men are always passive and feminine.

D. Naturally, women are always active and dynamic.

13. The categorization of two divisions of human beings pursues a person from

A. Adolescent

B. Birth

C. Adulthood

D. After married

14. _____ refers to all activity that produces goods and services for consumption and trade.

A. Production

B. Reproduction

C. Construction

D. Deconstruction

15. Femininity is constructed as being closer to _____; whereas masculinity is constructed as closer to the more highly valued _____.

A. Nurture; nature

B. Female; male

C. Culture; Nature

D. Nature; culture

Answers for Self Assessment

l.	B	2.	B	3.	C	4.	B	5.	C
6.	C	7.	B	8.	C	9.	C	10.	A

11. D   12. A   13. B   14. A   15. D

Review Questions

Q.1. Critically examines sexual division of labour.

Q.2. Define roles and briefly explain gender roles.

Q.3. Examine public private dichotomy.

Q.4. Discuss feminist's writings on patriarchy as ideology and practice.

Q.5. Explain 'radical feminist and Marxist feminist theory on patriarchy.

Further Readings

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Unit 03: Emergence of Feminist Thought

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Objectives

This unit deals with the historical development of feminism and after thorough reading of this unit, students will be able to

- Understand feminism and the development of feminist knowledge.
- Comprehend the socio-historical perspective in the development of feminism.
- Describe the concept of waves of feminism and elucidate the historical movement.

Introduction

The belief in gender equality in social, economic, and political concerns is known as feminism. Despite its beginnings in the West, feminism has spread across the world and is represented by various organisations dedicated to working on favour of women's rights and interests. As a result, feminism has evolved into a global political movement focused at improving women's lives and eliminating gender-based inequity.

The word feminism is claimed to have originated in the nineteenth century from the French word feminism, which was used as a medical term to describe the feminization of a male body or to characterize women with masculine traits. In the early twentieth century in the United States, it was only used to refer to one group of women: 'particularly that group which asserted the uniqueness of women, the mystical experience of maternity, and women's special purity' (Jaggar 1983: 5). It was, however, misinterpreted as a political stance made by someone who wanted to improve women's social position.

Since then, feminism has come to mean anybody who believes that women are oppressed and discriminated against due of their biology (sex), and that women deserve at least legal equality.

Although the phrase is new, it has quickly become a popular way of referring to early authors and philosophers. Feminist knowledge has traditionally been seen as informal or illegitimate in some way, and it became vital for modern feminists to legitimise feminist ideas by disseminating them as widely as possible and welcoming the contributions and comments of other women.

Although all feminists share a common goal of abolishing female oppression, they do not always approach the issue from the same philosophical or political position. This also demonstrates that the diversity and variability of feminism's legacy is part of its richness.

However, all feminists agree on one aspect of feminism: women are subjected to social and/or material injustice solely because of their biological condition. They are committed to combatting it, but the techniques available to them are varied.

Surprisingly, every feminist agrees on the essential truth of women's subjugation. Some perceive feminism's variety as a sign of healthy discussion, while others see it as a flaw in the system. It's also obvious that, while some critics equate this fragmentation with contemporary feminism, feminists have always come from a variety of cultural and political backgrounds and have always concentrated on issues that are relevant to the period and place they live in.

3.1   Waves of Feminism

The history of feminism (especially in the United Kingdom and the United States) is commonly divided into several key periods, some of which are marked by a relative lack of feminist thought and mobilisation, while others are marked by a sustained growth of feminist criticism and high-profile activism.

The 'wave' metaphor arose from the apparent pattern of feminism's rise and fall over time; the feminist movement's peaks and lows are described as a continuous cycle of gradual swelling, eventual cresting, and final receding. The 1960s resurgent feminism stood apart from a prior period of similarly productive, high-profile feminist analysis and political participation.

3.2   First wave

'First wave' feminism was popular during the previous time (roughly from the mid- to late-nineteenth century through the 1920s). As a result,'second wave' feminism emerged from the revitalised feminist analysis and action of the 1960s.

The first wave of feminism may be traced back to pre-nineteenth-century concerns about women's rights in broad historical terms. The French Revolution of 1789 is often credited as being the catalyst for the first significant demands for women's rights. It also influenced Mary Wollstonecraft, whose book Vindication of the Rights of Women, published in the United Kingdom in 1792, is often considered to be the first thorough and systematic feminist article.

The primary objective of first-wave feminism was for women to achieve equality with men, hence feminist analysis and campaigns focused on gaining changes in women's laws. Feminist scholars believed that the first wave feminist movement in Britain was crucial in bringing about a shift from 'private' to 'public' patriarchy through the struggle for the vote, access to education and the professions, legal property ownership rights, rights in marriage and divorce, and other issues.

The beginnings of first wave feminism in the UK may be traced back to the massive social and economic changes brought about by industry, one of which was the expansion of constitutional rights to broader portions of the population.

In addition to the long-standing legacy of 'equal rights' feminism, Banks (1981) recognises two more significant strands of first wave feminism. Religious evangelical movements spawned 'evangelical' feminism. Its followers aimed to protect and morally reform people who were less privileged than themselves, such as working-class women, "fallen" women, children, and the destitute. 'Socialist feminism,' which is concerned with social and legal transformation, is the other fundamental strain of feminism defined by Banks.

Suffrage had become the most important issue in the early twentieth century, and it had become the centre of public activism. Almost all feminists were pulled together in a single campaign centred on voting rights. On tactics, however, there was a fundamental disagreement. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies was created in 1897, with Millicent Fawcett as its President. Its members were largely well-connected middle-class women.

The advent of World War One in 1914 put a halt to the suffragettes' militant actions and broadened the women's movement. Following their recruitment into the labour market as replacements for absent males, the war is widely credited as shattering many traditional views about women.

Kent thinks that at least two factors led to the downfall of feminism as a popular movement during the interwar years. The first was the rise of anti-feminism in the United Kingdom, which was focused with 'persuading' women to abandon their wartime jobs and resume their traditional roles. Second, there are ideological and structural divisions within organised feminism itself.

Equal rights feminists were no longer prominent in the women's movement by the end of the 1920s. They continued to struggle for equal suffrage, as well as equal guardianship of children, the admission of women to the legal profession, equal remuneration, equal morals, and a widow's pension scheme (Banks 1981: 163–4).

In the 1930s, a decade marked by depression, unemployment, and fears about population decline, the 'new feminism,' with its focus on women's parental role and the contribution this permitted them to contribute to social welfare, rose to prominence (Randall 1982; Lewis 1980).

The 'subsiding' of the first wave in Britain occurs when the two feminisms divide in the 1920s and 1930s.

3.3   Second Wave Feminism

The phrase "second wave feminism" refers to a new era of feminist collective political engagement and militancy that began in the late 1960s. Because the term of feminism's 'waves' was first used in the late 1960s and early 1970s, its application to a prior era of female action tells us a lot about the oncoming second wave.

The wave analogy not only serves to record historical development from feminism's first 'wave,' which lasted roughly from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1920s, but it also marks a shift in feminist thought's fundamental political themes.

When comparing second wave feminism to first wave feminism, the first wave advocated for women's enfranchisement through the vote, access to professions, and the ability to own property, but second wave feminists spoke of 'liberation' from the oppressiveness of a patriarchally structured society. They claimed that enfranchisement had failed to create equality, and that it was now time to consider life outside of the public realm. While the battle for the vote remained the symbolic centre of first wave feminism, the female body itself – its representation and the meanings linked to the blatant reality of biological difference – was undoubtedly the fundamental site of struggle for second wave feminists.

In this light, Simone de Beauvoir's famous declaration that "a woman is not born, but rather becomes" (1972: 295) guided new thinking on how gender differences were perceived as constructed, so that the first wave feminists' main battle was against women's ideological positioning as much as their material position.

Second-wave feminists were dedicated to creating a corpus of knowledge that especially addressed the cultural and social marginalization of women throughout history.

Furthermore, second wave feminism questioned what equality could achieve, not least since women and men were still philosophically obliged to play different social roles, and there was a progressive shift toward a greater attention on disparities between men and women and the meanings associated to them. Second-wave feminism frequently alluded to the likelihood of massive societal transformation that would render existing social institutions unworkable due to patriarchal reality.

As discussed in the entry on 'feminisms,' many of the women who gave feminism its new radical impetus and these radical feminists' decision to organise in small groups and engage in consciousness raising, direct action, and demonstrations that were more akin to street theatre meant that this new brand of feminism, or the 'women's liberation movement,' quickly communicated itself to the public consciousness.

Second wave feminism reflects significant transformations in the politics of liberal and Marxist feminists, as well as the birth of a new radical feminism. They too came to focus on debates which only emerged during this period and were defined much more by what Kate Millett had termed 'sexual politics' – such as the family, abortion, sexuality, the sexual division of labour, rape and domestic violence.

This entailed a more pronounced change from traditional Marxist ideas to an examination of how gendered relations may be included into a class gender based analysis of power for Marxist feminists in particular. The idea that anyone could 'join' the women's movement, fostered by the explosion of second wave radicalism, encouraged a kind of inclusiveness that led to the emergence of a variety of sub-groupings, many of which were formed to provide critical space for lesbians, women of colour, and working-class women.

The second wave's virtues were that it established the circumstances for such diversity; its drawback was that it was still distinguished by an informal 'mainstream' of white middle-class, heterosexual women who looked unwilling to offer much more than token room to opposing or critical voices at times. The idea that feminism's 'membership' is more of a political decision than a formal affair is critical to the character and structure of second wave feminism.

White western feminist theorists saw it as their primary task in the early years of the second wave—roughly during the late 1960s and early 1970s—to develop critical analyses of the structural features of patriarchal societies, as a result of which women and men live structurally, materially, and experientially markedly different lives. Feminists first focused on how these experiences differed along sex-gender lines, rather than how they differed along lines drawn by class, racism, sexuality, age, ability, ethnicity, and religion.

The starting point of feminist theory, both then and now, is in women's lives: in their widely diverse experiences and situations. Because experiences do not speak for themselves, theory plays a major role in feminist movements. As a result, from the beginning of the second wave, consciousness-raising has been an important component of feminist practise. Women have had to learn how to observe and name their experiences from one another, as well as acknowledge and analyse their similarities and distinctions.

Feminist ideas have diverged dramatically from early attempts to describe women as a caste, class, or homogeneous group in the more than thirty years since the beginning of the second wave. Race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, and ability are just a few of the myriad differences between/among women that have become focal points for analysis. No feminist at the turn of the twenty-first century would speak of a single, essential 'women's experience,' because race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, and ability are just a few of the myriad

As a result, feminists have pushed to establish theoretical tools for studying areas of convergence and divergence in women's lives; for recognising the borders of commonality and distinctiveness, while also realising that no experience is pure, unspoiled, unmediated, or generic.

3.4   Third Wave Feminism

The third wave is a new phase of feminism that emerged in the 1980s. Since the 1980s, third wave feminism has remained one of the most vibrant and vital areas of feminist intellectual evolution. This demonstrates the global success of the women's movement, which affects women everywhere, both domestically and internationally.

From radical and socialist feminism came the third wave of feminism. The third wave feminists re-evaluate, re-examine, and expand the second wave's feminist problems. The fundamental focus of third-wave feminists is gender inequality.

They also re-examine themes and notions from the early waves of feminism. They don't treat "women" as a broad category, instead focusing on the practical and theoretical implications of gender differences. The differences are not biological, but rather the outcome of unequal distribution of socially created commodities and services based on caste, class, colour, nationality, religion, age, and affectional preference in the global system. Gender stratification interacts with these issues.

The third wave feminists have understood that no amount of scholarly inquiry on genders, differences, and oppression will alleviate the uneven misery experienced by many groups. Every conversation about women will remain an intellectual exercise unless we address these fundamental inequalities. In reality, the pace of pain is related to one's personal life and other stratification characteristics.

As a result, various studies have been conducted on topics such as "gender and race," "gender and global location," "gender and caste," and so on. Caste, class, race, gender, and worldwide expression and advantages are all inextricably intertwined, according to research. As a result, the worldwide and futurist movements of the twenty-first century are known.

Third wave feminism has several definitions, but one of the most common is that it is the feminism of a younger generation of women who recognise the legacy of second wave feminism while also recognising its limits. These perceived limitations include their perceptions that it remained too white and middle-class, that it became a prescriptive movement that alienated ordinary women by making them feel guilty about enjoying aspects of individual self-expression such as cosmetics and fashion, as well as sexuality – particularly heterosexuality and its trappings, such as pornography.

Women who have grown up heavily impacted by feminism, maybe with feminist moms and relatives, and who are accustomed to the availability of women's studies courses as well as scholarly interrogations of 'race' and class, appear to represent the majority of third wave feminists. However, it's worth noting that most of its motivation comes from the works of women of colour.

Third wave feminism appears to have emerged from the academy in the broadest sense – that its key spokespeople developed these ideas in response to their own feminist education – but it is also present in popular cultural forms, as these feminists see popular culture, particularly music, television, film, and literature, as having a powerful influence on their lives.

The birth of third wave feminism is closely linked to the Riot Grrl movement, which demonstrates their contention that popular culture can be a site of action and that media such as music may be utilised to transmit political ideas. Riot Grrrls' musical approach was greatly influenced by punk music from the 1970s, and it embraced punk's inclusion — the concept that anybody with a passion for music, but possibly without professional training, could play. Making music (not an insignificant aspiration in an industry often controlled by males), establishing record labels, publishing fanzines, and organising cultural events are all examples of Riot Grrl and following third wave activism.

The sources for third wave inspiration reflect this cultural multi-lingualism. Beyond their cultural tastes, third wavers pride themselves on their global perspective and there is a commitment to look at the material conditions of people's lives while embracing some of the key tenets of second wave feminism.

Very much at the heart of feminism's third wave is the sense of generational conflict – one generation claiming its own space and fashioning the movement in its own image. This marks a very different transition from the first to second waves of feminism, where the shape of political action and feminist purpose was transformed from a discourse of rights to that of liberation.

3.5   Fourth Wave Feminism

The fourth wave of feminism, focusing on women and technology, is thought to have originated in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Although the phrase 'fourth-wave feminism' originated in the West, thanks to the widespread usage of social media in India, it arose virtually simultaneously. Women in India saw a cultural shift in the 2000s as a result of economic liberalisation and the introduction of contemporary technology, which emphasised rights such as women's freedom, choice, and independence.

Gender and Society

The 4th wave is essentially defined by its form, i.e., kinds of female engagement and communication that mostly occur online (Rampton 2008). The global economic, social, and political landscape has been transformed by the convergence of technology and the physical world. Blogging and social media have democratised the feminist movement by making it more accessible, fostering diversity, and inspiring leadership in a movement that has traditionally lacked these qualities. Blogging and social media are used by online or cyberfeminists as a means of political mobilisation and community development. Transnational feminist networks are enabled by the rapid distribution of knowledge and information across boundaries enabled by social media.

Feminists have appropriated online culture through the use of humour and other innovative hilarious styles as a way of communication, using digital resources.

Although many of the underlying interests of the 4th wave of feminism are similar to those of the preceding waves, this wave places a specific emphasis on the unsolved problems of inequality, various types of discrimination and violence, women's individual liberty, and sisterhood itself.

Furthermore, the fourth wave of feminism includes a debate of body positivity in order to empower men, women, and transgender individuals by advocating acceptance of all conceivable bodies.

Also, attention is addressed to the positive sides of femininity, and to the development of female consciousness, identity, and power, as an emerging process of subjectivation and self-determination, stimulated by "hashtag feminism" and online communications.

These ideas make the fourth wave of feminism a useful framework for comprehending the current worldwide mobilisation of women. We suggest that the global women's movement is challenging the neoliberal law and citizenship paradigm on a global scale, rather than only addressing particular national or international challenges. Describes many types of female resistance, as well as the development of new forms and patterns of contact, and the reformulation of female alliances and partnerships. In contrast to what we know from prior conversations, this entails taking steps toward a new concept of sisterhood.

Surprisingly, the conversation around sexual harassment has gained traction throughout the world, with the ability to reveal the hidden poisonous culture of sexualized power in people's daily interactions. In 2017, the 'Me Too' movement against sexual harassment, founded by American activist Tarana Burke, grew in popularity throughout the world thanks to Twitter.

Not only that, but numerous bloggers have advocated for "micro-rebellions" to propagate feminism through cyberspace's open channels. The 'When Women Refuse' blog, for example, was founded after three women were slain in California, United States, for refusing men's approaches, and has subsequently been used to document women's sexual assault stories. Microrebellions in Saudi Arabia deal with problems other than sexuality and the body, such as those against discriminatory official rules.

Conclusions

Feminism has always been perceived through a Western viewpoint. In compared to free Western feminists, 'third world women' are frequently perceived as a 'powerless' victimised group, posing a barrier to an inclusive, international feminist movement.

However, as more women of all nations, colours, classes, and cultures get access to the internet, feminist discourse broadens to incorporate previously marginalised perspectives. This advocates a postmodernist and postcolonial feminism that recognises the movement's variety and embraces diverse facts, roles, and realities as part of its focus. It allows marginalised women to rethink feminism in light of their own experiences and views.

Summary

Feminism is a global political movement to improve the conditions of women's life and to eliminate gender-based inequities and injustices. The usage of the term is very recent however it has become a very common to refer to early writers and thinkers. All feminists may share a common standpoint to ending female oppression buttheirapproaches do not arise from the same philosophical or political stand.

The development of feminism is commonly divided into several phases through wave's analogy. The earlier period (dating from at least the mid to late nineteenth century up until about the 1920s),

became known as 'first wave' feminism. The period of first wave feminism may be dated to include pre-nineteenth-century's concern about the rights of women. First wave feminism had as its main concern on women's attainment of equality with men and therefore feminist analyses and campaigning centred on securing change in the legislation with regards to women.

The Second wave feminism is a term used to describe a new period of feminist collective political activism and militancy which emerged in the late 1960s. This was also a signal for shift in the key political issues for feminist thought. The second wave feminists were committed to building a body of knowledge which specifically addressed the ways in which women have historically been marginalised, both culturally and socially. Second wave feminism is not just about the emergence of a new radical feminism but it also marks key shifts in the politics of liberal and Marxist feminists.

The third wave is a new stage in feminism developed during 1980's. Since 1980s third wave feminism can still one of the most dynamic and central area of intellectual growth within feminism. This indicates the gain of success of women's movement at global level which touches women at all within a nation and international. The third wave feminist's main concern is differences among women. The difference is not biological but those that resulted from the unequal distribution of socially produced goods and services on the basis of position in global system, caste, class race, ethnicity, religion, age and affectional preference.Some feminists believed that the fourth wave of feminism has been emerged, focusing on women and technology especially in the second decade of 21st century.

Keywords

- Feminist's movements
- First wave feminism
- Second wave feminism
- Third wave feminism
- Fourth wave feminism
- Cyber-feminists

Self Assessment

1. Which of the following play a major role in construction, presentation, representation and repression of women in contemporary society?

A. Religion
B. Media
C. Culture
D. Social System

2. What is responsible for the current discriminatory pattern of gender relations in society?

A. Female Foeticide
B. Neglect of the female child
C. Dowry Deaths
D. Patriarchy

3. The discourse of 1980 women's movement outlined by various women's group identified sexual violence as

(A) an expression of economic status.

(B) an expression of power.

(C) an expression of male ego.

(D) an expression of upper class

4. All historical explanations of gender are agreed on one fact; masculinity and femininity are not eternal, given norms.

A. They were elaborated, institutionalized and made to seem eternal, to justify the power and authority which men enjoyed at the expense of women.

B. They were elaborated, institutionalized and made to seem eternal, to justify the power and authority which women enjoyed at the expense of men.

C. They were elaborated in the norm book of gender.

D. Masculinity and femininity norms were given.

5. One thing commonly share among all the feminists is _____

A. To end female oppression

B. To end male oppression

C. To educate the girl child

D. To end fascism

6. Historical development of feminism is known through _____

A. Women feminists and men feminists

B. Different types of feminism

C. Wave analogy

D. Different tactics

7. In particular, the _____ is often identified as the ground in which the first rigorous demands for women's rights were made.

A. Russian Revolution of 1917

B. French Revolution of 1789

C. Serbian Revolution of 1804

D. American Revolution of 1760

8. By the early twentieth century, the question of the _____ was the predominant concern among feminists.

A. Suffrage

B. Education

C. Freedom of speech

D. Abortion right

9. The concept of 'waves' of feminism was itself only applied in the _____

A. Late 1960s and early 1970s

B. Late 1940s and early 1950s

C. Early 2000s

D. Late 1990s

10. 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman'. Who among the following stated this?

A. Mary Wollstonecraft

B. Kamla Bhasin

C. Nivedita Menon

D. Simone de Beauvoir

11. The book, "Vindication of the Rights of Women", published in Britain in 1792 is authored by

A. Simone de Beauvoir's
B. V. Geetha
C. Kamla Bhasin
D. Mary Wollstonecraft

12. In Britain, the 1840s saw the spread of feminist ideas among _____

A. middle-class women
B. upper-class women
C. Lower-class women
D. Middle-caste women

13. _____ shows the emergence of new 'radical' feminism

A. The first wave feminism
B. The second wave feminism
C. The third wave feminism
D. The fourth wave feminism

14. The first wave feminist movement in Britain focuses on

A. Voting right for women
B. Access to education
C. Legal right of property ownership
D. All the above

15. Feminism is no longer

A. Diverse
B. The property of the patriarchal society
C. Organized
D. Homogenous

Answer for Self Assessment

l.	B	2.	D	3.	B	4.	A	5.	A
6.	C	7.	B	8.	A	9.	A	10.	D
11.	D	12.	A	13.	B	14.	D	15.	D

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Review Questions

Q.1. Discuss feminist's movements.

Q.2. Describe different waves of feminism.

Q.3. Write a note on liberal and radical feminism.

Q.4. Explain ideologies of feminism and briefly examine the features of the first wave of feminism.

Q.5. Elucidate the fourth wave feminism with appropriate examples.

Further Readings

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Unit 04: Approaches to the Study of Gender

CONTENTS

Objectives

After going through this unit, student will be able to

- Acquaint the different types of feminism and also learn different problems experienced by women under patriarchal system.
- Understand the debates and discussions on the post-feministmovement.
- Learn the concepts and meanings of anti-feminist as movement.

Introduction

Feminism is a global political movement aimed at improving the lives of women and eliminating gender-based imbalances and injustices. Feminist theories emerge from feminist activism and academic activities, with the goal of illuminating the hurdles and limits that women face, explaining their dynamics and persistence, and identifying tools for change. Feminist theories have always been diverse and contested, reflecting the unique circumstances of their inception.

4.1   Types of Feminism

1.Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism draws on the diversity of liberal thought dominant in Western society since the Enlightenment, and affirms that women's subordinate social position can be addressed by existing political processes under democracy. For liberals the key battle is access to education; it is argued that if men and women are educated equally, then it follows that they will get equal access to society.

Liberal feminism is a popular strategy in today's feminist groups. Women activists take on a variety of topics, including women's jobs, equal parenting, and gender-free education, to name a few. The public and private domains of activity are one of the hot themes. According to liberal feminists, the American constitution provides women with more rights and independence than many other countries. Because of sexist views, the constitution's equal opportunity clause is not followed. As a result, modern society and people's mindsets must adapt. They proposed a number of calculated options. All of these ideas are lawful and fit inside the existing framework. Liberal feminists do not

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discuss dismantling the system. Three important themes emerge: equal remuneration for similar work, equal distribution of wealth, and equal distribution of power.

"Women are first and foremost human being logical creatures, not sexual beings," declared feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft in her book "Violation of the Rights of Women." They have the ability to regulate themselves rationally. As a result, if women's natural rights are to be denied, it must be demonstrated that they are not logical creatures."

In their opinion that democracy itself is inherently adaptable to equality for both sexes, liberal feminists are unwilling to utilise the terminology of'revolution' or 'liberation,' as used by radicals and Marxists. This liberal approach is widely regarded as the most prevalent, 'common-sense' feminism, appropriate to the vast majority of women who identify as 'feminists' in some form yet do not wish to change social status quo.

From Harriet Taylor (1851) and John Stuart Mill through abolitionists and women's rights campaigners, liberal feminists attempted to show that women's "nature" was entirely artificial, the product of forced repression of certain qualities and undue stimulation of others (Mill [1869] 1971). They stressed the role of law in barring women from educational and occupational prospects, legal standing and constitutional rights, and political and public life involvement, thereby producing women as second-class citizens.

Black feminists in the United States have been pointing out since the 1830s that state and federal laws deprive black women and men of their human rights, denying them self-determination and constitutional protections in ways that differ significantly from the deprivations faced by white American women.

As a result, one school of feminist and critical race theory has constantly concentrated on the state and its legal apparatus as a fundamental tool for social change.

2.Marxist Feminism

Unlike liberal feminism, socialist or Marxist feminism connects changes in women's socioeconomic situations to the overthrow of industrial capitalism and transforming worker-machine interactions. For them, revolution is the only solution, albeit socialist feminists have grown increasingly sceptical about the chance of a socialist revolution bringing about a change in women's lives, given the ideological firmness with which the current interpretations of gender distinctions are held. Marxian ideas underpin socialist feminism, which is linked to radical feminism.

Feminists in the 19th and 20th centuries' strong socialist movements defined the reasons of women's oppression and the measures for social change in quite different ways. While the laws of bourgeois (and feudal) states solidified unequal relations, a full understanding of "the woman question" required a more expansive theoretical conceptualization that included exploitative divisions of labour within capitalist industrial production, unequal roles in physical and social reproduction sanctioned by marriage practises and kinship systems, commodity fetishism, modes of circulation, trade, and exchange, and commodity fetishism.

An important idea of socialist feminisms is that in a capitalist society marriage and patriarchal family is like a capitalist unit on a smaller scale it reproduces conflict and contradiction of wider society. Wives are like labour class and the patriarchal head of the family is like an employer or owner of the unit. Yet socialist feminist do not look of men as their enemies. This is because they say like women are exploited in capitalist society and men act as agents of the system. In the process, men are also oppressed. Hence men and women should unite together to fight against the system.

Socialist feminist stress two main area of work one is wage labour. All economic exploitation and injustice stem from society. Women, like other oppressed groups, supply low-wage labour, perform all regular, disagreeable home tasks, and are politically docile. Their employment both inside and outside the family is regarded as secondary.

As a result, they can be hired and fired according on the patriarch husband's or employer's financial circumstances. As a result, the liberal feminist position is that women are discriminated against as a result of systemic issues that should be altered. The socialist feminist viewpoint is that women are exploited because of the system itself. In the past, capitalists profited from the exploitation of the working class and worked as ageists, exploiting women in their homes.

Nonetheless socialist/Marxist feminists are considered as always mindful of the ways society is separate by class and race distinctions as well as those of gender and that it is more useful to

consider oppression as multi-pronged and inter-related rather than arguing that one form is more destructive than others.

3. Radical Feminism

Marxist principles of class antagonism and exploitation inform both radical and socialist feminists. In his book, "The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State," Engel explains that women's oppression began with the first division of labour between men and women, a division that has been sharpened by the women a division that has been sharpened by the advent of capitalism and the biological family. With this theoretical support, socialist feminists develop revolutionary ideas. The main demand of radical feminists is the abolition of patriarchy.

According to radical feminists, patriarchy is an autonomous historical fast, preserved through marriage and family. It is expressed in variety at ways in various institution, however in all these institutions, power is always with men and every institution and in society's most basic structure some people dominated other e.g. caste class ethnicity etc.

Patriarchy, according to radical feminists, is the least recognised but most significant framework of inequality. Radical feminists originated mostly from new left and civil rights political groups, particularly in the United States. Their politics were broadly radical left, but they were dissatisfied with the male-dominated power play that they saw in left-wing radical groups, so they founded the Women's Liberation Movement to provide a space for women's oppression to be discussed outside of male-oriented knowledge and politics. Their belief that a woman-centered politics could only be developed in a woman-only setting led to a separatist stance, at least at the policy-making and meeting levels.

Despite the rhetoric that feminist groups represented the needs of all women, many women of colour, working-class women, and lesbian/bisexual women felt more frustrated with the manner in which their participation in the movement rendered their own identities and concerns invisible.

The Combahee River Collective's 'A Black Feminist Statement,' first published in 1979 (see Hull et al. 1982), demonstrates a sense of belonging to feminism while also being alienated from some of the principles embraced, such as separatism, as well as the belief that gender determines oppression more than race, class, or sexual orientation.

This sense of inclusion and marginalisation simultaneously, the need to make one's own feminism to counteract the blindness of the mainstream became a commonplace in 1970s' and 1980s' feminisms – testimony to their own epistemological richness as well as less positively to the ways in which identity politics prevented feminist groups from speaking to each other and moving on.

4.2 <u>Post- Feminism</u>

It is important to state that there is no agreement about how post-feminism can be defined and consequently definitions essentially contradict each other in what they say about the term. At its most straightforward, the prefix 'post' in this context appears to mean 'going beyond' or 'superseding': it could therefore be seen as a confident announcement that feminism has achieved its key aims and that there is full equality for all women and a blurring of the boundaries between traditional ascriptions of gender.

Both definitions appear plausible, and the concept of exceeding or going beyond has been frequently used in popular culture and, to a lesser extent, intellectual discourse.Many feminist critics use the term *post-feminist* to negatively describe the renewed embrace of activities and positions that current and previous generations of feminists have deemed sexist or oppressive. The wide-ranging circulation of the term and its uncertain definition prompted scholars to study the implications of its usage.

At times, post-feminism is described as a media and publishing phenomenon, or as a backlash against feminism, while at other times post-feminism is discussed as a radically new way that young women are engaging in feminist activism and theory.

Within the current literature, the variety of definitions assigned to the phrase post-feminism causes confusion and disagreement. The major approaches of postfeminism, on the other hand, can be divided into two categories. Shelley Budgeon (2001) distinguishes between two major interpretations of postfeminism. Authors such as Susan Faludi (1992) define post-feminism as contributing to the pushback against feminism in the first approach (Budgeon 2001: 12). Authors who describe post-feminism as anti-feminism, according to Budgeon, believe the phrase to mean

"equality has been achieved" and that "goals are constructed as individual concerns, not political ones" (Budgeon 2001: 13). Budgeon proposes a second view to post-feminism, in which the prefix does not imply the death of feminism but rather "ongoing transformation" (ibid). The 'post' is not the end of feminism: actually, feminism is constantly to be picked over only to be rapidly set aside again or dismissed as old hat. For Myra Macdonald, 'post-feminism takes the sting out of feminism' it removes the politics and claims the territory of self-empowerment.

For Brooks the term 'post-feminism' 'is now understood as a useful conceptual frame of reference encompassing the intersection of feminism with a number of other anti-foundational movements including postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism' (Brooks 1997: 1).

Post-feminism emphasises competitive individuality over collective action, obscuring or obfuscating the myriad ways in which women are frequently afraid, subjected to rape and other forms of abuse, and politically and economically disadvantaged. The third wave, on the other hand, grapples with women's intersectional identities and demands an end to all forms of oppression that prevent women from realising their full humanity in texts ranging from Third Wave Agenda to Manifesta to Colonize This!

Many of the fundamental themes that were so radical in the 1970s are now acknowledged as part of mainstream politics, indicating that feminist politics has not stayed static. The claim that second-wave feminism failed to relinquish the hegemony of white middle-class heterosexual women to other kinds of women persists, and there is some truth to it. Nonetheless, it is clear that many feminists (particularly at the grassroots level) recognised the common links between various sites of oppression, and the growth in political and critical perspectives by women of colour, working-class women, and lesbians suggests that the struggle is far from over for them.

Despite its complex and multi-faceted nature, popular understandings of feminism depict it as a singular, radical movement while ignoring its internal conflicts, complexities, and contradictions.

Post-feminism can be seen as a hazy middle ground between feminism and anti-feminism, supporting gender equality and female empowerment but declining a rigorous feminist critique of still-existing patriarchal norms and institutions.

4.3   Anti-Feminism

Antifeminism is broadly defined as ideological opposition to some or all forms of feminism. This opposition has taken various forms across time and cultures. The meaning of antifeminism has varied across time and cultures, and antifeminism attracts both men and women. For example, antifeminists in the late 1800s and early 1900s resisted women's suffrage, while antifeminists in the late 20th century opposed the Equal Rights Amendment.

Antifeminism can be motivated by a conviction that feminist ideas of patriarchy and women's disadvantages in society are inaccurate or overblown, that feminism as a movement supports misandry and harms or oppresses men, or by a general opposition to women's rights.

Feminist sociologist Michael Flood argues that an antifeminist ideology rejects at least one of what he identifies as the three general principles of feminism: (i) That social arrangements among men and women are neither natural nor divinely determined; (ii) That social arrangements among men and women favour men; and (iii) That there are collective actions that can and should be taken to transform these arrangements into more just and equitable arrangements, such as those in the timelines of woman's suffrage and other rights.

Feminist Michael Kimmel defines antifeminism as "the opposition to women's equality." Antifeminists oppose "women's entry into the public realm, the reorganisation of the private domain, women's ownership of their bodies, and women's rights in general," according to him. Antifeminist arguments is based on "religious and cultural traditions," according to Kimmel, while proponents of antifeminism promote their cause as a way of "'rescuing' manhood from pollution and invasion." Antifeminists, he claims, regard "old gender division of work as natural and inevitable, possibly also divinely sanctioned."

"Antifeminist" is also a term used to denote female authors who identify as feminists but disagree with any or all aspects of feminist movements.

The antifeminist movement, whether as a counter to the women's suffrage campaign or to the equal rights amendment and the "second wave" of feminism, has at its foundation the belief that God created men and women to fulfill distinct roles. Gender equality therefore runs counter to nature.

Antifeminists believe that males were created by God to occupy the public domain, such as employment and politics, but women were created to bear and care for children and senior citizens in the private sphere of the home.

Traditional family traditions demand that the lady remain submissive and faithful to her husband, delegating all significant choices to him. As a result, antifeminists believe that any action that alters the fundamental power dynamic between men and women poses harm to society and the environment. As a result, the first and second waves of anti-feminist activities correspond to the first and second waves of the women's rights movement, respectively.Canadian sociologists Melissa Blais and Francis Dupuis-Déri write that antifeminist thought has primarily taken the form of an extreme version of masculinism, in which "men are in crisis because of the feminization of society".

Following the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention (the first women's rights convention in the United States), organised resistance to women's rights began almost immediately. The gathering, which took place in Seneca Falls, New York in July 1848, was the beginning of the women's suffrage campaign, which gave women the right to vote more than seven decades later. The first women's rights campaign produced a declaration of feelings and resolutions calling for fundamental changes in marriage, women's property rights, educational possibilities, better working conditions, and the ability to vote.

As suffrage became the major organizing tool of those advancing women's rights, however, it became the major point of opposition for antifeminists. Antifeminists viewed the vote as a threat to the protections middle- and upper-class women enjoyed and argued that politics was endemic with corruption, certainly no place for ladies.

Anti-Suffrage Movement

Men and women both participated in the Anti-Suffrage Movement, although women were the most conspicuous and vocal opponents of women's suffrage. They said that men and women are essentially different, and that women are unfit for politics. The so-called "antis" garnered big audiences on the assumption that if women were allowed to vote, they would neglect their families and domestic obligations, adopt masculine qualities and habits, and disrupt traditional family life.

Others claimed that once the vote was granted, it could not be limited to white, educated women. Fear-mongering based on race was particularly effective in states with large immigrant populations and in the South. In other countries, business and industry banded together to oppose women's suffrage, fearing the social reforms that women desired, such as control, better working conditions, and equal pay. As a result, a number of organisations developed to oppose women's suffrage.

The anti-suffrage movement's women tended to be Protestant and middle-class, but the organization's leaders were frequently the wives of influential politicians or businesses in the region.

Anti-suffrage forces actively campaigned against women's franchise and had the explicit support of business and industry, particularly among brewers and distillers fearful of women voters' support or the temperance movement.

Equal Rights Amendment

The second wave of antifeminism centered on opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Two national organizations were formed to oppose the ERA and remain active today: they are the Eagle Forum, founded in 1972 by Phyllis Schlafly, and Concerned Women for America (CWA), founded in 1979 by Beverly Lahaye. CWA developed a national network of anti- Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) prayer chains that sought God's direct intervention weekly.

Most of the opposition groups were organized on the principle of protecting what was perceived as traditional family values. Eagle Forum and Concerned Women for America (CWA) officials claimed that the feminist movement "deliberately undermines the housewife" from their self-proclaimed positions as legitimate supporters of women's welfare. They cautioned women that ratification of the anti-ERA Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) would drastically alter the power dynamic inside families, freeing males from their customary economic responsibilities to their families.

Separate-spheres doctrine was claimed by both antifeminist movements, the Anti-Suffrage Movement and the Anti-Equal Rights Amendment, as the source of women's fulfilment as well as God's design for human survival.Married women who worked outside the home did so for selfish, narcissistic reasons and threatened the health and safety of their children and the very stability of the family by doing so.

Schlafly deftly parodies anti-suffrage rhetoric by dubbing the Anti-Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) the "additional responsibilities amendment," a claim evocative of the argument that voting was a "unfair burden" on women already burdened with domestic and child-care responsibilities.

Antifeminist activists are also well-represented in the anti-abortion movement, claiming that legalised abortion, such as the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), will jeopardise women's traditional roles as mothers and homemakers.

Antifeminists in this context have built alliances with conservative religious leaders who opposed abortion on moral grounds and right-wing politicians who wanted to protect traditional patriarchal family arrangements.

Conclusion

Feminism as a term has endured and been found useful and the fruits of feminist challenges to the social order are evident in social policy-making today.

For these reasons the plurality of discourses which can be held to be 'feminist' today may be the key to its strength – its refusal to be pinned down, condensed to a single set of ideas or dogma, is what make feminist knowledge abiding in its appeal to women as well as a source of support in their daily material existence.

Summary

- Feminist theories arise in conjunction with feminist activism and academic practices, seeking to illuminate the barriers and constraints that circumscribe women's lives, explain their dynamics and persistence, and identify mechanisms for change.
- There are dominant strands that make up modern feminist thought as we encounter it today. First is the liberal feminist, draws on the diversity of liberal thought dominant in Western society since the Enlightenment, and affirms that women's subordinate social position can be addressed by existing political processes under democracy. Liberal feminism is widely diffused approach in contemporary women's movements. There are many issues taken up by women activists such as careers for women, equal parenting, gender free education etc. Liberal feminists are not happy to use the language of 'revolution' or 'liberation' favoured by radicals and socialists, in their belief that democracy itself is naturally adaptable to equality for both sexes.
- Second, Marxist feminism links changes in women's social conditions with the overthrow of industrial capitalism and changing relations of the worker to the means of production. For them, revolution is the only answer. Socialist feminism has its roots in Marxian thoughts and it is linked with radical feminism.
- Radical feminist's main demand is destruction of patriarchy. According to radical feminists, patriarchy is an autonomous historical fast, preserved through marriage and family. It is expressed in variety at ways in various institution, however in all these institutions, power is always with men and every institution and in society's most basic structure some people dominated other e.g. caste class ethnicity etc.
- A post-feminist position is one formulated due to dissatisfaction with existing feminist politics and is to be located in an entirely new area or set of propositions altogether. At

times, post-feminism is described as a media and publishing phenomenon, or as a backlash against feminism, while at other times post-feminism is discussed as a radically new way that young women are engaging in feminist activism and theory.

- Anti-feminism is broadly defined as ideological opposition to some or all forms of feminism. This opposition has taken various forms across time and cultures. Antifeminism may be motivated by the belief that feminist theories of patriarchy and disadvantages suffered by women in society are incorrect or exaggerated. The antifeminist movement, whether as a counter to the women's suffrage campaign or to the equal rights amendment and the "second wave" of feminism, has at its foundation the belief that God created men and women to fulfill distinct roles. Gender equality therefore runs counter to nature.

Keywords

- Liberal feminist
- Radical feminist
- Marxian feminist
- Post-feminism
- Anti-feminism

Self Assessment

1. Choose the incorrect statement that is not relevant in challenging the gender stereotypes

A. The content of media messages can be changed

B. Women can be shown in more enabling and more empowering roles

C. To continue the same traditional expectations and norms of male and female

D. Men can must be told that norms of masculinity limit them, can in fact prove quite oppressive.

2. Marxist feminist attempt to explain how

A. Gender relations does not operate in a society.

B. Gender relations are universal.

C. Gender relations are connected with processes of production and reproduction.

D. Gender relations are crucial for property.

3. In the Marxist view, reality is

A. Not an important aspect in the analysis of certain mode of production

B. Constant aspects and not systematic

C. Being made and re-made, as human bring strive to lead their lives with a certain mode of production.

D. Being made and re-made, as human bring strive to lead their lives with a certain mode of manufacturing.

4. "History is best understood as a history of class struggle, of contentions between producing classes and owning classes". Which theory is this?

A. Functionalism

B. Neo-Functional

C. Structuralism

D. Marxism

5. The book, "the origin at family, private property, and the state" is authored by

A. Uma Chakravarti

B. Juliet Mitchell

C. Mary Wollstonecraft

D. Friedrich Engels

6. The first great division of society into two classes: master and slave, the exploiters and the exploited was given by

A. Friedrich Engels

B. Emile Durkheim

C. Max Weber

D. Friedrich Hegel

7. The main focus for radical feminist is

A. To encouraged the patriarchy

B. To destruct the patriarchy

C. To destruct the matriarchy

D. To destruct both the patriarchy and matriarchy

8. Both radical and socialist feminists have their roots in

A. Marxist concepts at class-conflict and exploitation

B. Functionalist concepts at class-conflict and exploitation

C. Marxist concepts at class-cohesion and integration

D. None of the above

9. Which of the following do not favour to use the word, 'revolution' in their approach?

A. Radical feminist

B. Liberal feminist

C. All the above

D. None of the above

10. Friedrich Engels in his book "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", said:

A. Women's sub-ordination was biological.

B. The overthrow of mother right constituted the world historic defeat of the female sex.

C. Biology is destiny.

D. Invisibility of women's work in pre-history period.

11. The first great division of society into two classes: master and slave, the exploiters and the exploited was given by

A. Friedrich Engels

B. Emile Durkheim

C. Max Weber

D. Friedrich Hegel

12. _____ can be seen as a hazy middle ground between feminism and anti-feminism.

A. Anti-feminism

B. Non-feminism

C. Post-feminism

D. Neo-feminism

13. Which of the following is defined as ideological opposition to some or all forms of feminism.

A. Liberal feminism

B. Anti-feminism

C. Traditional feminism

D. Modern feminism

14. Which of the following work against anti-suffrage movement?

A. Liberal feminist movement

B. Modern feminist movement

C. Marxian feminist

D. Anti-feminist movement

15. Which of the following focus on revolution in their approach?

A. Liberal feminist

B. Anti-feminist

C. Marxist feminist

D. None of the above

Answers for self Assessment

1.	C	2.	C	3.	C	4.	D	5.	D
6.	A	7.	B	8.	A	9.	B	10.	B
11.	A	12.	C	13.	B	14.	D	15.	C

Review Questions

Q.1. Write a note on types of feminism.

Q. 2. Describe anti feminism movement.

Q. 3. Discuss post-feminism.

Q. 4. Examine radical feminist movement.

Q. 5. Write a short note on liberal feminism.

Further Readings

1. V. Geetha (2002). Gender: Theorizing Feminism. Calcutta: Stree.

2. Amy S. Wharton. (2005). The Sociology of Gender: An introduction to theory and Practice. USA: Blackwell.

3. Jane Pilcher & Imelda Whelehan. (2004). Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies. London: Sage.

Unit 05: Gender Based Sociological Analysis

Objectives

This present unit deals with the contemporary context of gender focusing on globalization and gender. From this unit, students will be able

- To understand the sociological analysis of globalization.
- To aware the issues of globalization, neo-liberalism and women in Indian context.
- To understand the gender in globalization and its impact on gender equality.
- To acquintthe analysis of gender and female migrants in a contemporary period.

Introduction

We now frequently hear references to living in a "global community" or a more open world (McLuhan, 1964). The extension of capitalist market relations and a genuinely integrated global economy are the outcomes of globalisation, which is generally understood to imply the growing linkages of social, economic, cultural, and political life. The fact that information and communications technology has led to "time-space compression," which connects faraway regions and lifestyles together, is another important feature of globalisation (Harvey, 1989).

The 20th century is coming to a close as the globe transitions into a new age marked by a globally interconnected economy, where decisions about production, consumption, and other facets of social interactions increasingly have global implications. Globalization's forces are actual, and they have an impact everywhere. It involves open commerce, unrestricted movement of real and financial capital, and quick dissemination of goods, technology, knowledge, and consuming habits.

5.1   Debates and Discussions on Globalisation

According to some academics, globalisation is the result of Western culture and ideas having a hegemonic influence on the rest of the globe. Francis Fukuyama famously predicted "the end of history" and the victory of liberal capitalism in 1992, heralding previously unimaginable global unification. Many authors now claim that globalisation is a dialectical process, meaning that it comprises of opposing tendencies rather than bringing about a unified set of changes.

When it comes to the things we wear or consume, globalisation is frequently seen as a slow, Western-mandated homogeneity process (Latouche, 1996; Ritzer, 1996). Globalization may also lead to emotionally charged nationalisms (Smith, 1990) and a resurgence of the mythological certainties of "old traditions" (Morley and Robins, 1995), which disprove any notion of a really representational and shared identity and experience. Others have asserted that new hybridised identities are developing even while national identities are vanishing. More and more people are believed to be associated with several cultures as a result of these activities.

5.2   Gender in Globalization

The majority of mainstream research on globalisation, according to academics, has spoken relatively little about gender disparities and the experiences of women in various parts of the world. Given the common acceptance that globalisation can both divide and unify societies (Bauman, 1998; Robertson, 1992), analysts frequently draw attention to the uneven effects of globalisation, particularly in respect to various regions of the world, such as the "North" and the "South."

However, very few authors who write about globalisation go beyond a fleeting mention of the possibility of gendered globalisation processes and impacts. Although numerous female academics, like Saskia Sassen (1998) and Doreen Massey (1994), have written about the dynamics and processes related to globalisation, males have dominated the field's literature on the topic (and the discourse around it) up to this point. As a matter of fact, a wide range of feminist scholars, such Cynthia Enloe (1990) and Elspeth Probyn (1996), discuss topics that are unmistakably connected to globalisation, like inequality, belonging, and location, without using the terminology of globalisation.

Most globalisation theories have been macro-level and indicated a gender-neutral drive to the ongoing activities connected with it. For instance, Giddens convincingly discusses how globalisation is changing our lives in Runaway World (1999). 'Globalization isn't solely about what is "out there," remote, and far away from the person,' says Giddens, who is aware that most of the study on the topic is quite abstract. Traditional family structures are changing or being put under pressure in many areas of the world, especially as women demand greater equality, according to Giddens (p. 12).

Although this statement is not obviously incorrect, it is so broad as to be useless. There is a lot of study that looks skilled at describing in detail the intricate workings of international commerce and finance or the mandate of modern nation-states without taking into account how these intricate processes may be gendered. As a result, assessments of how gendered processes are created, sustained, and altered by the complexity of globalisation are absent from mainstream, male-dominated globalisation literature.

Some feminist academics have recently started to question the extremely abstract, gender-neutral understanding of globalisation. Gender matters: exploring globalisation and social change in the 21st century is the topic of a recent special issue of International Sociology. Esther Ngan-ling Chow (2003) contends that popular theories regarding globalisation and how it affects people's material, political, social, and cultural life at all levels are inaccurate. Women's views and experiences are particularly underrepresented in many theoretical discussions on globalisation. A additional observation made by Chow is that "when the gender problem is explored, the attention tends to be on the consequences of globalisation on women rather than on the implications of gender on globalisation" (p. 444).

In order to comprehend what globalisation is and how it is influenced by gendered ideologies and hierarchies, which in turn affect gendered institutions, relationships, and the experiences and identities of both men and women, gender definitely important (Chow, 2003). The fundamental principles of capitalism, market rationality, multinational businesses, and trade liberalisation are gendered processes founded on institutional frameworks that uphold unequal power relations between men and women (Kimmel, 2003). There are systematic connections between the global development of production, trade, and finance and the rise of women in these networks, which are gendered and have seen major growth in areas including export production, sex work, and domestic service (Pyle and Ward, 2003).

In the context of globalisation, a variety of transnational migratory patterns emerge, including a complex web of economic and social linkages that illustrate how civilizations throughout the world

are becoming more intertwined. Additionally, gendered family survival tactics may be a factor in international migration.

The feminization of export labour thus provides insights into the close intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and "North-South" in the processes and practises of what we call "globalisation" in its many forms, as well as how globalisation can result in the widening gap between the richer and poorer countries.

Previous feminist studies of women's migrant work have claimed that some types of transnational movement can be advantageous for some women. Women can be empowered, for example, by their contributions to family survival tactics through the creation of transnational homes (Boyd, 1989; Morokvasic, 1984). Without taking into account the gender norms that underlie hiring procedures in such companies, despite the fact that they are usually unsaid, it is impossible to comprehend how global, multinational enterprises operate.

5.3   Globalization and its Impact on Gender Equality

According to academics, while reacting to the pressures of globalisation, it is important to take into consideration the major gender variations and inequities that exist in many civilizations with regard to decision-making authority, participation, and rewards for work. Because of gender inequality and discrimination, which exist everywhere in the globe, feminist writers are particularly concerned that women may be adversely affected by the processes of globalisation to a higher degree than males. On the other hand, other people believe that globalisation may benefit women significantly. To ensure that the objectives of gender equality and the advancement of human potential are not compromised, it is vital to routinely assess the gender effect of change.

Globalization's impact on changing gender relations and its connection to gender equality have both been increasingly thoroughly documented. The Survey makes a significant addition to the understanding of globalisation from the standpoint of gender. While the poll concentrates on labour market involvement within the evolving workplace, further study is required to determine how globalisation is affecting other facets of life.

The effects of globalisation on gender relations and women continue to be ignored at the policy level both domestically and abroad. The macroeconomic and social development goals are being integrated by United Nations system organisations. To maintain the system's continued leadership in promoting gender equality, development, and peace within the context of globalisation, more has to be done to incorporate gender equality components in its normative, policy, and operational activity. In order to decide on further activities and initiatives for the full fulfillment of the Beijing pledges, one might reflect on the effects of globalisation through the Beijing + 5 process.

5.4   Globalization, Neo-liberalism and Women in Indian Context

A comprehensive economic reform programme aimed at structural adjustment in all sectors was announced with the turn of the year 1991, radically altering, if not undoing, more than four decades of development planning.

These policies were initially made public after the Congress regained power in 1991 and were subsequently carried out by the coalition government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party when it assumed office in 1996. However, "economic facts" shouldn't make us naive to the altered wider ideological context that has allowed a nation like India to enter the contentious globalisation debate as a relative latecomer to the stabilisation, structural adjustment, and liberalisation processes.

Globalization and liberalism are ideologies that seem to be inherently at odds with one another, if not outright antagonistic concepts. Their economic philosophy involves moving away from the state's welfare and production functions in favour of market and export-driven growth and the development of a consumer culture.

D.L. Sheth argues that the very beginning of globalisation has revitalized the entire spectrum of social movements and is even producing a "high degree of convergence on a wide range of issues concerning globalisation" in a recent article reviewing India's "micro-movements" from the 1970s to the present (Sheth 2004: 47).

Sheth's account has a lot of intriguing and useful elements. However, after correctly recognising how many social groups, including the women's movement, have adopted globalisation as their

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new frame of reference and focus, this leads to the dubious assertion that a "counter-discourse" of convergent perspectives is subsequently developing.

The diversity of the women's movement shows how opposing and varied viewpoints have actually been solidifying in recent years. Even when it is taken into account that these perspectives frequently concentrate on various aspects of liberalisation and globalisation, their diversity is still impressive given that they are all feminist and devoted to social justice. Similar public debates regarding the highly debatable nature of the new 'globalisation' context have not occurred, in contrast to the extensive debates that have taken place within the movement on issues like the debate over a uniform civil code or the issue of reservations for women in local self-government and in parliament.

It's time to think more deeply about viewpoints, whether they are taken unambiguously or with a great deal of doubt. Today, no conversation on poverty is complete without including globalisation, including its discourses, policies, and institutional changes.

The New Economic Policies have been criticised and fought by the women's movement's loudest and most consistent voices from its start a decade ago. Their premise is that globalisation can only begin to deepen processes of impoverishment for the majority by causing gaps between and within nations and regions to grow. Poor women will suffer particularly in this situation because they will have to shoulder more and more of the disproportionate burdens brought on by unequal resource distribution and subpar self-care, even as they put in more effort to make up for declining real incomes, cuts to social welfare, and privatisation of services. As more women work several jobs, their daughters will either do the same or take over the household, which will prevent them from going to school. Increased stress will also make it harder for males to deal, which manifests itself in things like rising aggression or a rise in desertions.

Following this line of reasoning, significant portions of the women's movement have been organising against economic reform on several occasions, whether it be due to concerns about the public sector's disinvestment, the working conditions in export processing zones, or food security subsidies.

The Indian Association of Women's Studies focused fully on the issue of the "New Economic Policy and its Implications for Women" during its 6th national conference in 1993 to demonstrate how seriously they took the declaration of the New Economic Policies in 1991. Marxists and ecofeminists like Vandana Shiva have a shared stance against multinational capital because they hold a fundamentally different worldview—one that is motivated by a desire to preserve the traditional local knowledge and relationship to nature that she attributes to women farmers in developing nations.

Shiva is opposed to the potential of "decentralised agricultural communities," which are in some way free of hierarchies—whether of ecology and economics, domestic or commodity production, natural or human economies, or relations of gender. A series of phases of globalisation, including colonisation by Europe, the universalization of production and consumption in the name of "development," and finally the current trade treaties focused on biodiversity and genetic resources.

The Marxist-Feminist Rohini Hensman approaches the issue from a radically different angle, believing that growing global economic integration is a crucial step in the development of capitalism. She goes on to say that this necessitates a correspondingly global level of intervention and struggle, whether through the encouragement of coordinated class actions by globally disenfranchised workers or by utilising global norms like the hotly contested WTO directive to link trade with labour standards in developing countries like India.

She goes on to say that groups like women workers in third-world environments, who may stand to gain more from "concerned action to shape the global order in accordance with a women's agenda for justice and equity as well as caring and nurturing," do not make sense for the anti-globalization movement.

Omvedt contends that the very populations whom the development era effectively suppressed may benefit from globalisation and the new economic order. Her analysis is predicated on the expectation that, on the one hand, globalised markets will restrain the Indian bourgeoisie, its unprofitable monopolies, and the ineffective upper caste state bureaucracy, and, on the other hand, provide the small farmer with a better global price for produce that was previously underpriced because of state regulation.

She said, polemically, "If the alternative is between a somewhat labor-intensive multinational connected firm in a rural region employing women and a high caste capitalist Indian economy with a highly privileged all-male workforce...producing steel or autos, then we would favour the multinational" (Omvedt and Gala 1993).

The most significant of the numerous concerns that this argument, which has some similarities to other feminization arguments, poses is the following: Are these previously underrepresented groups—peasants, dalits, members of backward castes, and women—socially prepared to benefit from globalisation, and on what grounds may we anticipate that the formerly dominating urban classes and castes would lose out in the current realignments taking place?

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), which portrays itself as a trade union of underprivileged, self-employed workers and has over 200,000 members, is an example of a diverse voice. Though there are more recent ones in a few other states as well, Gujarat is home to its primary centres. They take an economically empowering stance toward issues affecting women.

Their reaction to liberalisation was, in my opinion, pragmatic. They want to take a "positive" approach by developing the necessary social security systems that could potentially address the needs of the vast majority of the country's workers. They are aware that the living standards of the poor may have decreased after structural adjustment was started and that the previously secure entitlements of the organised sector may also get eroded.

They have proposed the idea of "the people's sector"—unorganized labour and self-employed producers in rural and urban India—as an alternative to the public sector and the private sector, which served as the foundation of India's experiment with a mixed economy during the development era and were the targets of all national policies (Qhabvala 2000). It is perhaps not surprising that SEWA has been chosen as a model by international organisations like the World Bank, not just for third-world countries but even for first-world countries who are seeking to dismantle their welfare systems in favour of neoliberalism, given their emphasis on women's economic agency processes of decentralisation and increased levels of financial and managerial participation by the "beneficiary" population. Thus, SEWA is at the centre of several hotly contested topics.

The arguments about how to define poverty in the 1970s, which centred on the proper caloric intake metrics to employ to identify persons living below the poverty line, have long since passed. However, due to the influence of economic ideology, the physical conceptions of inferiority, lack of entitlements, and unmet fundamental requirements still rule today's arguments. Additionally, there has been a trend over the past ten years to support poverty-related conflicts in contrast to those asserted in the name of so-called "identity politics," particularly in the aftermath of the return of caste and community politics to the national scene. Such misgivings have been voiced in the women's movement as well. This polarization blocks the chance of actually transforming our understanding of poverty itself. One of the shortcomings of the developmental era, it may be said, was its inability to explain inequality and hierarchies, such as those based on caste and community, other than as remnants of the past. In order for previously largely invisible structures of disparity based on caste, community, and region to gain some degree of recognition in their own right, they needed major national crisis points, such as the anti-Mandal agitation of 1990 against the implementation of reservations for the Other Backward Castes in administration and higher education, the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the anti-Muslim riots that followed, and the rise of new regionalisms, among others.

Recent events in regions as dissimilar as Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are only a sign of how the most savage disputes may occur between communities that are strictly geographically close to one another. Additionally, there is a longer history of anti-reservation movements that have prevented the middle class's small but never invisible members of lower castes from forgetting who they are. This tactic has been used to lethal effect in Gujarat to successfully destroy the lives and livelihoods of all classes of Muslims.

The worsening of female-male sex ratios, which are sharpening outside the classes of the poor, has caused significant anxiety in more recent years. This has led to speculations about the "paradox" of the "prosperity effect," the detrimental effects of declining fertility on women, and the discrepancy between measures of "backward" districts according to economic and gender indicators. Results from the 2001 Census, in particular, where child female/male ratios in the 0–6 age group have sharply decreased in numerous districts of the nation's most economically developed states, particularly in metropolitan areas, have given rise to a variety of dystrophic hypotheses.

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5.5   <u>Gender and Female Migrants AContemporary Issue</u>

Globalization has caused worldwide migration to increase at an unprecedented rate during the past 20 years in the 21st century. International migrant populations have been steadily rising. More individuals than ever before are residing outside of their nation of birth at the present moment. Policymakers, academics, and international organisations are becoming more and more interested in the effects of international migration on everyone involved: the migrant, the host community, the country of origin, and the country of destination. The globalisation process, which has resulted in an increase in movement of individuals on a temporary basis, as transnational citizens, or as permanent migrants, is expected to contribute to the phenomenon's continued growth in the ensuing decades.

However, as a result of the ongoing recession that has affected almost all of the world's economies, rising unemployment and layoffs have had a negative impact on immigrants, who have been made the scapegoat of this upheaval, and the destination countries have begun to enact policies that are more protectionist and discriminatory. This casts doubt on the prospects for both current and future immigrants from underdeveloped nations. When immigrants fall into a vulnerable demographic, particularly women, worries about their safety and well-being become even more prominent. Women are already at risk of exploitation during the migration process due to their lack of educational credentials. Additionally, when borders are tightened and legal immigration is restricted, more people migrate illegally, putting women at danger of prostitution, trafficking, and exploitation. Hence, a serious effort is required to explore and unveil the female face of international migration from India to control and limit their exploitation in the migration cycle.

Trends in the migration of women

The growing presence of women among migrants is one of the key aspects of globalised international migration. Women are currently clearly visible and actively participating in the global market as a result of the recent economic and social developments. The number of women going to Asia outnumbered men. Nearly 65 percent of Filipinos who left the nation for employment were women.

The majority of female migrants, like the majority of all migrants, are now residing in industrialised nations, notably in North America (20 million) and Europe (29 million), where they exceed males among foreign migrants. In spite of the large numbers of female migrants, the subject of gender and migration has not received the deserved attention and policy implementation.

In contrast to the past, when women travelled mostly for marriage or family reunification, a considerable number of them are travelling for job, as shown by statistical statistics. Women provide a large economic contribution to families and communities, which has been correlated with their significant participation in migrant flows. The main sector influencing women's labour migration abroad is domestic employment. Additionally, women's migration patterns exhibit a remarkable diversity, and this diversity has grown in tandem with recent economic and social developments in both the sending and receiving nations. In terms of the reasons for and effects of migration, gender strongly influences migration trends.

Although the main reason for female migration is still marriage, there is a growing trend of female movement for employment. For male and female migrant labourers, there are separate labour markets. Females predominate in certain service occupations including domestic work, the care industry, and the entertainment sector, whereas men predominate in production and construction. Importantly, from the standpoint of the sending nation, women often remit a far bigger portion of their earnings than males do; as a result, the source nations have begun to see the advantages of female migration.

Job profiles

It is critical to comprehend the connections between the status of women in the labour market, the kind of jobs they hold, and the immigration laws and entrance methods in the countries of destination. The type of employment that migrant women conduct contributes to a significant amount of their issues with discrimination and exploitation at work.

Today's changes, including the rise in male unemployment, the decline in demand for male labour as a result of the economic slowdown in some sectors, and the shift in the priority of the economy

to the service sectors in both the countries of origin and destination, have increased the burden on women.

Low skilled jobs

Globally, the majority of migrant women make a living doing tasks that are seen as low-skilled, poorly paid, frequently done in the home or private sphere, or connected to the growth of the service industry. Such occupations are typically economically undervalued and socially despised. The most pervasive issues with domestic labor are the low compensation and long hours, the undervalued positions of domestic workers, and the very intimate ties with employers, all of which make it challenging for employees to get their agreed-upon income or take time off. Domestic employees' health and safety conditions at home are rarely good, and if they become unwell, they risk losing their jobs in addition to not being paid. Psychological, physical and sexual abuses are very common. We can clearly observe the nexus between sexism and racism as these areas are not preferred by the native women because of the social stigma attached to this area.

Skilled Jobs

The percentage of women working at all levels of employment, even the highest levels, has increased as a result of rising female literacy rates and changes in the global economy's structure. Women have been expanding their engagement in the labour force and in middle- and high-level jobs as well as in the service sector. This increase in female labour force participation and female migration has not just been at the level of the rank and file in the manufacturing sector.

Migration of skilled workers is diverse in terms of gender distribution, jobs, and working circumstances (Iredale, 2004). Female migrants face a highly gendered labour market in the country of destination where men predominate in the field of transnational corporations and in the Information Technology and Scientific sectors (HRST), accounting, and engineering, with fewer women in these sectors. This is true even though native workers also experience a gendered labour market. The predominance of one sex over another in a specific migratory stream may be explained by a gendered demand structure. As they look for work, female migrants face racial and ethnic prejudice.

5.6   Trends and Issues of Female Migration

India has a history of undermining and restricting female migration due to its largely patriarchal culture. Indian women have been moving more often recently, both as independent workers and dependent family members, in line with worldwide trends. They have moved to Western industrialised nations, Gulf nations, Australasia, and other Asian nations. High-skilled female migrants from India are also on the rise, both as workers and as students pursuing higher education. In addition, many women cross the border into India in search of employment via both legal and criminal ways, or through human trafficking, making India a place of origin, transit, and destination for women who have been forced into prostitution or trafficked as goods.

Therefore, it is important that migration policies and programmes include gender equality, pay close attention to the problems and effects of female migration, and work to empower women. To guarantee that women may enjoy their human rights and reach their full potential, efforts must be done. It is important to provide migrants, especially migrant women, the ability to participate in decision-making.

Summary

- The extension of capitalist market relations and a genuinely integrated global economy are the outcomes of globalisation, which is generally understood to imply the growing linkages of social, economic, cultural, and political life.
- According to academics, the discourse of globalization has relatively paid less attentionon gender disparities and the experiences of women in various parts of the world. It has been observed that women's views and experiences are particularly underrepresented in many theoretical discussions on globalisation.
- Gender matters: exploring globalisation and social change in the 21st century is the topic of a recent special issue of International Sociology.
- The effects of globalisation on gender relations and women continue to be ignored at the policy level both domestically and abroad.

Gender Based Sociological Analysis

- Criticism came up against New Economic Policies as it believed that poor women will suffer because they will have to shoulder more and more of the disproportionate burdens brought on by unequal resource distribution and subpar self-care, even as they put in more effort to make up for declining real incomes, cuts to social welfare, and privatisation of services.
- Overseas migration has been steadily rising and more individuals than ever before are residing outside of their nation of birth at the present moment. In contrast to the past, when women travelled mostly for marriage or family reunification, it is found that a considerable number of them are travelling for job.
- India has a history of undermining and restricting female migration due to its largely patriarchal culture. Indian women have been moving more often recently, both as independent workers and dependent family members, in line with worldwide trends.

Keywords

Globalization

Neo-liberalism

Gender equality

Female migration

Labour market

Self Assessment

1. The extension of capitalist market relations and a genuinely integrated global economy are the outcomes of _____
   A. Globalization
   B. Education
   C. Global economy
   D. Localization

2. The fact that _____ has led to "time-space compression," which connects faraway regions and lifestyles together, is another important feature of globalisation.
   A. Information and communications technology
   B. Industrialization
   C. Urbanization
   D. None of the above

3. Globalization's forces are real, and they have an impact _____
   A. Nowhere
   B. Western society
   C. Upper class group
   D. Everywhere

4. Some scholars have the view that, globalisation is the result of _____ and ideas having a hegemonic influence on the rest of the globe.
   A. Asian culture
   B. Eastern culture
   C. Western culture
   D. All the above

5. Which of the following predicted "the end of history" and the victory of liberal capitalism?
   A. Francis Fukuyama
   B. Anthony Giddens
   C. George Ritzer
   D. Manuel Castells

6. Globalisation is a _____
A. One-way process
B. Dialectical process
C. Hierarchical process
D. None of the above

7. The assessments of how gendered processes are created, sustained, and altered by the complexity of globalisation are absent from mainstream, male-dominated globalisation literature.
A. True
B. False

8. Women's views and experiences are particularly underrepresented in many theoretical discussions on globalisation.
A. True
B. False

9. The fundamental principles of capitalism, market rationality, multinational businesses, and trade liberalisation are _____ founded on institutional frameworks that uphold unequal power relations between men and women

10. Feminist writers are particularly concerned that women may be adversely affected by the processes of globalisation _____
A. To a higher degree than males
B. To a lower degree than males
C. Both a and b
D. Neither a nor b

11. It is believed that, today, no conversation on poverty is complete without including_____, including its discourses, policies, and institutional changes.
A. Globalisation
B. Localization
C. Universalism
D. Parochialism

12. SEVA stands for?

13. The anti-Mandal agitation of 1990 was associated with _____

14. Globalization has caused worldwide migration to increase at an unprecedented rate during the past 20 years in the _____

15. India has a history of undermining and restricting female migration due to its largely _____.

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	A	3.	D	4.	C	5.	A
6.	B	7.	A	8.	A	9.	Gendered processes	10.	A

| 11. | A | 12. | The Self Employed Women's Association | 13. | The implementation of reservations for the Other Backward Castes in administration and higher education | 14. | 21st century | 15. | Patriarchal culture |

Review Questions

1. Write a short note on globalization.
2. Discuss gender in globalization.
3. Critically examine globalization and gender equity.
4. Elucidate female migration in contemporary period.
5. Explain issue and challenges of female migration.

Further Readings

- Amy S. Wharton. (2005). The Sociology of Gender: An introduction to theory and Practice. USA: Blackwell.

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Web Links

Unit 06: Economic

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Objectives

- to understand the concept of marginalization and also elucidate the multifaceted context of marginality,
- understand the sexual based division of labour and the gendered definition of work,
- to understand the sexual division of labour especially in the context of economic aspect.

Introduction

The process of marginalisation occurs when something or someone is pushed into a group's frame of reference and given a lower priority. This is a societal phenomena in which a minority or sub-group is marginalised and its demands are ignored. Different scholars interpret marginalisation differently in different settings, suggesting that it is a nebulous and diverse concept.

According to Ghana S. Gurung and Michael Kollmair, the concept of marginality is generally used to analyse socioeconomic, political, and cultural spheres, where disadvantaged people struggle to gain access to resources and full participation in social life. In other words, marginalized people might be socially, economically, politically and legally ignored, excluded, or neglected, and, therefore vulnerable to livelihood change.

According to Sommers et. al., "Socio-economic marginality is a condition of socio-spatial structure and process in which components of society and space in a territorial unit are observed to lag behind an expected level of performance in economic, political and social wellbeing, compared to the average conditions in the territory as a whole".

The term "marginalisation" is commonly used in sociology, economics, and politics. From genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other intolerant acts/activities on one hand, to more fundamental economic and societal disadvantages on the other, marginalisation can take various forms. Furthermore,

marginalisation refers to individuals or groups living on the periphery of society. Their circumstances may be historical and cultural in nature, as they straddle social classes or cultural groupings without fully integrating into them. In the present era of postcolonial, post-modern, and in a society dominated by market forces, the phrase has numerous connotations and nuances.

As a result, marginalisation is frequently depicted as a societal process in which people are driven to society's peripheries or "margins." It is defined as a series of techniques through which individuals or communities are socially excluded, denied access to, or denied participation in social and political activities that are required for society integration. Individuals, groups, sections, and communities who are marginalised are denied the same rights, privileges, opportunities, and resources as other members. Scholars used the term `marginalized' as synonymously with the term `oppressed' in comparison to an `oppressor'. For example, in his renowned book, 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed,' Paolo Freire used the phrase, while Karl Marx used the term 'proletariat' to describe the state of the working class in relation to capitalism. Antonio Gramsci coined the terms 'subaltern'. Many other terms such as exploited, vulnerable, discriminated, disadvantaged, oppressed, socially excluded, alienated, or downtrodden, have been employed by different researchers.

Robert Park was the first to establish the concept of marginality (1928). In truth, marginalisation is a global phenomenon that impacts millions of people. People that are marginalised have a limited amount of influence over their lives and the resources they have access to. As a result, they became disabled and vulnerable, unable to contribute to society. This has a significant impact on human development as well as society as a whole. This restricts their options and means of surviving.

In cultural anthropology, one of the major topics of study is marginalisation, which examines ethnic groups and their social situations. At one level, it can take many shapes such as class, caste, gender, community, and so on, while at another level, it can take the form of groups experiencing economic and social suffering. In a country like India, which has seen great socio-political transformations in both the pre-independence and post-independence periods, there may still be marginalised groups on several levels.

In the Indian subcontinent and especially within the fold of Hindu social orders, the marginalised are designated to be the out- castes represented by the 'low born' belonging to the social categories of "untouchables" and others practising unclean, ascribed occupations and manual activities of various kinds. They are stigmatised and considered impure under the traditional cultural framework of the varna system, and are kept apart from a variety of social and cultural interactions with the upper varnas. They are socially, culturally, politically, economically, and even geographically conditioned to live on the periphery of society.

6.1 <u>Marginalisation Theory</u>

Generally, three explanations are offered for the emergence and the continuation in the practice of untouchability: first, racial theorists believe that the root for emergence of untouchability lies in racial issue. According to them, the origin of the practice of untouchability located in the two different races differentiated by colour that is the touchables were white Aryans who invaded India and conquered the black race native, known as Dasas. With the passage of time, the cultural segregation increased between these two races. However, there were strong criticisms against racial theory, for instance. Dr. Ambedkar rejected this theory and claims that there was no racial distinction between Aryans and Dasas.

Second, religious theories:according to Religious theory, caste was the core of the Hindu social order. Caste was legitimised and given as divine basis and religious sanction through the Shastras. It was based on the Hindu caste doctrine that men are created from different parts of the divinity. Many sociologists argue that in Hinduism, purity and impurity are the central values governing interpersonal and inter-group relationships. The third one is known asconsensus theory, not only ignores the multiplicity in Hindu beliefs and practices, but also highlighted the struggles and resistance of Dalits against their position in the caste hierarchy and the Hindu religious theory.

Many of these social and cultural stigmas are extended to women, tribal communities, and religious minorities in addition to caste groups. Women are consistently marginalised in favour of men. As a result, marginalisation is defined as the social process of being relegated to a lower social status. People are marginalised when their fundamental rights are violated, decreasing their economic and social status. They are subjected to discrimination and inequity.

6.2 Gender And Marginalization

Throughout the world, women and "other" genders are marginalised. Millions of women and girls around the world are victims of physical or psychological violence and discrimination every year, with serious effects for their health and human capital. Gender discrimination, it turns out, begins in the mother's womb. Although it varies from civilization to society, country to country, and even within the geographical context, the male-female ratio tends to be unbalanced.

Only in exceptional situations, such as selective abortion or infanticide, may such instances occur. Despite efforts by countries with such imbalanced sex ratios at birth to implement legislation targeted at avoiding gender selection during pregnancy, the problem's intricacy necessitates breaking down traditional gender attitudes inside cultures. Gender biases against girls manifest themselves in a variety of ways in various communities shortly after a baby is born. Food allocation, household healthcare expenditure, education, and attitudes and conduct toward girl children all have discriminatory practises. Boys are more likely than girls to receive better care and attention. Every community teaches males and girls various norms, which influence practically every part of their lives and destiny.These prescribe norms can be vividly seen in dress codes, qualities, and roles and responsibility. However, these roles and responsibilities are varies from time to time and from culture to culture.

Despite international attempts to promote gender equality in school attendance, discrepancies exist in many low-income countries, especially in rural areas (UNESCO, 2003). The difference is due to cultural norms that cause families, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, to feel that boys' education is more economically beneficial than girls' education. The first step in stopping females from growing their human capital is denying them access to education. Women's health and wellbeing are harmed by a lack of economic autonomy, unequal remuneration, and an imbalance in the number of working (paid and unpaid) hours, all of which increase their risk of sliding into poverty (UNFPA, 2007).

Another area where women are placed in a submissive position is in the distribution of power. When it comes to marriage, girls are usually married to older men, which isolates them from their parents, causes them to drop out of school, and makes it difficult for them to communicate with their partners about any aspect of their lives, including decisions about their child and their own health. Women also experience pressure from their partners and family members in their new residences. Women are frequently the victims of domestic violence perpetrated by their spouse.

Thus, women's subordination is also reflected in various socio-cultural practices such as genital mutilation (FGM), which affects between 100 and 140 million women worldwide. Moreover, girls and women around the world have to face the daily risk of being raped (WHO, 2007), abused (WHO, 2005) or trafficked (WHO, 2012). Women in low-income countries tend to have higher risk of victimization than women in high-income countries. It is also true that based on the last Global Gender Gap report there is no country in the world in which the gender gap has been closed (World Economic Forum, 2014).

6.3   Sexual Based Division of Labour

The division of labour can be explain as organization of work into specialized roles, which means the division of work process into a number of parts, each part undertaken by a separate person or group of persons (Mitchell, 1968). The division of labour or work process may be based on age, sex, class, race etc. and it exist in almost all societies. The most basic division of labour appears to be founded on sex or gender (Haralambos 1980).

Men and women appear to divide labour in practically all known societies, ranging from the primitive hunter–gatherer pattern of society to agricultural and herding communities, all the way to today's industrialised and contemporary world. Regardless, the form it takes may differ from culture to culture and from time to time, albeit there are some universal features (Wood and Eagly, 2001).

There is a long legacy of explanations for the origins of gender roles in the social sciences disciplines, particularly in women/gender studies, that have focused on patriarchy and male dominance of women.

From promiscuity through matrilineal succession to patriarchy, nineteenth-century anthropologists such as Lewis H. Morgan built a series of transformations through which human society was said to have progressed. Furthermore, Friedrich Engels' 'Origin of the Family' was based on this viewpoint, and it informed later feminist thoughts.

Following Engels, de Beauvoir (1953) and Mitchell (1966) emphasised the necessity of private property for men's subjection of women. The beginnings of gender roles are linked to the origins of male dominance in these interpretations, as the division of work into public and domestic realms is seen as the foundation of men's control over women.

Cancian (1987) traced the origins of public and private labour divisions to the early nineteenth century in American and British society. The office, it was said, became more impersonal and instrumental as it became isolated from the warm intimate private sphere as it became detached from the home and family. Men's and women's personality qualities, as well as prejudices about them, evolved from the social framework that separated men's and women's realms of activity.

Social role theory also emphasised the division of labour as a source of sex differences in personality and behaviour (Eagly et al., 2000). These sex differences were viewed as a consequence of a social structure that involved dividing the labour of men and women into full-time paid work outside the home and unpaid work in the home.

6.4   Domestic (or Household) Division of Labour

The domestic (or household) division of labour refers to how duties and tasks for the continuing maintenance of a domestic home and the people who live in it are distributed among family members. The terms 'sexual' and 'gendered' divisions of labour are sometimes used to acknowledge that, historically and today, there are significant inequalities between men and women in their responsibility for and performance of the various tasks required for everyday living in a family household.A 'traditional' domestic division of labour is one in which men have primary responsibility for the necessary economic provision of their family household (via laboring/working outside the home for a wage) and women have primary responsibility for the management and performance of household activities and caring work, which has developed especially since industrialisation (such as cleaning, laundry, shopping, cooking, and caring for children). Women's domestic work is unpaid, mostly (but not always) done at home, and is important for the household's and its members' day-to-day maintenance.

6.5   Debates and Discussions on Sexual Based Division of Labour

The concept of the domestic division of labour especially came to prominence in academic debates in the 1970s. There are different perspectives about the origin of male favoured sexual division of labour in the society.

Traditionalists argue that sexual division of labour as natural, God-given, complementary and teleologically even essential for the continuance of human race. For them it is originated due to the biological differences between male and female and its roots are in the prehistoric cultures. Women's biological weakness is said to have been at the base of the social institutionalisation of harder jobs for men and simpler household chores for women.

Another viewis that the subordination of women by men is the basis on which early civilization has formed and thatthe sexual division of labour has maintained a reciprocal state of dependency between the sexes.

The Marxist argument: Using Marxist theories, feminists argued that what women do within the home, although unpaid, is 'work' or 'labour'; in other words, a form of productive activity like men's waged labour. The Marxist argument is that women's subordination and division of labour by sex originated in lines with the emergence of social differentiation and patriarchy caused by the historical changes in the modes of production and elated economic structure.

In an attempt to explain the traditional home division of labour, a number of feminist theories have emerged. Della Costa (1972), for example, claimed that the domestic division of labour promotes capitalism. Unpaid housework and care work fill labour power on a daily and generational basis, sustaining the capitalist dynamic by contributing to the development of surplus value.

Other theorists emphasised the link between patriarchy and capitalism. Hartmann (1982), for example, stated that, prior to the formation of capitalism, a patriarchal system existed in which men controlled the labour force of women and children in the home. Men learnt hierarchical

organisation and control as a result of this, which they later utilised to separate paid jobs to their own advantage as capitalism emerged.

6.6 Job Segregation Between Men and Women

This segregation means that men are more likely than women to hold jobs with higher monetary rewards. Women became dependent on men as a result of their low economic status. As a result of this domestic division of labour, women's positions in the labour market are weakened. The labour market, in turn, perpetuates the hierarchical household division of labour, and vice versa' (1982: 448). According to Hartmann, patriarchy and capitalism have reached a "mutual accommodation," resulting in a "vicious spiral" of disadvantage for women.

Delphy and Leonard (1992), in contrast to Hartmann, emphasis on patriarchy in their explanation of household division of labour. They assert that "women's continued subjugation in Western society is due in large part to men's exploitation of women's domestic labour," and that "women's oppression is directly profitable to men and perhaps only indirectly helpful to capitalism" (1992: 29). (1992: 35). When it comes to selling their labour power to employers in the capitalist labour market, these are the gain guys. Several studies have looked into the issue of changing domestic labour divisions. The majority of domestic work was still done by women. Men, on the other hand, had greatly expanded their participation in domestic chores, and there had also been a considerable increase in more 'egalitarian' relationships, according to the study.

From all perspectives, one general observation is that the sexual division of labour is skewed toward women, manifesting in subordination and sex stereotyping of women in the home and in the workplace. This gender divide in the workplace, as well as the distinction between hard and soft employment, has resulted in a devaluing of women's work and has incorrectly maintained the misconception that women do not and cannot engage in physically demanding work. As a result, women's domestic and child-care activities are considered as extensions of their physiology, and women's labour is conceived as domestic, private, and personal labour, which is unpaid and unrecognised.

6.7 Definition of Work Through the Gender Lens

Work, in general, is an activity that can be classified as either economic or non-economic. Labor as an activity, on the other hand, is characterised as a gendered definition of work when it is defined, understood, acknowledged, appreciated, and distributed according to genders, that is, when it is distinguished between males and females. As a result, a contrast is created between the sorts of labour done by women and men.

It was always assumed that any activity or task performed by men was considered "work," and that men had the right to work; however, all activities or tasks performed by women within the home were not considered "work," and thus were never valued highly because household activities/tasks were not considered economic activities. The fact that domestic labour is unpaid has resulted in the obscurity of women's work and its importance. As a result, males became the breadwinners, while women who did housework were viewed as individual dependents, i.e. on their husbands. Work was therefore gendered not just within the house, but also outside of it.

Women are also thought to be favoured for activities and duties that demand abilities that women utilise in housework and servicing the family, sometimes known as feminine labour. Several other economic pursuits were also gender-segregated, with socially determined roles for women and men. Men and women have varied economic potential as a result of such segregation or division of labour. As a result, it became simpler for employers to influence women's earnings and pay them less.

With the advent of information and advance technology, men are preferred for such jobs which include more control and more amount of decision making. Women are preferred for home-based work. As a result, it increases the gap between men and women in nature of work. Thus, gender plays a very important role in determining the type of work that is expected over to males and females.

Working women outside the house is becoming supported in Indian society, which is transitioning from traditionalism to modernization. Despite the fact that modern industry arrived in India after it had already established itself in other nations, women were nevertheless humiliated and exploited under the name of weak sex, just as they were in other countries. The current state of women in

India is deplorable, and they are still a long way from achieving equality with males. Despite the fact thatour constitution guarantees some fundamental rights and specific protection for women, they are nevertheless treated as second-class citizens, economically, socially, and politically. This is especially true for the great majority of rural women, who are illiterate and unaware of their legal rights.

In the urban areas, with the spread of education and the increase in the number of women working outside their houses, the situation is however turning to a bit better. The demand for women labour has been increasing consistently which has resulted in rising proportion of women to enter the total workforce all over the country. Thus, development of Indian economy cannot be possible by neglecting the women who constitute large segment of Indian population.

6.8   Traditional Division of Men's and Women's Work

Women's job contributes significantly to a caste group's occupational continuity. Of course, new professions' growth and open recruitment to occupations have been important aspects of social change in Indian society.

Simultaneously, there are considerable continuities in the caste-occupation relationship. Agriculture still lends a unique identity to a vast number of castes of "traditional" cultivators, despite the fact that it is now available to all castes. Similarly, certain vocations are reserved for members of specific castes.

In these occupations, closely tied to caste, the work of women carried out as members of households – the basic units of production – is indispensable. For instance, it is difficult for weavers & potters to carry on the complex processes of their craft without the continuous help of the women & children of the household, who in turn have well-defined tasks.

In horticulture, women often carry the major burden of work. Despite regional variations, these examples highlight the fact that occupational continuity in a large measure depends on women.

Women are frequently forced to take on the task of continuing caste-based vocations and managing the home in times of transition. When males leave their conventional occupations, for example, the full load of occupational work typically falls on women. Furthermore, many men travel to towns, leaving their families behind in pursuit of new employment, while women continue to contribute in the form of services or crafts. As a result, women's contributions to occupational continuity are limited by patrilineal constraints as well as caste-based impositions and limitations.

Women were also expected to support the males of the household who were trying to acquire skills for entering new occupations or explore independent sources of income. For instance, boys were being sent to school while girls joined their mothers at household work at an early age.

6.9   Division Of Women's and Men's Work Today

Women's participation in employment is not only mediated by gender, but also by caste, ethnicity, age & marital status. Dalit and tribal women have significantly higher work force participation rates than the rest of Indian women. Tribal women have higher participation in informal commercial activities like vegetables, eatable items and other daily household products, yet their income is for the family; and it is the husband or the father who controls their income.

It has been found that when women's economic standing increases, they withdraw from the labour force in upper caste and Muslim households.

Women's employment opportunities are similarly influenced by their age. Employers like to hire young ladies who are single. Women who are married are not a positive indicator for employers since it is expected that they would be unable to work long hours, particularly after the birth of a child. When it comes to males, however, it is a favourable indicator for the employer since he may assume that the wife will take care of the family and that his male employee would contribute well at work.

Women are also readily replaced by new technology, and as employment needs for competent and trained people change, they are either driven out or pushed down. The government has recently developed skill and vocational training programmes and policies. Despite their best efforts, many vocational training programmes fall short of expectations due to inadequacies in their rules and programmes.

With the turn of the twenty-first century, India's urban labour market began to feminise as a result of flexible labour. Women are now heavily absorbed by the urban economy, but they are mostly employed in low-wage, insecure jobs. They were compelled to accept salary discrimination in most positions when they were replaced by males. They are obligated to do so because they have no other choice.

The combined responsibility of homemaking and career building for modern educated women leads to a difficult challenge for women all over the world. Despite the fact that working women's vocational options are evolving in the last decade, the majority of employed women still work in relatively narrow clusters of occupations such as education, health professions, and administrative and secretarial labour.

Even today, the international business world remains gender-neutral when it comes to hiring women. Focusing on the carrier, urban educated women choose to remain single or marry late, and if they are married, they also postpone childbirth. As a result of all of this, women today have the same position as men in the workplace.

6.10 Differential Wages Between Men and Women

Wage differentials refer to wage disparities or discrimination between males and females in the context of employment or jobs. Women are paid less than males, implying that men and women are compensated differently. Wage disparities are frequent, and they may be found in a variety of nations and economies.

It raised a crucial question: why do men and women earn different amounts of money? The answer is straightforward; we already know the expected general response to this question, having learned about the debates and controversies surrounding sexually based labour division. That is to say, the income disparity between men and women is linked to the role of women in both the household and public spheres.

It also promotes women's subjugation in employment, in the home, in the community, and in public life. Without a doubt, India's constitution provides equal job opportunities and mandates the state to provide equal livelihood, equal pay for equal effort, and decent working conditions for all. Despite the government's best efforts, women's economic standing lags considerably behind that of their male counterparts.

Conclusions

Women work the most; paradoxically they earn the least in life. Thus, women's special social responsibilities, subordinate status in society, patriarchal family, socio-economic backwardness and proneness for occupation in the unorganized sector with low products and marginalization in employment opportunities account for their poor or low earning capacity. Thus, it would not be wrong to say, the labour market is not neutral for men and women. It favours men against women. Gender inequalities exist in almost all sectors. The division of labour is highly gender biased in urban informal sector.

Women's earnings are always seen as secondary or supplemental. Given the state of the labour market, the majority of women work in the informal sector.

Differences in education and work experience account for the salary disparity. Although it is only a tiny element, discrimination against women is a significant one. Occupational segregation by gender continues to be a global phenomenon, notwithstanding the tremendous and widespread expansion in female paid work in recent years. It is a key measure of women's underemployment in the labour market. It results in poorer compensation, lower prestige, and fewer job options. As a result, pay disparities between men and women are a major cause of gender discrimination.

Summary

Marginalisation is frequently depicted as a societal process in which people are driven to society's peripheries or 'margins.' It is defined as a series of techniques through which individuals or communities are socially excluded, denied access to, or denied participation in social and political activities that are required for society integration. Individuals, groups, sections, and communities who are marginalised are denied the same rights, privileges, opportunities, and resources as other members. Gender marginalization is commonly found throughout the world. Millions of women

and girls around the world are victims of physical or psychological violence and discrimination every year.

In some societies, women are placed in a submissive position in the distribution of power, decision making and freedom in all facets of life. In context of financial position, men are more likely than women to hold jobs with higher monetary rewards.

In traditional based occupation, despite significant contributions from women, they are still put in the secondary positions. Women's participation in employment is not only mediated by gender, but also other social-cultural categories such caste, ethnicity, age & marital status. Women are also easily replaced by men when comes to the access of new technology based occupation. Further, wage disparities or discrimination are not uncommon between males and females in the context of employment or jobs.

The division of labour can be explain as organization of work into specialized roles, which means the division of work process into a number of parts, each part undertaken by a separate person or group of persons (Mitchell 1968). A division of labour between men and women would seem to occur in nearly all known societies. From the beginning of the twentieth century up until the 1960s, British census data indicates that women made up less than one-third of the total paid labour force (Hakim 1979). A common view is that the sexual division of labour is women biased and it manifests the subordination and sex stereotyping of women in the family as well as in the labour market. This sexual division of labour and the dichotomy in terms of hard and soft jobs has lead to the subsequent devaluation of women's work and activities. In addition, it has wrongly perpetuated the myth that women do not and cannot engage in work that requires physical labour.

Keywords

Gender

Work

Marginalisation

Division of labour

Wage gap between men and women

Self Assessment

1. Gendered based division of labour
   A. Based on gender-constructed conceptions of appropriate work.
   B. A division of labour that has led to an increase in women's compensation throughout the world
   C. Shows a division that indicates the "double burden" of work for men.
   D. All the above

2. What is mean by myth of protection?
   A. It portrays national security policies
   B. It is a myth that challenge the traditional gender roles
   C. It shows men as protectors and women as protected
   D. None of the above

3. Which of the following divisions is well known in India?
   A. Division based on creed
   B.) Division based on class
   C.) Division based on gender
   D.) Division based on caste

4. Gender division of labour refers to
   A. Biological differences between women and men
   B. Imbalance sex ratio
   C. Discrimination in women in political participation
   D. Unequal roles assigned by the society to men and women

5. Marginalisation refers to individuals and groups living on the
A. Core area of society
B. Periphery of society
C. Centre zone of society
D. Semi-core of society

6. Marginalization is frequently depicted as a societal process in which people are driven to society's _____

7. Choose the correct option
A. Karl Marx- Proletariat
B. Antonio Gramsci- Proleteriat
C. Paolo Freire- Subaltern
D. Durkheim – Pedagogy of Oppressed

8. Marginalization is a _____ phenomenon that impacts millions of people
A. National
B. Regional
C. Global
D. Local

9. The most basic division of labour appears to be founded on _____
A. Sex/Gender
B. Age
C. Ethnicity
D. Religion

10. Which of the following considered that sexual division of labour is natural?
A. Traditionalists
B. Marxists
C. Post-modernists
D. Feminists

11. The advent of information and advance technology _____ between men and women in nature of work
A. Reduces the gap
B. Increases the gap
C. Neutralizes the gap
D. Balanced the gap

12. Choose the correct statement.
A. Women's participation in employment is not only mediated by gender,.
B. Women's participation in employment is not only mediated by gender, but also by caste, ethnicity, age & marital status.
C. Women's participation in employment is not only mediated by caste, and class.
D. Women's participation in employment is not only mediated by age.

13. Women's employment opportunities are also influenced by their age.
A. True
B. False

14. The income disparity between men and women is linked to the role of women in both the household and public spheres.
A. True
B. False

15. Unpaid domestic labour has resulted in the obscurity of women's work and its importance.
A. True
B. False

Gender and Society

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	C	3.	D	4.	D	5.	B
6.	Peripheries or margins	7.	A	8.	C	9.	A	10.	A
11.	B	12.	B	13.	A	14.	A	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Define marginalization and examine gender and marginalisation.
2. Discuss marginalization of women in public and private spheres.
3. Critically examine sexual based division of labour.
4. Examine household division of labour.
5. Discuss theories of marginalization.

Further Readings

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Unit 07: Politics

Objectives

In this unit, students will be able to

- Aware the constitutional provisions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

- Understand the importance of reservation for women in different governing bodies.

- Acquaint the discussions and debates on the reservation of women in politics

Introduction

The subject of women's political empowerment gained traction across the world in the last decade of the twentieth century. The UN Economic and Social Council adopted a target of 30% women in decision-making positions throughout the world by 1995 in 1990. By 1995, just 10% of the world's MPs were women; hence this goal had not been attained. Women make up around 16% of the world's legislators now, well short of the aim of 30%. With men accounting for 84 percent of lawmakers, it appears that politics is still mostly a man's game.

Women were in the forefront of the anti-corruption and anti-price-hike rallies that preceded the declaration of the Emergency. In the 1980s, outspoken and prominent independent women's groups emerged, putting feminist concerns such as dowry, rape, and violence against women firmly on the public agenda. Women were clearly underrepresented in representative bodies at the same period. Thus, by the time of the National Perspective Plan 1988-2000, both women's aggressive engagement in politics and their exclusion from decision-making bodies had been acknowledged.

One of two causes altering the consensus on women's reservations is the rise of women as a substantial group in Indian politics. The other, the transformation of the caste composition of parliament and the growing presence of backward castes through successive elections, is an equally significant development.

Gender and Society

7.1   <u>Reservation for Women in India</u>

Women in India have always had a high place in society. Even in political and intellectual matters, they were treated equally to men in ancient times. However, women's status in society has worsened with time, and they have been pushed to the margins politically.

Women's participation in India was first regarded as natural course in the twentieth century, notably during the liberation struggle led by the charismatic Mahatma Gandhi. In reality, Gandhiji's ideas and approach to women's roles in the independence movement contrasted sharply with the Indian psyche's long-standing biases against them.

Women's social conditions were horrible at the time, and it was largely thanks to the purposeful efforts of the leadership, who were at the vanguard of the independence movement, that women fought with men against the power of the British Empire.

Gandhiji underlined the need to "enroll women as voters, offer or have imparted practical education, train them to think freely, liberate them from the bonds of caste that bound them so as to bring about a change in them" in a Harijan letter dated April 21, 1946.

Our independence movement was seen by national authorities as part of a larger plan to restructure the socio-economic and future political structures to provide, among other things, equality for both men and women.

Women have held major political and administrative posts in independent India. For example, as Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi oversaw the country's fate for more than a half-century. Despite the fact that Indian women have held significant positions at both the national and international levels, women's participation in politics and decision-making bodies is not proportional to their population, with the exception of municipal governments. Even in these bodies, their effective involvement has a lot to be desired.

7.2   <u>Constitutional Provisions</u>

India's constitution grants women equal political rights, including the ability to vote. In addition, the Indian Constitution contains practically all of the requirements of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. According to Article 15(3) of the Constitution, there is even room for 'positive discrimination' in their favor. There are several more clauses in the Constitution that emphasize male and female equality.

Women's Representation in Parliament and State Legislatures: Political representation was founded on the assumption that it primarily deals with individuals. Though only a small number of women entered politics at any given period, it was assumed that as education and career possibilities improved, their presence in politics would expand as well.

Did you know?

Every year, India celebrates National Panchayati Raj day on April 24 to mark the historic moment of decentralization of power. The day was first celebrated in April 2010 making it one of the most important days in Indian history.

Reservation for Women in Local Bodies — Encouraging trends

Given women's underrepresentation in politics, there has been a constant desire for more effective measures to improve female participation in decision-making bodies.

The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1993, and the Constitution (Seventy-fourth Amendment) Act, 1993, both reserved seats for women in local level bodies, namely Panchayats and Municipalities, in the hope that these measures would set the trend of providing women with their legitimate place in public life.

Following these amendments, Articles 243 D and 243 T were added to the Constitution, stating that not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in local bodies (Panchayats and Municipalities) be reserved for women, and that such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the local bodies.

This is a watershed moment for women's effective engagement in the decision-making process at the grassroots level. Every five years, more than one million women were elected to these municipal bodies in elections.

It is only logical that a higher percentage of women voted in these elections, indicating a positive trend for women's empowerment. Women's numerical strength has taken time to transfer into active involvement in rural and semi-urban regions, but the outcomes have been genuinely remarkable. Prior to reservation, the percentage of women in this area was extremely low, but after reservation, it has risen to 40%.

Reservation for Women in Lok Sabha/Assemblies — Previous efforts

Women's seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies have had a rough legislative history. Women's reservation bills were first introduced in Parliament in 1996, 1998, and 1999, respectively, after years of painstaking struggle by women's organizations.

Some of the significant features of the Bill were as under:-

1). In the House of People and the Legislative Assemblies of the States, one-third of the total number of seats filled by direct elections should be reserved for women.

2). Of the seats allotted for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under paragraph (1) of article 330 and clause (1) of article 332 of the Constitution, one-third should be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

3). No seats in the Lok Sabha are reserved for women from states with fewer than three seats.

4). No quota for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was granted in any State where the number of seats designated for the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes was less than three.

5). The seats were to be reserved for women through rotation in accordance with Parliamentary law.

6). There was no temporal restriction on the duration of women's reserve.

7). It did not include a seat allocation for women from the Other Backward Classes.

8). It did not allow for women's reservation of seats in the Rajya Sabha and State Legislative Councils.

After intense debates and dissenting opinions, the Bill was referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament consisting of 31 members from both Houses of Parliament. On December 9, 1996, the Committee led by Smt. Geeta Mukherjee submitted its findings.

With the dissolution of the Eleventh Lok Sabha, the Constitution (Eighty-first Amendment) Bill, 1996, as recommended by the Joint Committee of Parliament, expired.

Following that, on December 14, 1998, a similar Bill, the Constitution (Eighty-fourth Amendment) Bill, was submitted. The bill likewise expired when the Twelfth Lok Sabha was dissolved. On December 23, 1999, another effort was made when the Constitution (Eighty Fifth Amendment) Bill, 1999 was introduced in the Lok Sabha. However, due to a lack of agreement among the political parties, this Bill could not be pursued.

Gender and Society

Reservation for Women in Lok Sabha/Assemblies — Current Initiatives

On May 6, 2008, the Rajya Sabha presented the Constitution Bill, 2008, also known as the Women's Reservation Bill. The Bill aims to eliminate gender inequality and discrimination against women through political empowerment of women, in order to fulfill the people's mandate of Women Empowerment, as outlined in the Government's National Common Minimum Programme, and seeks: reservation for women of one-third of the current strength of the House of People and the Legislative Assembly of each State.

To provide, as nearly as possible, one-third reservation for women in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assembly of each State, with one-third of the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be reserved for women of that category; to provide reservation for women in respect of nominations of members of the Anglo-Indian community in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States; to provide reservation for women in respect of nominations.

7.3 Differing Perceptions about the Reservation for Women

The bill has elicited a range of comments from across the political spectrum, both inside and outside the House. While some political parties agree that the Bill, which seeks to provide 33 percent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislatures, should be passed in its current form as soon as possible, others demand that a quota be set within the 33 percent for women from backward sections of society. Otherwise, they argue, the advantage of this reserve is likely to be monopolized by women from our society's high and middle classes. One political party has indicated that it will fight for the 33 percent reserve for women.

It has also backed the Election Commission's proposal to require political parties to set aside 33% of their seats for women.

The Bill has the backing of the majority of parties if there is agreement on it.

While some parties claim to be in favor of women's reservation, they argue that the rights of Dalits, backward castes, Muslims, and other religious minorities should be fully respected. Others argue that if 33 percent reservation for women is added to the existing 22.5 percent for scheduled castes and tribes, more than 55 percent of Parliament seats will be reserved. This would be unjust to the rest of the population.

The bigger question is whether it will "empower" ordinary women. Has India's males been emboldened by the presence of over 500 male members in Parliament? Have these lawmakers helped to expand men's freedom from violence and harassment? Hunger and malnutrition no longer exist? In today's India, do males feel comfortable and safe? Why should we trust that 180 women in Parliament would transform the fate of women in India since most males in this nation have not profited from the preponderance of male parliamentarians?

A few alternative suggestions have been proposed to solve the issues of women's reservations in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies without having a 33 percent quota for women.

7.4 Gender Quotas (Reservations) in legislatures – General Perspectives

It is common knowledge that a group's capacity to influence policymaking, or even the character of a representative system, is severely constrained if it is not proportionally represented in the political system. The more people there are, the more power and influence they can wield. Despite the fact that women account for over half of the world's population and labour force, they have little or no influence on decision-making and priority-setting. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), enacted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and in force since 1981, calls for equal participation of men and women in public life.

The Convention is signed by India. Despite this, there is still prejudice in the representation of women in decision-making bodies. The Beijing Platform for Action identified 'inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels' and 'insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women' as two major areas of concern where action was critical for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.' Given

the sluggish rate of growth of women in politics, many policy initiatives are being implemented to achieve gender balance in political institutions. Quotas present one such mechanism to increase, and safeguard, women's presence in Parliaments and are now being introduced in many countries.

What are Quotas?

Women must make up a specific number or proportion of a body's members, whether it's a candidate list, a legislative assembly, a committee, or a government, according to quotas. Women's participation in publicly elected or appointed institutions such as governments, parliaments, and municipal councils is a goal of quotas. Gender quotas get their validity from women's underrepresentation as a result of discriminatory policies in political parties and organizations. Quotas put the responsibility of candidate selection mostly on those who have control over theprocess, namely political parties. Quotas push those who nominate and choose to begin hiring women and giving them opportunities that they would not otherwise have.

Types of Quota

Candidate quotas and reserved quotas are the two most popular forms of electoral gender quotas.

Candidate quota: It stipulates the minimal proportion of female candidates for election, and it applies to political parties' candidate lists.The Constitution, election legislation, and political party regulations all have legal candidate quotas. Quotas set by legislation compel all political parties to nominate/select the appropriate number of women.

Voluntary party quotas are embraced by political parties willingly, and are most frequent in center–left parties, whereas liberal and conservative parties are often hesitant or vehemently opposed to quotas.

*Reserved quota:*It designates a certain number of seats in a legislature for women, which is stated either in the Constitution or through law. It might be argued that reserved seats should not be included in election quotas. However, reserved seats currently appear in a variety of forms, some excluding women and others allowing women to be elected rather than appointed to occupy these seats. Having designated seats for only one or a small number of women, representing a broad and inclusive group of women, is no longer deemed sufficient. Quota systems now strive to ensure that women make up at least a 'critical minority' of 30 or 40% of the workforce, or to achieve 'gender balance,' as required by numerous international treaties and conventions.

Quotas may be viewed as a temporary remedy until impediments to women's political participation are overcome. Because the problem to be addressed is frequently under-representation of women, most quotas strive to increase women's representation. This is especially important since, while women make up more than half of the population in most nations, they only hold fewer than 16% of legislative seats globally.

*Gender-neutral quota:*Quota systems, on the other hand, can be built to be gender-neutral. In this situation, the condition may be that neither gender has more than 60% of posts on a party list or in a decision-making body, or that neither gender holds less than 40% of positions.Gender-neutral quotas create a maximum limit for both sexes, whereas women's quotas establish a maximum for men's representation. Gender neutral quota regulations are occasionally employed as a deliberate decision to dispute quota opponents' claims that they are discriminatory towards males.

Quotas for women, in general, signal a move from one idea of equality to another. The traditional liberal definition of equality was "equal opportunity" or "competitive equality." It was deemed sufficient to remove formal restrictions, such as granting women voting rights. The rest was up to the ladies themselves.

Following decades of intense feminist pressure, a second idea of equality, 'equality of result,' is gaining greater significance and acceptance. The idea is that just removing formal obstacles does not result in genuine equality. Women are denied their fair share of political power due to direct discrimination and a sophisticated system of hidden impediments. Quotas and other active equality measures are thus a method of achieving result equality. The argument is founded on the realization that formal equal treatment as a means cannot achieve equality as a goal. If impediments exist, compensating measures must be implemented to achieve equality of outcome, it is suggested.

According to research on women's representation, women are frequently subjected to double standards. Women politicians are frequently accused of lacking knowledge and education while also being chastised for representing a limited number of educated elite women; they are also accused of being tokens of their clans, families, and political parties.

Gender and Society

It's also vital to highlight the obvious: quotas don't address all of women's issues in politics, and they may even generate new ones. If there existing biases in a society, quotas or reservations will not solve the problem. It may, however, enable women to overcome some of the hurdles that prohibit them from pursuing certain possibilities. They may provide for a 'jump start' in which women have practically little experience.

7.5   Current Situation in Politics

1) Concerns about the dwindling number of female candidates have grown.

2) Both at the state and national levels, there is a significant disparity in the number of male and female lawmakers.

3) There has been an increase in female voters. As a result, women constitute a significant voting bloc that cannot be overlooked. Despite this, female candidates are few.

4) Women politicians criticize their party's flawed policies for the low number of female candidates. During the election campaign, each party guaranteed a 30% reserve for women. However, for the most part, this promise remained unmet.

5) The notion that female candidate would necessarily get women's votes initially attracted the attention of the political parties. However this was not a sufficient factor to have more number of women candidates.

Reasons for low candidature of women:

1) The majority of political parties are wary about fielding female candidates. This is because women are seen as inexperienced and lacking in resources. As a result, women are assigned tough roles and considered as undesired.

2) Women's responsibilities as spouses and mothers are still supported by society today. As a result, it is thought that a woman's finest location is within her own home.

3) Politics is regarded as a place rife with unethical behavior and filthy political games. As a result, the majority of males strive to keep their wife out of politics.

4) Women, according to political parties, lack the time and capacity to be serious about politics.

5) Women frequently shoulder a double workload at home and at work. Political action will add to the workload. This limits women's political engagement.

6) Almost all female politicians are subjected to sexual allusions and accusations. Character assassination is a certain technique to suffocate a woman's political ambitions. As a result, women abandon politics in order to prevent controversies.

7.6   Importance for Reservation

1) Women should be given the opportunity to enter politics and run for office. This allows them to grasp the nuances of politics and demonstrate their capability. As a result, ladies must make reservations.

2) Women are capable of taking on leadership roles. As a result, they should be given ample opportunity to run for office and win.

3) Women politicians have been seen to have a greater political influence. In comparison to male politicians, the general female public finds them more personable.

4) Women politicians have also quickly learned decision-making and policy-making talents.

5) Lower-level reservations will undoubtedly assist women in breaking into the political arena and demonstrating their worth. It will also make handling elections at the state and federal levels easier for them.

6) Reservations are required to halt the decline in the number of female parliamentarians and to assist women in gaining confidence in the political arena.

7) Women elected via the reservation system will have a higher sense of duty and concern for their jobs and voters.

8) Women's political reservation is linked to the principles of equality and democracy.

7.7   What Can WeDo to Make Reservations Work?

- The women's movement has traditionally linked itself with socially conscious women rather than those who belong to rightist groups that deny that women face systematic oppression. They also have no vision for a new society based on a more equal and transformed interaction between men and women.

- Across all classes and castes, a common thread of hope, justice, and equality unites all left and progressive women's organizations, requiring them to support one another despite their differences. When local government elections are announced, we can: Determine which seats are designated for women and who the most probable female candidates from each party are.

- Make a public plea to all political parties to refrain from fielding female candidates. Other details about each candidate's past and political experience, to ensure that they are actual candidates rather than proxies for the incumbent corporator.

- Hold a public gathering with these women candidates to discuss their responsibilities to the electorate of women's movements.

- Encourage independent women who are sympathetic to women's predicament and work to improve the lives of underprivileged women. We could, for example, run a campaign for them or spread propaganda. Conduct a negative propaganda campaign against these candidates, including women and men, who have espoused anti-women positions or have been accused of or have continued to commit crimes against women. This can be done by revealing them through using door to door or street to street awareness.

- We should state our expectations in the form of demands and a list of services that women in distress require in order to survive. For example, elected women can ensure that women are given preference when applying for hawking licences, that more special police cells for women are established, that shelter homes are established in each ward, that municipal clinics and hospitals have equipped female wards, and that banks provide women with low-interest loans for housing, among other things.

- Provide a public forum for all female candidates running for office to inform their constituency, particularly women voters. Create a forum for female members of political parties and activists. We should demand that the elected women candidates are given important position of power within the local bodies.

- Women candidates should be appointed as deputies to standing committees. In addition, women's voter monitoring committees should be formed. These groups might meet every few months to discuss and report. One may also spread these and other features, as well as inform other women and conscientious citizens about candidates who come to us for propaganda, and demand answers to their pledges after they are elected, but this requires the formation of a strong pressure group and an unified front.

Summary

Attempts for the upliftment of women were important steps taken in the independent India. Women's participation in politics and decision-making bodies is not proportional to their population, with the exception of municipal governments.Most of the women's organization and women politicians have considered reservation for women in politics as a significant step towards

upliftment of women. If women have access to political power, they can bring about positive changes in the general states of women in the society.

Given women's underrepresentation in politics, there has been a constant desire for more effective measures to improve female participation in decision-making bodies.Women's reservation bills were first introduced in Parliament in after years of painstaking struggle by women's organizations. Political representation was founded on the assumption that it would be a great helps to increase the participation of women, though only a small number of women entered politics at any given period.

Keywords

- Politics
- Political empowerment
- Reservation for women
- Gender gap
- Governing bodies in India

Self Assessment

1. The women's reservation bill seeks to reserve _____ seats in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.
   A. 33%
   B. 30%
   C. 23%
   D. 50%

2. Full form of PRIs
   A. Panchayati Raj Institutions
   B. Panchayati Raj of India
   C. Primary Rate Interface
   D. Public Relations Institution

3. Women's Reservation Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in _____
   A. May 2000
   B. May 2008
   C. May 1998
   D. May 2007

4. The National Panchayati Diwas is celebrated on
   A. 10th April
   B. 14th April
   C. 24th April
   D. 25th April

5. The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1993, and the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1993, reserved seats for women in

A. Panchayats only

B. Local level bodies, namely Panchayats and Municipalities

C. Municipalities only

D. State governing bodies

6. Women's reservation bill aims

A. To eliminate gender inequality and discrimination against women through political empowerment of women, in order to fulfil the people's mandate of Women Empowerment.

B. To eliminate gender inequality and discrimination against men through political empowerment of men, in order to fulfill the people's mandate of men's Empowerment.

C. To eliminate gender inequality and discrimination against women through compulsory vocational education in order to fulfil the people's mandate of Women Empowerment.

D. None of the above

7. Women's participation in publicly elected or appointed institutions such as governments, parliaments, and municipal councils is a goal of quotas.

A. True

B. False

8. _____ are the two most popular forms of electoral gender quotas.

A. Candidate quotas and reserved quotas

B. Unreserved quotas and reserved quotas

C. Regular quotas and contract quotas

D. Male quotas and female quotas

9. _____ stipulates the minimal proportion of female candidates for election, and it applies to political parties' candidate lists.

A. Voluntary quota

B. Candidate quota

C. Reserved quota

D. Unreserved quota

10. It designates a certain number of seats in a legislature for women, which is stated either in the Constitution or through law.

A. Voluntary quota

B. Unreserved quota

C. Reserved quota

D. Candidate quota

11. The condition which neither gender has more than 60% of posts on a party list or in a decision-making body, or that neither gender holds less than 40% of positions.

A. Voluntary quota

B. Gender-neutral quota

C. Reserved quota

D. Candidate quota

12. Which among the following is NOT a reason for low participation of women in election?

A. The majority of political parties have the view that women are inexperienced and lacking in resources.

B. Women'sresponsibility as being wife and mothers is thought that a woman's finest location is within her own home.

C. Women frequently shoulder a double workload at home and at work. Political action will add to the workload. This limits women's political engagement.

D. The more the educated women the less participation in politics.

13. Women should be given the opportunity to enter politics and run for office. This allows them to grasp the nuances of politics and demonstrate their capability. As a result, ladies must make reservations.

A. True

B. False

14. Women elected via the reservation system will have a higher sense of duty and concern for their jobs and voters.

A. True

B. False

15. Women's political reservation is linked to the principles of equality and democracy.

A. True

B. False

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	A	3.	B	4.	C	5.	B
6.	A	7.	A	8.	A	9.	B	10.	C
11.	B	12.	D	13.	A	14.	A	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Discuss women participation in politics.
2. Examine Women's Reservation Bill.
3. Explain the challenges of women's participation in politics.
4. Discuss women and politics in India.
5. Why there is a need for reservation? Discuss.

Further Readings

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Unit 08: Religion and Culture

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Objectives

- To elucidate the concepts of marriage and forms of marriage.
- To understand the theoretical perspectives of family and marriage.
- To understand the dowry system and their impact on women in India.
- To elucidate women's position in property inheritance in society.

Introduction

Family and marriage are important social structures in most societies. These two institutions have historically been closely linked; their connection is becoming more complex. Interestingly, the relationship between family and marriage is often taken for granted in the popular imagination however with the increasing diversity in forms of family in the 21st century, according to sociologists and feminists their relationship needs to be re-examined.

Sociologists have concerned the relationship between the institution of marriage and the institution of family because, historically, marriages are what create a family, and families are the most basic social unit upon which society is built. Both marriage and family create status and gender roles that are sanctioned by society.

Apart from these two institutions, other institutions like religion and cultural practices like dowry and property is becoming an area of concern in feminist theorization to understand the status, roles and power of decision making of women in patriarchal society. This unit discusses these cultural aspects of patriarchal norms to understand women's subordination in society.

8.1   Family and Marriage

Throughout the 1970s, as feminist knowledge grew and became more sophisticated, the family and marriage became a significant topic of inquiry. It was, for many, the most important site of women's subjugation, the place where, unnoticed by the outside world, women were at the mercy of their

fathers or husbands, where the law of 'patriarchy' retained its most rudimentary form. One of the things that feminism saw as special about 'sexual politics was its examination of the 'private' domain; social structures based on family and romantic love may be seen as part of patriarchy's oppressive rule.

Feminists looked at the family in two ways: first, as a social arrangement that has changed over time but is fundamentally defined by deep blood relationships; and second, as an ideology that transmits a desired type of organisation that everyone internalises. It's crucial to keep these two areas of contention distinct because one allows us to examine how families have really been organised in any given historical time within any specific cultural framework, while the other allows us to examine how 'the family' functions at the level of representation.

It is useful to be able to see how familial ideology operates on the emotional reactions of individuals in order to impose a specific family 'standard,' regardless of how little it may relate to people's lived experiences of the family. Many of the challenges women face in family life are financial in nature, as males have historically been expected to earn a 'family wage' regardless of their real circumstances. As divorce rates rise and the number of single-parent households grows, it is evident that single moms need an equal chance to be 'breadwinners.'

To displace the ideal of the nuclear family as the central determinant of social existence would, it was felt, release women from some of its inevitabilities and make such a structure-less necessary' (1982: 159) rather than find something to take its place.

It is useful to be able to see how familial ideology operates on the emotional reactions of individuals in order to impose a specific family 'standard,' regardless of how little it may relate to people's lived experiences of the family. Many of the challenges women face in family life are financial in nature, as males have historically been expected to earn a 'family wage' regardless of their real circumstances. As divorce rates rise and the number of single-parent households grows, it is evident that single moms need an equal chance to be 'breadwinners.'

8.2   The Marriage Gradient

Homogamy, or being attracted to and marrying someone who is similar to yourself, has been studied in sociology. If romantic love were the only factor in mate selection, coupling would happen by accident; instead, homogamy leads to assortive mating, or pairing based on likeness. Assortive mating believes that persons who are culturally and demographically similar to one another have greater chances to meet others who are similar to them than those who are not (Kalmijn and Flap, 2001). For example, college is a significant marriage market where individuals meet, date, fall in love, and marry. Mating necessitates getting together. Parents send their children to certain universities in the hopes that a good education would enable them to meet suitable mates from similar backgrounds. For some women, the perception of college as a marriage market may trump their career goals, especially in light of media reports claiming that acceptable male mates are scarce when women outnumber males on campus. The demise of women's colleges is also tied to this viewpoint.

In mate selection, demographics such as age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion are extremely important. Although nonaffective in nature—that is, not linked to the emotional expressiveness and highly charged passion of love—these predict partner selection and marital stability better than romantic love. These nonaffective characteristics have a role in determining who we will fall in love with. A market approach to mate selection tempers romantic passion. As a result, the method looks to be very different from the philosophy that surrounds it.

Whereas, homogamy is the marital mate selection norm, it is filtered by the marriage gradient, in which women tend to marry men of higher socioeconomic status, which is the traditional practise for women seeking upward mobility (hypergamy). Although this practise is less common nowadays, evidence shows that hypergamy is still the method many women choose to ensure financial stability. For women who want well-educated men with the financial means to sustain a family, the marriage gradient is useful. Women appreciate a prospective mate's instrumental traits more than men do, while men are judged on their fitness as competent providers. Decades of studies reveal that this is still true, even among college-educated women who express high levels of equality, except in the case of males.

Age factor in marriage

Age is perhaps the most critical factor determining mate selection. When there is an age gap, the guy is often older than the woman. Men were expected to get the education and work skills

necessary to maintain a family, which kept them out of marriage for longer than women, who were groomed largely for domestic tasks.

The marriage age has been gradually increasing for both genders since the 1950s. Traditional gender norms are disappearing as women make up over half of all college students and half of the work force. Women's median age at first marriage is presently greater than it has been since 1890, and it is nearing men's.

However, a new trend suggests that marriage between a younger man and an older lady is becoming increasingly accepted, especially among the elderly. For everyone except the most fortunate, new female role models, economic success, divorce and remarriage, and fewer restraints from family and society will certainly accelerate the tendency.

Today's women are less likely to marry for financial reasons. When these women are genuinely considering marriage, their options for mates are limited. Many women may choose to remain single because they do not want to marry or settle down with the "leftover" unmarried guys. Men may want attractive women, but attractiveness has declined in importance, with education and intellect taking precedence. A female marriage clutch based only on age has fostered the concept of the rejected, highly educated woman. Poorly educated, lower-SES males are the category most likely to be forced out of the marriage market today.

8.3   Sociological Perspectives on Mate Selection

Sociological theories propose alternative explanations for the marriage gradient and the resulting social class marriage gap. Traditional gender socialisation, defined as expressive duties for women and instrumental roles for men, contributes to societal stability, according to the functionalist approach. Although a beautiful woman will have an advantage in "marrying up," she, her family, and society will benefit.

According to conflict theory, males do not need to be as handsome as women since they have more economic power and social status. When males attain economic power outside the house, they will utilise it to retain authority at home.

The feminist viewpoint on conflict theory indicates that when women are denied authority, they become objects of exchange. The marriage gradient in mate selection reduces women to objects based on looks while ignoring their other statuses, such as personal accomplishments and professional success.

Symbolic interactionists, on the other hand, believe that the marriage gradient may provide a self-fulfilling insight in a dating situation, where women may learn to regard themselves as objects of exchange based on differing degrees of attractiveness.

8.4   Gender Roles in Marriage and the Family

The impact of love and marriage on society is significant. For couples on their way to the altar, marriage and the families that become "legitimate" as a result of it are both glorified and terrifying. Abandonment, divorce, and domestic violence coexist alongside images of loving spouses with joyful children. The allure of romance has a finite shelf life. Regardless of image or fact, the great majority of individuals will marry, despite their numbers being fewer.

Changes in gender roles have influenced our perceptions of "conventional" marriage and families, as well as the creation of a range of lifestyles for individuals seeking alternatives. Significant demographic changes in marriage trends are also partly due to these adjustments.

The Marriage Gap

Since 1950, the United States has had a consistent marriage gap, with young adults leading the way with greater rates of cohabitation and lower rates of marriage. The marriage and divorce rates have been steadily declining during the past half-century. There is a link between dropping marriage rates and rising divorce rates. The fall in marriages and growing acceptance of cohabitation are linked to a reduced divorce rate. The gender gap is increasing, fueled by the percentage of women who are not married or stay married.

More people, particularly women, who are in committed partnerships, are opting to stay alone. Despite the lower divorce rate, divorced women had lower remarriage rates than divorced males, according to research. Women who postpone or remarry may decide not to marry at all.

Furthermore, because women outlast males, widows may find themselves alone for decades after their spouses pass away.

Surprisingly, research have revealed that there is a strong link between marriage and income disparities. Poor individuals are less likely than non-poor people to marry (and stay married). The gender–social class relationship is a significant element in the marriage difference. Poor men and women are both more likely to be forced out of marriage, but poor women with children, particularly women of colour, are even less likely. Regardless of a marriage gap and the decreased time spent with spouses, marriage is still the preferred choice for couples regardless of race and socioeconomics.

8.5   Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and the Family

It is simpler for sociologists to explain what families do than than who they are. Large families are useful for subsistence agriculture and the production of items for family use or for sale or trade when surpluses are available in many developing world locations. A bigger family unit gives an economic benefit as long as it can feed itself. Subsistence farming is considered a household duty and is given to women in many regions of the world since women are responsible for feeding the family. The family has evolved from a unit of production to a unit of consumption in the industrialised world. In rural places throughout the developing world, extended families — consisting of parents, dependent children, and other relatives, generally of at least three generations living in the same household — are common.

Larger families have an economic disadvantage in metropolitan environments since they consume rather than generate commodities. In metropolitan places across the world, nuclear families, which consist of a woman, husband, and their dependent children who live away from other relatives in their own home, are more common. A more comprehensive definition is needed because the traditional definition is too narrow to include the structural variety of families, particularly those without married partners.

The United States Census Bureau currently defines a family as a group of two or more people who live together and are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. A married couple and their children, or one parent with one or more never married children under the age of 18, make constitute a subfamily. The word "subfamily" so encompasses both the "conventional" nuclear family and other types of family. Keep in mind that not all families are the same as households. A household is a single individual or a group of people who share a living space. There are three types of households: family households, nonfamily households, and mixed-family homes. All of these descriptions highlight family structure but provide little information about how the family is structured.

Industrialization and urbanisation, the two main drivers of modernisation, have had tremendous effects on families. In this sense, gender roles in families are changing as a result of modernity. Women entering the labour force fueled family transformation throughout the previous century, but modernisation fueled women entering the labour field. In today's world, the "conventional" nuclear family is just one among many other types of family and household structures.

Families are critical in carrying out tasks for family members and society as a whole, according to all theoretical orientations in sociology. The functions can also be carried out in a range of married and non-marital family configurations found all throughout the world, according to consensus. However, sociologists are not favour about the benefits and liabilities to the family and society that are associated with gender role change.

Functionalism:

Marriage and eventual parenting, according to functionalists, are good for society and the individual couple. Marriage and the family give societal advantages such as sexual behaviour control, child socialisation, economic cooperation, safety and protection, and a safe and secure atmosphere in which love and commitment may be freely expressed. Continuous companionship and ego support are beneficial to married couples in combating depression and boosting emotional well-being. Families supply people with social capital. Social capital is defined as a set of relationships and resources that benefit and benefit a person and society. This encompasses a family's resources, such as educational attainment, money, housing, and material possessions, and stresses the role of families in the greater social stratification structure.

These family responsibilities are important for societal stability, according to the functionalist approach. If the family institution fails to carry out required social "duties" and other institutions do

not step in to fill the void, societal balance will be jeopardised. The socialisation of youngsters into non-overlapping and acceptable social roles, instrumental for boys and expressive for girls, is vital to social stability, according to functionalists. Changes in gender roles and role ambiguity are harmful to family peace. When one partner assumes the responsibilities that are traditionally assigned to the other, marital discord and family instability ensue. If too many families are uprooted as a result of such transformation, societal cohesion would be jeopardised.

Functionalists advocate for a nuclear family with a wage-earning husband who has ultimate say in home choices and a dependent wife and children. This model becomes the ideal that all families should strive to achieve.

Conflict Theory Conflict theory

This focuses on the family's social placement function in maintaining existing inequalities and power relations in society. Wealthier families' social capital is enhanced through marriages that assure its preservation within their own social class. According to conflict theory, when patriarchal and patrilineal systems are in existence, money is concentrated even more in the hands of men, promoting female subservience, neglect, and poverty.

Conflict theory claims that married couples and other family members have varying amounts of resources and will protect their particular interests and resources to maximise their power base in the home. The economic leverage that comes with a husband's salary maximises his power base. Conflict theorists argue that as women gain economic strength by working outside the house, their influence at home grows as well.

Feminist Perspective

In the 1960s and 1970s, feminist researchers saw the conventional patriarchal family as a key location of women's oppression. When the patriarchal family is seen as advantageous to social stability, feminists worry that it will stifle the progress toward equitable roles desired by both men and women. They also said that the idealised picture of the family failed to account for the diverse realities of women who lived their lives in a variety of family structures. Since the 1980s, feminist perspectives have expanded significantly to include not just gender, but also race, class, and sexuality as sources of oppression for women in the home.

Feminists realise that gendered family connections do not exist in a vacuum, and that the resources outside the family that determine what happens inside the family assist or hinder people's lives (Wells and Zinn, 2004). Feminists argue that while race, class, and sexuality may disadvantage women twice or three times, they are not helpless victims; they have agency, the ability to adapt and even thrive in tough conditions.

Symbolic Interaction and Social Constructionism

Both approaches argue that what a family is "supposed" to be and what its members are "supposed" to do have various subjective interpretations. However, we change these ideas in our daily lives to match our own meanings and meet our own needs. The census classifications show that the notion of a family is not set in stone. It shifts in response to greater social developments beyond the family. These changes can be seen in how persons are labelled. Unmarried women's children are no longer often referred to as "illegitimate," for example.

Even when they want egalitarian marriages, Symbolic Interactionists are interested in how partners take on traditionally gendered family tasks, such as housekeeping. The expectations of what a man and a woman should do at home are strong, and they are reinforced every time we carry out our household responsibilities. Because families negotiate these definitions in the privacy of their own homes, responsibilities may evolve over time to reflect what a couple want rather than what they already have.

8.6   The Dowry System

Dowry refers to the money, assets, or estate that a woman gives to her husband or his family when they marry. Dowries have a long history in Europe, South Asia, Africa, and other regions of the world, and are most frequent in societies that are firmly patrilineal and require women to live with or near their husband's family (patrilocality).

One of the main roles of a dowry, it is considered, has been to shield the wife from the very real danger of poor treatment by her husband and his family. In this case, a dowry is a conditional

present that is expected to be returned to the wife or her family if the husband divorces her, abuses her, or commits other serious crimes against her. Land and precious metals are regularly used as dowries, and they are typically inalienable to the husband, even though he may utilise and benefit from them throughout the marriage. A dowry can occasionally assist a new husband in fulfilling the duties that come with marriage.

This purpose is especially important in communities where weddings between very young people are common; the dowry allows the new couple to have a family, something they would not have been able to do otherwise. In certain cultures, a dowry offers a source of support for the widow in the event of her husband's death. In this situation, the dowry may be viewed as a substitute for her husband's estate inheritance, which she may or may not get.

Dowries have traditionally been used by the bride's family to compensate the groom's family for the expenditures paid by the latter in the payment of bride riches. These exchanges are not purely economic but instead serve to consent the marriage and consolidate friendship between the two families. The dowry was commonly used in mediaeval and Renaissance Europe to boost a woman's desirability for marriage, as well as to develop the power and riches of great families and even to set state borders and policies. Dowries were used less often in Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Dowries, on the other hand, rose in popularity in several countries around the close of the twentieth century, even when they were deemed illegal or otherwise banned by governments. Parents of grooms in South Asia, such as India, have occasionally requested pay for their son's higher education and future wages, which the bride would purportedly share.

Dowry is a societal scourge that has resulted in unspeakable tortures and atrocities against women, as well as polluting the Indian marriage system. Dowry is a contribution paid to a bride's in-laws in cash or in kind at the time of her marriage. The legislation, however, has failed to deliver the anticipated consequences in our culture due to the social character of the problem. Appealing to people's social and moral conscience, giving education and economic freedom for women, and effectively enforcing legislation against the dowry system can all assist to solve this problem.

8.7   Dowry System in India

The dowry system is thought to have been created in Hindu between the 13th and 14th century (Rao, 1982, cited in Dalmia and Lawrence, 2005, 73). However, scholars contend that the dowry as it is practised now is a contemporary custom. Despite being prohibited in 1961, dowry has spread outside Hinduism and into other religious communities (Gupta, 2003, 102).

The Indian law known as the Dowry Prohibition Act was implemented on May 1, 1961, to prohibit the giving or receiving of a dowry. Dowry involves property, goods, or money provided by either party to the marriage, by either party's parents, or by anyone else in connection with the marriage, according to the Dowry Prohibition Act. In India, the Dowry Prohibition Act extends to people of all faiths.

The Dowry Prohibition Act's initial draught was largely seen as inadequate in preventing the practise of dowry. Furthermore, failing to satisfy dowry demands was still related to specific types of violence against women. As a result, the Act was amended in the future. It was altered in 1984, for example, to enable gifts to be presented to the bride or groom at the time of the wedding. However, the legislation required that a record be kept of each present, its value, the identity of the person who gave it, and the individual's relationship to either of the marriage parties. The statute was also revised, as were pertinent provisions of the Indian Penal Code, to protect female victims of dowry-related violence. In 2005, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act added another layer of legal protection.

The original Dowry Prohibition Act was amended to include minimum and maximum penalties for providing and receiving dowry, as well as a penalty for demanding dowry or publicising money or property offers in connection with a marriage. In 1983, the Indian Penal Code was amended to include specific offences of dowry-related cruelty, dowry death, and suicide abetment. When proof of dowry demands or dowry harassment could be established, these statutes penalised violence against women by their husbands or family.

The document itself ends up allowing people to get around the law by stating that any gifts given to one of the parties during the marriage, whether in the form of money, ornaments, clothing, or other items, should not be considered dowry unless they were previously agreed upon as a

(pre)condition for the marriage to take place. Another example is section 6 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, which states that the dowry shall only be utilised for the benefit of the wife or her heirs. By outlawing dowries, this normative Act established a penalty not only for those who receive them, but also for those who give them. Because the restriction proved ineffective, it was amended again, in 1984 and 1986.

Despite these strict rules, there are still loopholes in the system, and the practise thrives, leaving women susceptible to domestic abuse and murder. Although dowry, or "streedhan," was originally intended to be a woman's inheritance and a gift from her family at the time of marriage, over which the groom's family had no rights, demand for bigger dowry has grown in popularity.

Harassment and torture of newlywed brides, as well as bride burning in extreme cases, are all considered as strategies to compel the bride's family into paying greater money. There is a link between domestic violence and dowry; in situations when the groom and his family are unhappy with the dowry money they received, greater rates of maltreatment and abuse are observed.

In reality, a survey of 40,000 weddings in rural India over the previous two decades found that dowries were paid in 95% of the cases. They also discovered that the amount of dowry paid has remained rather consistent throughout time. In rural India in 2007, the average dowry was 14 percent of annual household income. Another intriguing conclusion of the study was that dowry was common throughout India's major religious groups. In fact, Christians and Sikhs experienced a significant surge in dowry, resulting in greater average dowries than Hindus and Muslims.

Many websites, even as late as 2015, featured "dowry calculators" that estimated the groom's expected dowry based on his educational skills and work situation. It was also discovered that uneducated households and those from the scheduled caste had significant dowry issues. Despite the laws prohibiting the payment and demand of dowry, dowry-related issues still exist today.

8.8   Women and Property

Social conventions, practises, and regulations limit women's property rights in many nations across the world, limiting their economic standing and possibilities to escape poverty. Women are often denied the right to own the land they produce and rely on to sustain their children, even in nations where women make up the majority of small farmers and perform more than 75 percent of agricultural labour. Land and property ownership empowers women by providing income and security. Women with few resources, such as land, have little influence in household decisions and no access to assets in times of crisis. Without the security of a house or a source of income, women and their families fall into poverty and battle for fundamental rights such as education, sanitation, and health care.

Property rights for women are an essential component of accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals. As part of its primary strategy to improve women's economic security and rights and eliminate gendered poverty, UN Women fights for women's land and property rights. There is a major emphasis on ensuring that women have equal access to property rights under the law and in practise at the grassroots level.

Property rights for Indian women, like those of women in other countries, have evolved as a result of a long fight between conservative and progressive forces. While Indian women's property rights have improved significantly over the previous century, they still have less rights in property than males, both in terms of quality and quantity.

What is perhaps unique about Indian women's property rights is that, like many other personal rights, Indian women are deeply split within themselves when it comes to property rights. India, which has a diverse religious population, has yet to develop a uniform civil code. As a result, every religious group continues to be controlled by its own personal rules in a variety of areas, including property rights. Even within religious organisations, there are sub-groups and local customs and norms, each with its own set of property rights.

Thus, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains are controlled by a single code of property rights written only in 1956, but Christians are governed by a different code, and neither Shias nor Sunnis have codified their property rights. Additionally, indigenous women of all religions and governments continue to be bound by conventions and norms for their property rights.

 To make matters more complicated, the Indian Constitution gives both the federal and state governments the authority to pass rules on succession, therefore states can adopt their own variants of property laws within each personal law. As a result, there is no unified body of Indian women's property rights. The property rights of an Indian woman are decided by her religion and religious

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school, whether she is married or single, where she is from in the nation, whether she is tribal or non-tribal, and other factors.

Ironically, what unites them is the reality that, despite the Constitutional promise of equality and justice, Indian women's property rights are unprotected. The varied property rights might be discriminatory and arbitrary, as they are in numerous ways. With a few exceptions, Indian courts have generally refused to test personal laws against the touchstone of the Constitution in order to strike down those that are clearly unconstitutional, instead relying on the wisdom of the legislature to determine when the uniform civil code should be framed, as mandated by a Directive Principle in Article 44 of the Constitution.

In the eyes of Indian Constitution:

The Indian Constitution contains a comprehensive framework for ensuring equality among its inhabitants. It not only guarantees equality to all people as a basic right under Article 14, but it also extends on this in later Articles to allow for affirmative action and positive discrimination.

In reality, this promise has been interpreted to imply 'substantial' equality rather than 'formal' equality, as judicially defined and developed in various Supreme Court of India and Indian High Courts judgements. The latter stipulates that only equals should be treated as equals, while unequal's should not. This wide paradigm allows for affirmative action through special legislation providing rights and positive discrimination through reservations in favour of society's weakest segments.

First and foremost, women are one of the groups defined as being vulnerable to prejudice, and they are therefore specifically protected from any expression or form of discrimination. Second, women are entitled to particular protection or privileges through legislation, if necessary, to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages they have faced solely because of their gender.

Because one of the directive principles' aims is to lead the state's conscience, and they've been used to constructively interpret the extent and ambit of basic rights, they also apply to any discrimination or injustice against women. However, despite the frequent and strong constitutional promises of equality for women, Indian women's property rights remain far from gender-just even today, despite many inequities being worked out in courts. The following are some of the highlights of Indian women's property rights, intermingled with some major decisions that have helped to make them less gender unequal.

Hindu women's property rights

 Hindu women's property rights differ based on their familial position and marital status, such as whether they are daughters, married, unmarried, abandoned, wives, widows, or mothers. It also depends on the type of property being considered, whether it is hereditary/ ancestral or self-acquired, whether it is land, a dwelling place, or marriage property.

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 was the first law to create a complete and consistent system of Hindu inheritance and to address gender inequities in the field of inheritance; it was therefore a codification and reform process at the same time.

Prior to this, the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act of 1937 was in effect, which was groundbreaking in that it granted Hindu widows the right of succession for the first time. The Hindu Succession Act was the first post-independence legislation to provide Hindu's property rights. Only the "streedhan" (properties gifted to her at the time of marriage by both sides of the family, as well as relatives and friends) was the widow's absolute property under old Hindu law, and she was only entitled to the other inherited properties as a life-estate with very limited alienation powers, if at all. Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act eliminated a woman's power to acquire and retain property as an absolute owner and converted a woman's right to an absolute owner in whatever estate she owned as a limited owner on the date of the Act's inception.

While the Hindu Succession Act may be said to have revolutionised previously held concepts on inheritance, it still has flaws when it comes to women's property rights, as it still does not grant the daughter of a coparcener (One who has an equal portion with others of an inheritance) in a Hindu joint family the right to be coparcener by birth in her own right in the same way as the son, or the right to make a claim.

Concluding remarks

Apart from the ongoing campaign for an unified civil code based on the Constitution, Indian women are now battling for rights to marital property, which are denied to them consistently across religious lines. In several hill states, there is also a considerable push toward communal land

ownership by women by forming group titles and encouraging group production and administration of land and natural resources by landless women for joint cultivation or similar farm activities. Under the Beijing Platform for Action's proposed method, land rights would be closely connected to living and employment on land. However, there are other obstacles to overcome, with societal acceptance of women's property rights being the most significant. The path ahead promises to be long and rocky in a society where women are still considered property.

Summary

The present unit discusses religion and culture focusing on marriage, dowry and property, highlighting the position of women in these spheres. The theme, marriage and family discuss the changing gender roles in contemporary society. In mate selection, demographics such as age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion are extremely important. Homogamy is the marital mate selection norm; however, women tend to marry men of higher socioeconomic status, which is the traditional practise for women seeking upward mobility (hypergamy). Age is perhaps the most critical factor determining mate selection. When there is an age gap, the guy is often older than the woman.

Today's women are less likely to marry for financial reasons. With the increase of carrier-oriented youths, there is more likely not to marry or late marriage among these educated youths. The traditional motivation of marriage for practical problems -wants children for economic reasons or for dharma has been changed. Main motives now are believed to be escape from the feelings of loneliness and for the purpose of living through others.

Dowries have traditionally been used by the bride's family to compensate the groom's family for the expenditures paid by the latter in the payment of bride riches. Dowries, rose in popularity in several countries around the close of the twentieth century, even when they were deemed illegal or otherwise banned by governments. Parents of grooms in South Asia, such as India, have occasionally requested pay for their son's higher education and future wages, which the bride would purportedly share. There is a close link between dowry and violence against women. In India, the Dowry Prohibition Act was implemented on May 1, 1961, to prohibit the giving or receiving of a dowry.

When comes to property, women are the most disadvantage group in the society. Social conventions, cultural practises, and regulations limit women's property rights in many cultures across the world consequently limiting their economic standing of women. While Indian women's property rights have improved significantly over the previous century, they still have lesser right in property than males, both in terms of quality and quantity.

Keywords

Marriage and family

Gender roles

Rules of mate selection

Dowry system

Women and inheritance

Self Assessment

1. Feminists looked at the family as
   A. a social arrangement that has changed over time but is fundamentally defined by deep blood relationships
   B. an ideology that transmits a desired type of organisation that everyone internalizes.
   C. Both a and b
   D. None of the above

2. Many of the challenges women face in family life are financial in nature, as males have historically been expected to earn a 'family wage' regardless of their real circumstances.
   A. True

B. False

3. College is a significant marriage market where individuals meet, date, fall in love, and marry.
A. True
B. False

4. Choose the correct option. In mate selection
A. Demographics such as age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion are extremely important
B. Demographics such as age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are important but not religion.
C. Only the personality and education is important.
D. None of the above.

5. _____ is the marital mate selection norm, it is filtered by the marriage gradient, in which women tend to marry men of higher socioeconomic status.
A. Homogamy
B. Hypogamy
C. Indogamy
D. Exogamy

6. A traditional practise for women seeking upward mobility in marriage
A. Homogamy
B. Hypogamy
C. Hypergamy
D. Exogamy

7. According to _____, traditional gender socialisation, defined expressive duties for women and instrumental roles for men, contributes to societal stability.
A. Functionalist approach
B. Conflict approach
C. Feminist approach
D. Symbolic Interactionists

8. _____believe that the marriage gradient may provide aself-fulfilling insight in a dating situation, where women may learn to regard themselves as objects of exchange based on differing degrees of attractiveness.
A. Symbolic Interactionists
B. Functionalist approach
C. Conflict approach
D. All the above

9. Marriage and the family give societal advantages such as sexual behaviour control, child socialisation, economic cooperation, safety and protection, and a safe and secure atmosphere in which love and commitment may be freely expressed.
A. Symbolic Interactionists
B. Functionalist approach
C. Conflict approach
D. Feminist approach

10. _____ focuses on the family's social placement function in maintaining existing inequalities and power relations in society.
A. Symbolic Interactionists
B. Functionalist approach
C. Conflict approach
D. None of the above

11. In the 1960s and 1970s, feminist researchers saw the conventional patriarchal family as a key location of _____
A. women's oppression
B. women's education
C. women's higher position

D. higher status of women

12. Which among the following is higher rate of dowry related violence?
A. USA
B. UK
C. India
D. Pakistan

13. Dowry is a societal evil that has resulted in unspeakable tortures and atrocities against women, as well as polluting the Indian marriage system.
A. True
B. False

14. Women with few resources have little influence in household decisions and no access to assets in times of crisis
A. True
B. False

15. While Indian women's property rights have improved significantly over the previous century, they still have lesser right in property than males, both in terms of quality and quantity.
A. True
B. False

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	C	2.	A	3.	A	4.	A	5.	A
6.	C	7.	A	8.	A	9.	B	10.	C
11.	A	12.	C	13.	A	14.	A	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Discuss marriage and marriage gradient in contemporary society.
2. Write a short note on mate selection bringing sociological perspective
3. Describe gender roles in marriage and family.
4. Critically examine modern dowry system in India.
5. Examine women and inheritance in Hindu society

Further Readings

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Unit 09: Major Gendered Social Issues

Objectives

This unit deals with the major gendered social issues focusing on development, ecology, communalism and violence. From this unit of study, students will be able

- to elucidate the context of gender and development,
- to learn the feminists theorization of gender and ecology,
- to acquire the knowledge related to women and communalism,
- to examine the forms of violence against women in the context of India.

Introduction

The present unit discusses contemporary gendered issue especially focusing on development, ecology, communalism and violence. Gender is an imperative consideration in development. It is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures affect the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women. Globally, it is known that compared to men more women live in poverty. In fact, men and women, boys and girls experience poverty differently and face different barriers when comes to access to various services, economic resources and even political opportunities.

As a new movement, eco-feminism is emerged from the intersections of feminist research and various movements for investigation of questions for peace, social justice and environment. Their attempt is to examine the broad linkages between oppression of gender, ecology, race, species and nation.

Gender based violence is not new in India or elsewhere; the Indian women's movement is still in the forefront of the fight against gendered violence. Regardless of nature or definition of violence is used, violence is gendered. Scholars also paid attention on the multiple family laws in a country to

understand the rights and status of women. Understanding women and communalism is an important area and this has been examined in the present unit.

9.1 Women and Development

In the history of the women's movement and the birth of women's studies, development has had a special position. The quest for women's equality has been hampered by a cloak of tradition and religion that has obstructed critique and rationalism. Women are all struggling against the ideals of their society, values that do not originate with the women but impact them in every way. Because of gender disparities, women are frequently overrepresented among the poorest in emerging nations.

India's growth route was targeted from a variety of angles and locales during the 1970s and subsequent decades. While Towards Equality used the lens of women's declining economic status to some effect at the national and international levels, others prioritised grassroots organising, whether in collaboration with left-wing political parties or through the formation of independent women's organisations like the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), which drew on Canadianism to work with women vendors and petty producers.

Explorations of working women's life, gender and poverty, the 'interior' realm of the family, and public policy issues, among other topics, occupied a new generation of researchers and activists, not all of whom were professional economists. After many years of state-led development, the 'opening up' of the Indian economy to world markets is merely the most recent of hurdles. Feminists have revolutionised the way labour, economic activity, the role of the state and markets, and the gender relations that underpin all of these are treated today, from local models of women's empowerment to national statistics systems to the new global order.

"There has been a rising worry about the incapacity of our national data system to capture women's labour and the subsequent undercounting of it," Maithreyi Krishna raj wrote in her paper "women's work in Indian census: beginnings of change." In India, the most substantial distortions occur in tracking women's involvement in the economy more than in any other sector. In most third-world nations, unemployment, poverty, and misery are apparently the professed priorities of development policy. However, there is still a lack of acknowledgment that the aforementioned issues are also gender specific.

National level statistics are the primary data source for developing policy, but they are significantly hampered by the undercounting of women, both as employees and as those who are available to work. This data gap cannot help but impact the design of plans and programmes aimed at assisting the impoverished among women. For this, we must consider (a) what proportion of rural (and urban) women can be counted as workers, (b) what proportion of women who are not counted as workers are available for work, and (c) for how long are rural women (both those who are counted as workers and those who are not) willing to work and available for work.

The first and most significant impediment is the key question of what constitutes labour or productive economic activity, particularly when it comes to women's job. Despite international debate and discussion, we have yet to find a solution to this dilemma.

There are two types of labour that Indian women do: one that pays well and one that does not. The former, in turn, has both home-based and non-home-based work. Even within the latter, there are many components that are not 'pure' domestic work, such as cooking, cleaning, and child care, but instead include post-harvest processing, livestock maintenance, fuel, fodder, water, and forest produce gathering, unpaid family labour on the family farm or family enterprise, and so on.

The Indian Census' economic questions use work definitions better suited to sophisticated industrial economies, where labour for pay (i.e. market-oriented labour) is the norm. As Maithreyi Krishnaraj pointed out, this is problematic for economies like India and the third world in general, because subsistence production is huge, non-monetized, and women are concentrated in this sector. Even if women conduct market-oriented employment, such as home-based piece rate employees, the unique aspects of women's job render such work 'invisible.'

She argued that the Census concept of 'work' overemphasises production for exchange, and that while it does include some non-market production for own consumption, such as cultivation, where men are also involved, it excludes other types of non-market production for own consumption, such as livestock maintenance (done primarily by women), and thus these figures do not correspond to non-market output in the national accounts. From the creation of the schedule design through actual data collecting and reporting, the concept that all women are essentially

"housewives" and that any work they undertake is marginal and subordinate to that of males pervades the data system.Conceptually, the multiple roles played by women at different levels of economic life are not perceived because of the definition of work as 'for pay or profit'.

The work performed by women in rural and urban India are classified into seven categories (i) wage and salaried employment, (ii) self-employment outside the household for profit, (iii) self-employment in cultivation or household industry for profit, (iv) self-employment in cultivation for own consumption, (v) other subsistence activities in allied sectors like dairying, other livestock rearing such as poultry, goats, pigs, etc. and fishing, hunting and cultivation of fruit and vegetable gardens, (vi) activities related to domestic work, such as fetching fuel, fodder, water, forest produce, repair of dwellings, making cow dung cakes, food preservation, etc., and (vii) domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, care of the children, the aged and the sick.

The present definition of work as 'for pay or profit' covers only (i) to (iii) that is (i) wage and salaried employment, (ii) self-employment outside the household for profit, (iii) self-employment in cultivation or household industry for profit. Though cultivation of crops for own consumption is included, it excludes pre- and post-harvest operations, which peasant women carry out within the domestic premises, particularly by upper social groups where outdoor work for women runs against social norms. It is also often the case that men may 'supervise' or just own land and be regarded as cultivators while the women who in men's absence or un-involvement actually carry out all the operations may be termed as family helpers. This has consequences for women's status, for the 'cultivator' has more rights than a family helper. It is in a patriarchal society a value loaded term.

Women's economic analyses and policy have long been obsessed with employment, to the exclusion of a key predictor of their condition, namely the gender difference in property control. This is notably true (but not exclusively) in South Asian studies. The gender disparity in property ownership and control is the single most important factor to the gender gap in economic well-being, social status, and empowerment, according to this argument. The most significant property in question in largely rural economies, such as those in South Asia, is arable land.

9.2   Concept of Gender and Environment

Patriarchy in society: Even though we live in a technological age, we are still appraising the patriarchy setup, and this patriarchy setup is not only killing women, but it is also destroying our planet. Women are thought to be the worst victims of environmental disasters. Our major focus is on how women are the hardest affected by the environmental crisis or era. So, anytime we observe a worldwide pandemic of violence against women and their systematic exclusion from the power structures that govern us, we must remember that men's binding exploitation of the earth and its resources is chevalier.Nafeez stated, 'natural environmental crisis is created by men', and this treatment is made by men. So, most of the times it has been seen that the environmental crisis is created by men. Similarly, we seen the violence against women is also created by men.

9.3   Themes of Gender and Environment

Eco-feminism

Eco-feminism arose from the intersections of feminist scholarship and numerous groups dedicated to investigating issues of peace, social justice, and the environment. Ecofeminists seek to explore the vast connections between gender oppression, ecology, race, species, and nationalism. Ecofeminism is concerned with the contexts of capitalism, modern science, and progress. They also attempt to understand women's interactions with nature in the context of development, capitalism, science and technology, and modernization. It aims to prove and investigate the existence of a link between society's patriarchal character on the one hand and modern, western capitalism on the other. As a result of capitalism ideology and practises, the environment is being destroyed.

The two ideologies, patriarchal social order and modern capital society, both want to govern women and nature. Just as women are subjugated by men under patriarchy, nature is dominated by capitalist ideology in modern capital society. Essentially, eco-feminism seeks to draw an ideological relationship between patriarchal society's rule of women and capitalist industrial society's dominion of nature.

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Griffin's 'Women and Nature' examines how the gendered position of women, animals, and nature has been conceptualised as distinct and inferior in order to justify their subjugation under a male-dominated social system that is sometimes violent and military.

The patriarchal social order and the capitalist ideology both try to legitimize the domination of male and the domination of capitalist culture. So, in the process both women and nature are subjugated. They are subjected in the domination of social order. Women and nature are subjugated

Carolin observed that in a rational capitalist society, economic expansion might occasionally promote natural dominance. In a patriarchal social structure, the dominance and enslavement of nature run parallel to the dominance and subjugation of women. These two types of dominance, according to ecofeminists, are related. These two types of dominance are intertwined in the sense that dominating nature not only promotes to capitalist expansion but also strengthens men's status by allowing them to profit from dominating nature. Similarly, under a patriarchal social order, women's dominance or submission helps to the consolidation of male social status as well as the capitalist economic social order.

In the same line of arguments, Vandana Shiva expresses in her, 'Staying Alive', the organic process of growth in which women and nature work in partnership with each other has created a special relationship of women with nature.

Now, it is also an important concern to look at the question, 'why women are considered close to nature'. In this concern, Bina Agarwal identifies four fundamental premises of ecofeminism:

1. There are important connections between the domination/oppression of women and domination/exploitation of nature. Both these processes of domination continue simultaneously. They are not separate, but they are interlinked processes. On the other hand, domination of nature contributes to the growth of capitalist growth that consolidating men's position in society. Similarly, dominance on women also contributes consolidating men's position in society. So there is interconnections between both spheres i.e. dominance of patriarchal social order and capitalist social order.
2. Women are being identified as closure to nature and men as closure to capitalist culture. Nature is inferior to culture, so are women. The modern capitalist culture talks about dominating the nature, exploiting the nature. So, the process of mastering or exploitation of the nature is the integral part of capitalism. For capitalism could not found some base without domination of nature, and this domination of nature is interrelated with domination of women in patriarchal nature of social order. In both spheres, they both are simultaneously exploited.
3. Domination of both women and nature have occurred together, thus women have a stake in ending the domination. Feminist women, tries to ending this domination of men on women in social order. Likewise, innovative movements try to end the exploitation of nature.
4. Feminist movement and environmental movement both stand for egalitarian and non-hierarchical system. So, the domination in both two spheres i.e. is patriarchal social order and capitalist social order, both has stake to end up the domination of men over both.

Feminist movement and environmental movement both stands for equal or egalitarian and non-hierarchical social system because both these two movements ultimately aim at bringing out an egalitarian social order by ending forms of domination, while feminist movement aims at ending forms of domination by gender, and innovative movements aims at ending forms of domination on nature. Thus, there is a close affinity between 'feminist movement and environmental movement' or 'Women and nature'.

The ecofeminist argument is based on the common exploitation of women and environment, as both are exploited, one in the presence of patriarchal social order and the other in the presence of capitalist ideology or capitalist social construction. As a result, both women's and nature's dominance become ideological and symbolic.

As a result, the origins of the relationship between women and nature—ideas, representation, values, and beliefs—place women and nature in a hierarchical position under males. As a result, under patriarchal social order, there is a hierarchy in which women are regarded inferior to males and hence exploited.

Similarly, in capitalist social order nature is considered something to be dominated by capitalist social order. So, experiences of women are same that those of nature. So, there is an intrinsic connection between women and nature.

Root of the connection between women – nature

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As a result, women's gender-specific experiences are tightly linked to those of nature. The reproductive cycle, pregnancy, and childbirth are all believed to be coterminous with nature for women. Because of their biology, women are seen to be closer to nature. The conceptual link between women and nature was based on two opposing images, one of which restrained and the other of which sanctioned environmental harm.

Nature was associated with a nurturing mother by ecofeminists. One does not easily murder a mother, rummage for riches in her guts, or mutilate her body. Similarly, we should not injure our mothers, and we should preserve the world since nature is Mother Nature, which provides the rationale for environmental protection. As a result, we must conserve, maintain, and safeguard the environment.

9.4   Climate change and gender

One of the most pressing worldwide issues of the twenty-first century is climate change. Its effects differ by geography, generation, age, social class, income level, and gender. According to the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), individuals who are already disadvantaged and marginalised would bear the brunt of the consequences. The poor, particularly in developing nations, are likely to be disproportionately affected by climatic variability and change, and so have the greatest need for adaptation techniques. Women and men who work in natural resource industries like agriculture are likely to be affected.

Climate change has a different influence on men and women. Women are increasingly considered as being more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than males, owing to the fact that women make up the majority of the world's poor and are proportionally more reliant on threatened natural resources. Men and women have diverse roles, duties, decision-making abilities, access to land and natural resources, opportunities, and requirements, all of which are held by both sexes.

Women throughout the world have less access to resources including land, loans, agricultural inputs, decision-making mechanisms, technology, training, and extension services that might help them adapt to climate change than males.

Women make up a large proportion of disadvantaged communities that rely heavily on local natural resources for survival, particularly in rural regions, where women are responsible for household water supply, energy for cooking and heating, as well as food security.

Women are mostly in charge of the more time-consuming and labor-intensive chores that are done by hand or with basic instruments. Women will have less time to acquire training and education, develop skills, or earn money as a result of this. When limited mobility is combined with a lack of access to resources and decision-making processes, women are disproportionately affected by climate change.

9.5   Women and Communalism

India no doubt is a secular country with people of different enjoying different personal laws. However, these personal rules can sometimes result in obvious gender inequities and discrimination against women. Cook correctly observes that, despite the Indian Constitution's sections demanding gender equality and non-discrimination, various laws exist that appear to contravene these values and continue to exist.

The Indian government's main excuse in front of numerous foreign monitoring bodies is that it does not wish to engage in the personal affairs of any group unless the members specifically seek it.

Multicultural institutions and policies are especially vital for addressing India's cultural diversity along axes including religion, language, caste, sect, and geography. One way that culturally inflected interests are reflected is through the adoption of different family laws to regulate diverse religious groups and some tribal groupings. The colonial state established a fairly centralised system of multiple family laws, in which state courts and numerous community courts shared adjudication powers. To accommodate cultural minorities, particularly Muslims, the postwar political elite kept much of colonial-era marital law.

Because all of India's family law systems give uneven gender rights in various ways, there were contradictions between this option and constitutional pledges to promote gender equality. Despite the fact that the Indian constitution contains a command to homogenise family law indefinitely, culminating to the creation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), policymakers have not pursued this path. The judiciary also rejected calls to alter different family laws in a methodical way based on constitutional and global human rights.

9.6   The Plural Family Law System and Their Criticism

Of India's multicultural institutions, the multiple family law system has received the greatest criticism. One critique of this method is that it allows for only limited legal change. The idea that group law is unable to keep up with societal change appears to be especially true with cultural minority legislation. This is because policymakers argue that the affected groups should begin changes in the legislation, yet conservative religious and political elites are frequently considered as the relevant group representatives, and they are often hesitant to do so. For numerous reasons, Muslim law is targeted by critics of Indian family law. During the transition from colonial control and subsequently, Muslim elites made the most forceful demands for the ongoing legitimacy of group law, and Muslim rules are less codified than those regulating India's other main religious communities. When the women's movement and women's studies first gained traction in public life and higher education in the 1970s and early 1980s, religious identity and a history of communal strife were not on the agenda. From the perspective of the history of the women's movement, the Shah Bano case of 1986 was considered as a turning point event. This event set the tone for the post-independence gendering of communalism, a process that has taken on many more dimensions in subsequent years, and shows few signs of abating.

The Shah Bano case, an important work of Radha Kumar

The case of Shah Bano, an elderly divorced woman who sued for maintenance against her husband under the Criminal Procedure Code 125, is described by Radha Kumar as an atypical scenario in which the topic of personal laws and the UCC first resurfaced (a law outside the purview of personal laws intended to prevent destitution and vagrancy). The essay's astonishing trajectory resulted in far-reaching and very troubling manifestations of conflict between "Islam," "country," and "women's rights." It contributed to intensify societal communalization against the backdrop of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, and it required feminists to acknowledge the precarious position of Muslim women in particular, as well as the political importance of religion in general.

In the early 1980s, attempts to understand women's relationships to and within the family led to an examination of the codification of women's rights in marriage, divorce, property, maintenance, and other areas, since much family law in India is differentiated on the basis of religion and community. This involved looking at several 'personal' laws. With what is now known as 'The Shah Bano case,' the question of personal law became extremely contentious for feminists in 1985. On April 23, a five-member Supreme Court Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice Chandrachud declared that Shah Bano, a 75-year-old lady, was entitled to maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code. For two years her husband gave her Rs 200 per month, and then abruptly stopped. In 1978 she filed an application under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), asking that her husband be ordered to pay her maintenance.

In general, the decision may be described as follows: To begin with, it affirmed Shah Bano's entitlement to maintenance from her husband under Section 125 and Muslim personal law, citing the two Koran verses mentioned by Shah Bano's attorney. Second, it claimed that Section 125 "went through religious barriers," meaning that it overrode the personal regulations of any religious community to which a married couple could belong. Third, it criticised the way women have "traditionally been subjected to unfair treatment," citing Manu, the Hindu lawmaker, and the Prophet as examples of traditional injustice. Finally, it encouraged the government to draught a single civil code, citing the promise of a common or uniform civil code in the Constitution.

The decision was widely panned for bringing matters of religion and personal law into what was fundamentally a matter of secular criminal law. Feminists, liberals, and secularists were among many who opposed it. Muslim religious leaders agreed that the ruling was an attack on their community. The announcement received a lot of attention, and within a few months, the whole thing had turned into a social movement. Muslim communalists urged that the Supreme Court decision be overturned and that Muslim women be exempt from Section 125.

In August 1985, a bill seeking to exclude Muslim women from the purview of Section 125 came up in Parliament. Muslim liberals, feminists and social reformers began campaigns all over India, but especially in Maharashtra, to publicise the upholding of Section 125 and to demand improvements in the legal rights of Muslim women against polygamy, and to maintenance. For feminists, the agitation around Muslim women's rights to maintenance consisted of a series of bitter lessons. Discovering the case with which 'a community in danger' resorts to fundamentalist assertions of self, among which, invariably, control over women is one of the first such assertions to be made, feminists were confronted with the associated discovery of the case with which the Indian state

chose to accommodate communalism, and balance this by a concession to fundamentalism (allowing personal law to cut into the application of uniform laws such as Section 125.)

9.7 Violence and Women

Several experts believe that the question of what constitutes "violent" behaviour is both complicated and politically relevant. The legitimacy of definitions of violence, both culturally and legally, reflects the influence that some social groups wield over what is and is not considered "violent." A broader definition of violence is behaviour that causes bodily or emotional harm to others. The concept of a 'continuum of violence' (Kelly and Radford 1998), which encompasses a wide variety of destructive behaviour, from physical acts of murder and rape to verbal acts of sexualized and racialized abuse, is one example of this larger conceptualization.

Regardless matter whether a tight or wide definition of violence is used, violence is gendered. In other words, it shows patterns of difference between men and women, with men's behaviour being particularly prominent. Feminist researchers have been particularly concerned about men's violence towards women. Abuse has been highlighted as a fundamental mechanism in the subjection of women by males. It is defined as a broad spectrum of men's destructive behaviour toward women, including rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment (Brownmiller 1976; Radford and Stanko 1996; Walby 1990).

The true scope of men's aggressive behaviour toward women is not publicly recognised in legal terms, nor does it appear in official crime statistics, according to several writers. For example, Walklate (1995) describes the routine and "daily" character of women's encounters of men's intimidating, frequently sexualized, and occasionally violent behaviour, most of which is not classified or penalised as "illegal." Studies reveal that men's sexually abusive behaviour is experienced in a variety of ways, typically from strangers in public locations. Sexually abusive statements, threats, unwelcome physical contact, and even attempted and real sexual assault were all examples of this behaviour. The people who were subjected to these encounters felt tremendous dread, illness, intimidation, and/or fury.

Edwards claims that the woman is "often watched for the amount to which she instigated her own demise" in situations of sexual harassment, domestic abuse, or rape (1987: 141). In circumstances of domestic violence, this frequently implies that the woman is held responsible - either for inciting her aggressor's rage or for refusing to leave him. The extent to which violence by men against women is minimised – by women, by men, and within the criminal justice system – suggests that it is a 'normalised' characteristic of contemporary gender relations in which masculinities predominate over femininities.

The close links between masculinities and violence means that, for men, violence is 'embedded in a network of physicality, experience and male culture such that it is more easily used and more readily available as a resource' (Dobash and Dobash 1998).

9.8 The Context of India

Gender-based violence has become widespread in India. Images of girls being gang raped in public areas, injured women escaping assault from their husbands, and women being beaten by relatives who consider their dowries to be too pitiful have captivated the nation. A father's beheading of his daughter in wrath over her marrying an unapproved guy who would bring shame to her family is also shocking (Associated Press, 2012). Despite the law, spouses are unrepentant, girls are encouraged to marry rapists, and police sympathise more with the culprit than with the victim. Sex crimes and gender-based violence in and out of the house are seldom criminalised or socially stigmatised (Bhatt and Ullman, 2014).Gender violence is centuries old, but the string of recent brutalities has mobilized women. Strong women's advocacy groups and media objection have kept the issue in front of the public.

The Indian women's movement is still in the forefront of the fight against gendered violence. Officials are taking notice of the sinking Human Development Index, which is now a primary priority. This revitalised feminist movement, backed by powerful NGOs, is urging governments to pay attention to attempts to put good development ideals into effect. The federal government has taken attempts to mitigate the negative effects of the restructuring of the economy on disadvantaged women and those working in the informal sector.

The Indian women's movement has raised public awareness of domestic abuse by highlighting power imbalances between men and women, which serve to disempower women in their homes, schools, and workplaces. The movement also serves as a watchdog, ensuring that laws are approved and followed rather than ignored. In some ways, media emphasis on gendered violence has re-energized India's feminist movement. The range of women mobilised in the anti-violence campaign in India is pretty impressive.

9.9   Gendered Violence

Men are subjected to greater physical abuse than women throughout their lives. However, it is clear that in a patriarchal culture, support of conventional masculine gender norms is intimately linked to rising violence against women. Antifemininity, hardness, self-reliance, violence, and sexual conquest are all masculine standards that promote this truth. Some of these standards are useful in communities that emphasise individuality and economic accomplishment via competition, such as the United States. However, these standards are profoundly maladaptive and dysfunctional in other circumstances, as seen by overall patterns of male aggression, particularly violence against women.

Rape

Rape is a learned behavior that is consistent in critical ways with socialization into masculinity norms related to antifemininity, toughness, sexual prowess, and aggression (O'Toole, 2007). Coupled with patriarchal beliefs about domination, these norms blend insecure and destructive masculinity with violence and sexuality.

The threat of sexual terrorism and rape is so widespread that women don't need actual experience to be terrified. Male aggressiveness is legitimised, gender stereotypes are reinforced, and rape myths are perpetuated by media representations of rape. The dread of rape is high, and women's freedom of movement is limited. Women are taught self-defense skills and strategies to prevent being raped (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009), yet the onus remains on women to constantly defend themselves, to always be on the lookout, and to always avoid situations where they are seen to be vulnerable. Because the overall societal norm prioritises male prerogative, the anti-rape strategy focuses on changing the woman rather than the circumstances that leads to the rape.

Domestic Violence and Battered Women

Domestic violence is on the rise in the United States, making the family home one of the most dangerous places to be. Intimate partner violence against women accounts for almost a quarter of all nonfatal violent crimes against women. Wife beating is more common in households with poor income and unemployment, isolation from relatives and community, and alcohol use, however violence affects all demographic categories. Domestic violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Marital rape and wife-beating have been prevalent throughout history, but until the mid-twentieth century, a husband's entitlement to his wife's body was seen as a personal luxury rather than a legal right.

9.10   Sociological Perspectives

According to the functionalist perspective, the social organization of family life, with its intimacy and intensity of relationships, lays the groundwork for family violence. The functionalist perspective, however, does not hold up to cross-cultural evidence in cultures where domestic violence and rape are rare (Sanday, 2007).

Wife battering, feminists and conflict theorists contend, has received less attention than child violence because it is quietly sanctioned by a societal structure that is inconsistent in enforcing the law. According to these viewpoints, power is the best explanation for all sorts of domestic violence, rape, and partner abuse. Violence is most frequent in civilizations where males have authority over their wives and children, and it is least common in societies where women and children have equal rights.

Domestic violence is defined as assaulting or injuring a woman in a domestic relationship, according to the Domestic Violence Act. Physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and financial abuse are all covered. The Domestic Violence Act covers both real and threatened domestic violence. Harassment of a woman or her family as a consequence of unlawful dowry demands is also covered by the Domestic Violence Act's definition. The Domestic Abuse Act is designed to protect wives or female live-in partners from domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands or male live-

in partners, including his family. Domestic violence against women in India ranges from physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse to financial abuse. There is no uniform or single reason that leads to domestic violence. It is a combination of various sociological/behavioral, historical, religious, and cultural factors that lead to perpetration of domestic violence against women.

Summary

- The fight for the equal treatment of women has been hindered by a veil of tradition and religion, which has stood in the way of criticism and rationalism.Economic analysis and policies concerning women have long been preoccupied with employment, to the neglect of a crucial determinant of women's situation, namely, the gender gap in command over property. This is especially (but not only) true in analysis relating to South Asia. It is argued here that the gender gap in the ownership and control of property is the single most critical contributor to the gender gap in economic well-being, social status and empowerment.
- Ecofeminist attempts to uncover the broad linkages between oppression of gender, ecology, race, species and nation. They argue that there is a relationship between patriarchal nature of society on one hand and with modern, western capitalism on other hand. Thus, the destruction of environment because of the ideology and activities of capitalist.
- Ecofeminist argument lies on the affinity between these two i.e. women and nature, comes out of the shared exploitation as both are exploited as one in the presence of patriarchal social order and other in the presence of capitalist ideology or the capitalist social formation. Therefore, the domination of both women and nature become ideological and symbolical.
- India is a secular country with diverse people enjoying different personal laws. But these personal laws, at times, glaring gender inequalities and discrimination against women.the Shah Bano case of 1986 was considered as a turning point event. This event set the tone for the post-independence gendering of communalism, a process that has taken on many more dimensions in subsequent years, and shows few signs of abating.
- A broader approach defines violence as behaviour which harms others, either physically or emotionally. However, it remains the case that violence is gendered.It is men's violence against women that has especially been the concern of feminist researchers.

Keywords

Gendered issues

Gender and ecology

Gender and development

Violence against women

Women and communalism

Self Assessment

1. Development has occupied a unique place in the history of the _____

2. The full form of SEWA is _____

3. Indian women are engaged in two kinds of work: one that produces an income and the other that does not. The former work is
A. Home-based work
B. Outside based work
C. Industrial based work
D. IT based work

4. The definition of economic 'work' adopted in the Indian Census is more suitable to advanced industrial economies where _____

5. The definition of 'work' in the Indian census excludes
A. Market based production such as livestock maintenance done mostly by women
B. Non-market based production for own consumption such as livestock maintenance done mostly by women
C. Non-market based production for own consumption such as livestock maintenance only done by men
D. None of the above

6. The definition of work as 'for pay or profit' covers
A. Wage and salaried employment,
B. Self-employment outside the household for profit
C. Self-employment in cultivation or household industry for profit
D. All the above

7. _____ is emerged from the intersections of feminist research and various movements for investigation of questions for peace, social justice and environment.
A. Eco-feminism
B. Eco-modernism
C. Eco-Marxism
D. Eco-Functionalism

8. Feminist movement and environmental movement both stand for _____
A. Egalitarian and hierarchical system
B. Masculinity and non-hierarchical system
C. Egalitarian and non-hierarchical system
D. None of the above

9. In_____, there is hierarchy where women are considered below men and therefore they are exploited.
A. Socialist social order
B. Matriarchal social order
C. Patriarchal social order
D. None of the above

10. The postcolonial political elite retained much of colonial-era family law to accommodate the _____ .

11. A broader approach defines violence as behaviour which harms others, _____

12. Violence is gendered.
A. True
B. False

13. It is men's violence against women that has especially been the concern of feminist researchers.
A. True
B. False

14. It is evident that the acceptance of traditional masculine gender roles in a patriarchal society is closely connected with escalating violence toward women.
A. True
B. False

15. Rape is a _____ that is consistent in critical ways with socialization into masculinity norms related to anti-femininity, toughness, sexual prowess, and aggression

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	Women's movement	2.	Self-Employed Women's	3.	A	4.	Work for wages	5.	B

Association

6.	D	7.	A	8.	C	9.	C	10.	Cultural minorities, especially Muslims
11.	Either physically or emotionally	12.	A	13.	A	14.	A	15.	Learned behavior

Review Questions

1. Discuss women and development with appropriate examples.
2. Describe feminist's theorization between gender and ecology.
3. Briefly explain eco-feminism and their fundamentals.
4. Write an essay on women and communalism.
5. Critically examinestwo major gendered issues in India.

Further Readings

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Unit 10 : Women in India

Objectives

The present unit discusses the changing status of women in Indian society starting from pre-colonial to post-colonial period. After reading this unit, student will be able:

- To identify the women's roles in society in comparison to men and the rights and obligations associated with these roles.

- To know the extent of actual "access" and "control" of women over societal resources and to assess their position in different historical phases.

- To understand the gender inequality persistent in society in different spheres of life, in different historical periods.

- To acquaint various parameters to measures the status of women in society.

Introduction

In the last few decades, many important changes have taken place in India. Some of these are more apparent than real. This is particularly so in relation to the status of women. During the last two hundred years a large number of women have marched out of their segregated households into the public life. However, the position of contemporary women in India is full of familiar contradictions. There are women politicians who hold high positions, yet men control politics both at the grass roots and at the top. There are some important women intellectuals and professionals in India who occupy top position while the vast majorities are still ignorant and illiterate.

A large number of women are in the workforce and are landless labourers in the remote villages. There are female deities like Durga, Kali, Chandika, Manasa, etc. who are worshipped and feared by most yet the majority of women at home have low ritual status and live in depressed conditions. Women are revered as mothers at the same time they suffer from brutal violence like rape, physical molestation and even murder. They are also worshipped as pure beings, but in order to elevate the status of their men folk rather than themselves.

Thus there are seeming paradoxes in the social life of women in India. Some historians argue that despite several legislations and other changes in favour of women over the past two hundred years

there has been little significant alteration to the traditional structure of male dominance and authority because still there are some deep ideological and structural roots through which this domination has been perpetuated (Allen and Mukherjee 1982). The religious practices and traditions ascribed for their subordination to men in all matters. They were denied education, access to social justice and equality. They were also unaware of their basic rights due to their ignorance. The following sections discuss the status of women in period wise, starting from pre-colonial to independent India.

10.1 Status of Women in Pre-colonial India

The status of women in Indian society has changed from time to time. Their status has been variously estimated and there are many views regarding her place in civilization. There is so much variability in the relation of women to society during different time period that it is difficult to make a general statement. Categorically, her utility, resourcefulness in domestic life, refreshing company and affectionate care for children have always proved a great asset to her partner in life and have to a considerable extent determined her status at different stages of civilization.

Throughout the Vedic period, women in India especially of the upper caste were given equal status with men. In view of this equality of status, women participated in sacrificial rites and had to be men's equals in upholding "Dharma". Women had been able to hear and learn the Vedas, during 600 B.C. In Rig-Veda, the husband and wife appear to have occupied equal status – both of them were designated as "Dampati".

In Indian culture, since the post Vedic period the overall status of women in family and society has been low. This low status of Indian women were mainly emerged from overpowering patriarchy and male domination, economic dependence of women over men, various caste restrictions, religious prohibitions and prejudices, illiteracy, lack of leadership quality, low self esteem and apathetic and indifferent attitude of men. It was the age of Sutras and Epics (500 BC to A.D. 500) that the status of women changed considerably. Procreation of a son became a religious necessity for he alone could discharge certain ritual obligations to the ancestors. A wife was expected to provide all services needed by her husband and to keep him satisfied. The religious dictum (Manu's) was that a wife ought to respect her husband as a "god" even if he was a drunkard or dumb headed or lunatic was accepted and applying to all women. Practice of Sati was gradually established by A.D. 700. The women were socialized and were expected to play the completely dependent role on men with no opportunity to take decisions of her own.

The status of women continued to deteriorate during the age of Smriti (A.D. 500 – A.D. 1800) and Muslim rule till they almost lost all status in society. Scholars like Matson Everett (1981) have identified five specific factors responsible for low status of women in India, both in the family and society and also for seclusion of women. There are Hindu religion, caste system, joint family system, Islamic rule and British colonialism. The values of Hinduism support the male supremacy over female, women's "mother-housewife" role in private domain and men's "public" role in economic and political spheres. Hindu religious scripture prescribed inferior positions of women in ritual activities and a dependent position of woman on man throughout her lifetime.

For the first time in Indian history, Indian women were subjected to cruelty during the Mughal period. In view of the Muslim invasion, the indigenous culture had been subjected to acculturation. The customs and traditions of Islam had made in-roads into the native culture. For example, the "purdah" system was widely practiced among the middle classes. According to Altekar (1956) for nearly 2000 years from B.C. to 1800 AD, the status of women steadily deteriorated. The revival of Sati, the prohibition of remarriage, spread of purdah system, and the greater prevalence of polygamy made the position of women worst. Generally speaking, before the advent of Muslims, the status of Hindu women were certainly better.

Notes:

Acculturation: It means transmission of cultural elements from one social group to another. Acculturation is a process of cultural change, which results due to contact between communities belonging to different cultures. Here, both the cultures get mutually affected as the culture traits of one culture move into the other culture and vice versa

Assimilation: It is a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups

acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons or groups by sharing their experience and history and are incorporated with them in a common cultural life. Assimilation is central in the historical process.

There were many factors directly or indirectly responsible for the continuous deterioration of the status of Indian women in medieval times. Child marriage became a rule – to safeguard the honour and chastity of girls. The Hindu laws gave unequal and discriminated treatment to women. They were discriminated in marriage, marital status, divorce, widowhood and inheritance. Very few women received education even in the 1850s. Literacy reached such low ebb after 1857 that there was hardly one woman in a hundred who could read and write.

This was so because of the evil socio-religious practices, sinister customs, irrational religious rites and inhuman superstitions and ceremonies unknown in ancient periods, which had crept into Hinduism such as child marriage, enforced widowhood, sati temple prostitution (devadasi), purdah, dowry, female infanticides, polygamy, etc.

All these made Hindu society a huge, static and immobile one where women had practically no positive role. In this period Hindu women were in a perpetual depressive state. The social structure allowed men greater freedom and liberty and greater access and control over resources, from which women were excluded. Different standards were adapted to judge the individual and social conduct of man and women. The laws did not recognize equality of sexes and equal rights for men and women. Thus, there was perpetual decline of status of women for several centuries, had reached its lowest ebb in the nineteenth century.

Notes:

Patriarchy A society in which men dominate in family decision making.

Polygamy: A form of marriage in which an individual may have several husbands or wives simultaneously.

Social inequality: A condition in which members of a society have different amounts of wealth, prestige, or power.

10.2   Status of Women in Colonial Period

There was much unrest among women in India during colonial period; a general desire to change the existing state of things. This had become possible because the 1920's were a period of social and political awakening in India, followed by intense reformist efforts made by social reformers with or without organized support. Thus, the issue of women's status, which had long become the focus of social reform, was also reflected in a series of legal enactments relating to or affecting women. To mention only a few, the Sati Abolition Act was passed in 1829 and the Widow Remarriage Act in 1854.

By 1929, Indian Women had been granted the right to vote. The Sarda Act, which fixed the minimum age at marriage for girls at 14, was enacted in 1929. Mahatma Gandhi stressed the need for educating women. Women's education and amelioration of their status had received a great deal of impetus by the third decade of nineteenth century (Chanana, 1996). One of the outstanding features of modern India has been the unprecedented awakening of Indian women during nineteenth and twentieth century. A number of movements, both religious and social like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Prarthana Samaj were launched in the middle of nineteenth century, reforming Hinduism and Indian society.

Did you Know?

The Child Marriage Restraint Act was a legislative act passed on 28 September 1929. The act fixed the marriageable age for girls at 14 years and 18 years for boys. It is popularly known as the Sharda Act after its sponsor, Harbilas Sarda.

Gender and Society

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, presently sets the marriageable age to be 18 and 21 for boys and girls respectively.

These movements have had a deep impact on the women's identity and women's life in India. The social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar in Bengal, Malabari, Ranade in Bombay and Dayananda Saraswati in Punjab and many others and their ideas changed the total atmosphere in India and brought about a near revolution through laws which started the new era of emancipation for women in India. The political upheaval under Mahatma Gandhi marked the climax when women participated in the independence movement. In the 1930s and 1940s the outlook of leaders of the nationalist movement became more egalitarian and less hierarchical.

The nationalist leaders' commitment to equality influenced the Indian women's movement to turn to liberal egalitarian values. Some women's organizations were formed to promote modern ideals to women on a nationalist basis. Of these Bharat Stree Mahamandal (BSM) was founded in 1910, Women's India Association (WIA) founded in 1917 by Madame Annie Besant, National Council for Women in India (NCWI) founded in 1925 by Lady Aberdeen, Lady Tata and others and All India women's Conference (AIWC) founded in 1927 by the efforts of Margaret Cousins and others. These organizations took up various issues like women's education, abolition of social evils, Hindu law reform, moral and material progress of women, equality of rights and opportunities and women's suffrage.

According to Ahuja (1992) the Indian Women's movement worked for two goals: 1) uplift the status of women in India, that is, reforming social practices so as to enable women to play a more important and constructive role in society and ii) equal rights for men and women, that is, extension of civil rights enjoyed by men in the political, economic and familial spheres to women also.

Source: The movement, Stop Violence against Movement, Global Giving.

10.3 Post-colonial India: Indian Government and Women's Equality

What Indian women achieved after independence of India and the provisions for gender equality in the Indian Constitution was a consequence of their participation in the freedom struggle. The Constitution of India brought Indian women at par with men. Article 326 gave them the right to vote. Articles 14, 15 and 16 ensure equality of opportunity and equality before the law. The state can make special provisions for women. Thus, the Constitution gives equality to Indian women through its fundamental rights and Directive Principles of State Policy. The adult franchise brought Indian women on an equal footing with men. The Constitution of India guarantees all those rights to women which are given to men.

The following are the legislation for safeguarding women's interests

- The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 – This act provides women with equal rights to divorce and remarry. Also, the act prohibits polygamy, polyandry and child marriage practices.
- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 – This act provides women with the right and claim over parents property.
- The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 – This act provides a childless woman with the right to adopt a child and a divorced woman with the right to claim maintenance from her husband.
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954 – This provides women with the rights to inter-caste marriage, love marriage and is only permitted for the girls with the age of above 18 years.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 – It protects women from exploitation by declaring taking of dowry an unlawful activity.

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was established by the Government of India 1953 to promote and strengthen voluntary efforts for the welfare of women. The Five Years Plans also laid emphasis on women's rights and stressed on the welfare activities, education, health and family planning for women.

After Independence in 1947, there was an acceptance of professional life for women although they were not encouraged in scientific and technological vocations. It has been observed that women of the upper classes have better educational and job opportunities whereas the rural and lower-middle class women do not enjoy such wide perspectives because they unfortunately still believe in traditional social taboos. Many of them are still confined to the four walls of domesticity and strict patriarchy.

The appointment of the National Committee on the status of women in India 1972, and the publication of its report in 1975 marked the first comprehensive official attempt in contemporary times to study the status of Indian women and recommend changes to improve their position. The report highlighted that despite constitutional guarantees the roles, rights and participation of women in all spheres of life were limited. The literacy rate of Indian women in still half of the literacy rate of men; sex ratio is still very low and life expectancy at birth for females is still lower than males and the economic participation rate of women is still very low when compared to men.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) was set up on January 31, 1992 to look into women related issues, to probe into the status of women, to study various legislations and point out the disparities, to look into the matters of discrimination and violence against women and analyse possible remedies. Still the status of Indian women is not up to the mark or to the desired level. The posed questions that even in the twenty first century are Indian women belong to the category of second sex?

It is true that one set of disabilities of women like – Sati, child marriage, female infanticide, widowhood, denial of property rights, Devadasi system, etc. have been removed by social reforms and legislations but others have taken their place in some new forms and practices such as bride-price, female foeticide, girl trafficking, divorce,etc. A series of laws have been passed in last five decades since independence for the upliftment of status of women in India but it is really pity for Indian women that all these are far from reality.

A handful of womenfolk only enjoys the benefits from the state who belongs to a small section of privileged educated women of urban upper economic strata. We cannot deny that various opportunities for women have considerably widened certain levels and enabled them to achieve numerous advances/gains in various spheres. But the process of modernization, westernization and of latest globalization further complicated the situation. A large section of the population of India lives in rural areas with traditional mentality and it is difficult for them to accept modern role of women in India based on equality, rationality and progressive mind.

Society's attitude in general is changing slowly towards women's due role and status, but the pattern of male superiority is still dominating. Although legally and theoretically women are now recognized as the social equal of men, the patriarchal family, the caste system, religious mores and prevailing value system are still surcharged with the spirit of male domination.

10.4 Different Parameters to Understand status of Women in India

This section attempts look at the status of women and to examine the various factors which are intricately connected with women's status in the society.

The concept of "status of women" can be perceived in different ways: the extent of women's access to social and material resources within family, community and society (Dixon 1978) or, her power and authority within the family and community and the prestige commanded from other male members or the position in the social system distinguishable from, yet related to other positions (Committee on the Status of Women in India 1974) or, the extent to which women have access to knowledge, economic resources and political power as well as the degree of autonomy they have in decision-making and making personal choices at crucial points in their life-cycle (United Nations 1975).

"Status" of women is correlated to the participatory rights and obligations of women in the managing of society. The term status refers to the position of women vis-à-vis men in the social structure in terms of rights and obligations. Status of women in society is explained in terms of "role" which is assigned to them by tradition, religion, ideology and the state of economic development. The enhancement of status essentially means the enlargement of the scope of participatory rights in society and decision making in all walks of society. The more balanced the opportunity structure for men and women, the larger the role women have in society and consequently higher their status.

Notes:

Status: the social honour or prestige which a particular group is accorded by other members of a society. Status group normally involve distinct styles of life- patterns of behavior which the members of a group follow. It should be noted that status privileges maybe positive or negative.

Social Positions: social identity an individual has in a given group or society; it may vary in nature (such as those associated with gender roles) or may be more specific (as in case of occupational positions).

Roles are socially defined expectations which a person in a given status or social positions fulfills. A role a set of ideas associated with a social status defines its relationship with one or more position.

The idea of status also connotes the notion of equality (Krishnaraj 1986). If we want to study the status of women in any society, we must study the complexity of roles which women perform in society in the socio-economic, cultural, religious and political fields. It is also important to find out such factors as how they face the problems and situations that are connected with their sex roles from birth to death and how they adjust themselves to these gendered role situations. The role of women has differed from society to society and from time to time. Within one society itself, it has changed over time. There were societies where women performed important economic roles. In these societies women had complete, or at least major, control over the economic activity.

It is important to note that the inferior status of women in societies also coincides with the denial of property rights and education, as well as denial of certain occupations to them. There are certain constraints, historical, traditional and constitutional, which are responsible for lowering of women's status in society. The (low) status of women constitutes a problem in almost all societies and it has emerged today as a fundamental issue in human development. Studying women's status means a sensitive diagnosis of the nature of gender subordination through an understanding of gender relations in a specific context.

Gender based role differentiation is basic to the understanding of the status of women in society. A gender-based concept of status denotes women's social, legal and ideological position and rights and privileges in a given social set up. It is very often conditioned by the prevalent ideas and functions in that society, the attitudes and behaviours of men towards women and their acceptance and rejection of women's role in society. Women's status, which encompasses their traditional as well as changing position in a society, is a dynamic concept where both their present and emerging status is based on the prevalent ideas, functions, norms and traditions. The corresponding changes in the status of women are directly linked with social and cultural traditions, stages of economic development, level of education and political participation.

Sociologists while doing women's studies often refer the term "changing status of women" rather than the term status of women in society. However, in a complex and stratified social structure and cultural plurality two other dimensions have been introduced in recent times to facilitate status assessment, particularly in a period of change (Mazumdar 1978). These are: a) the extent to actual control enjoyed by women over their own lives, b) the extent to which they have access to decision-making processes and are effective in positions of power and authority.

10.5 Power and Status in understanding women's status

Status and role are interlinked with the concepts of power and position. Status is determined to a great extent by the power enjoyed by men and women in the domestic and social spheres. Scholars identified five key aspects over which women's control has to be assessed to understand status of women in society:

- Women's labour
- Control over resources i.e. economic, health, education and political
- Sexuality (their physical integrity and freedom from all types of physical and mental violence)
- On their reproduction, and
- Mobility.

These are the most important parameters to measure and compare women's position in society vis-à-vis men and to define her status. Two other terms like "access" and "control" are important indices for women's autonomy and status in society. These two terms are of significance for comparing women's position in society with men and its changing nature in course of historical phases. The status of women correlates with the social space occupied by them in a particular society at a particular period of time.

Thus we can understand women's status through the examination of their:

- Access and control over private assets and resources,
- Access of public resources,
- Control over their labour and income.
- Control over their body i.e. sexuality, reproduction and physical security
- Control over physical mobility,
- Access to and control over political spaces,
- Access to and control over intangible resources, such as self-confidence, self-worth, communication skills, information, knowledge and skill, and
- Access to legal structure and redressal.

Summary

Women in India constitute nearly fifty percent of the total population. Yet they do not seem to have enjoyed equal status with men. Women's status, by and large, has been one of general subordination to men in societies known for the perpetuation of cultural heritage and tradition. It has been observed that women in India seem to have experienced various problems, particularly those that are socio-cultural over a period of time. India is a multicultural society with a great diversity and various forms of social hierarchy and inequality like caste and class.

Women's role, rights, norms, values, customs, etc. are greatly influenced by religion, institutions of family, marriage, kinship, descent, inheritance, caste hierarchy, and other cultural traditions. Hindu society is a complex phenomenon, developed by the integration of a system of theology with a system of social organization. It is often said that Hinduism is not just a religion but a way of life. As a way of life, Hindu society cannot be regarded as being homogenous, for the religious influences have varied through the ages and among peoples at different levels of the social hierarchy (Ponniah 1989).

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The status of women in pre-colonial era was every low. Their roles and status were highly influenced and subjugated by the traditions such as religious principles, caste rules, norms, and customs and so on. Various practices like Sati, prohibition of widow remarriage, child marriage and other practices forced them to live in worse conditions. The social structure allowed men greater freedom and liberty and greater access and control over resources, from which women were excluded. The laws did not recognize equality of sexes and equal rights for men and women.

With the arrival of the British, the Christian missionaries had taken an important role for the upliftment of downtrodden sections of the society including women. They build schools to educate them about their rights, along with their true intention of spreading their religion. More alarming at that time were the practices of Sati, child marriage, female infanticide, Devadasi system, pardha system and others which they wanted to free women from and also create a political platform for them.

Independent India saw more liberated women who have created a literature of their own, placing women in the context of the changing social scenario. But increasing education, better job opportunities and awareness of rights and privileges of women have forced her to ponder and define her role in society.

Keywords

Roles of women

Status of women in Pre-colonial India

Status of women in Colonial India

Status of women in Post-colonial India

Power and status

Self Assessment

   1. Gender roles are _____

   A. Constant

   B. Not constant

   C. Fixed by God

   D. None of the above

   2. The status of women during pre-colonial were much higher than post-colonial India.

   A. True

   B. False

   3. Historians argue that despite several legislations and other changes in favour of women over the past two hundred years there has been little significant alteration to the traditional structure of _____ because still there are some deep ideological and structural roots through which this domination has been perpetuated.

   A. Male dominance and authority

   B. Female dominance and authority

   C. Both a and b

   D. Neither a nor b

4. Throughout the Vedic period, women in India especially of the _____ were given equal status with men.

A. Upper caste

B. Middle Caste

C. Lower caste

D. All the above

5. This low status of Indian women were mainly emerged from _____ and male domination, economic dependence of women over men, various caste and religious restrictions.

A. Overpowering patriarchy

B. Overpowering matriarchy

C. Neolocal family

D. All the above

6. Procreation of _____ became a religious necessity for he alone could discharge certain ritual obligations to the ancestors.

A. A daughter

B. A son

C. Both a son and a daughter

D. Neither a son nor a daughter

7. In view of the Muslim invasion, the indigenous culture had been subjected to _____

A. Acculturation

B. Intolerance

C. Ethnocentrism

D. Prejudice

8. There were many factors directly or indirectly responsible for the continuous deterioration of the status of Indian women in medieval times. _____ became a rule – to safeguard the honour and chastity of girls.

A. Child marriage

B. Widow marriage

C. Dowry

D. Sati

9. By _____, Indian Women had been granted the right to vote

A. 1929

B. 1939

C. 1949

D. 1959

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10._____, which fixed the minimum age at marriage for girls at 14, was enacted in 1929.

A. The Sarda Act

B. The Sarat Act

C. The Dowry act

D. None of the above

11. _____ provides women with equal rights to divorce and remarry. Also, the act prohibits polygamy, polyandry and child marriage practices.

A. The Hindu Marriage Act 1955

B. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956

C. The Special Marriage Act, 1954

D. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

12. The National Commission for Women (NCW) was set up on _____ to look into women related issues.

A. January 31, 1992

B. January 31, 1982

C. January 31, 2002

D. January 31, 2022

13. _____ of women in society is explained in terms of "role" which is assigned to them by tradition, religion, ideology and the state of economic development.

A. Education

B. Status

C. Tradition

D. Development

14. If we want to study the status of women in any society, we must study the complexity of _____ which women perform in society in the socio-economic, cultural, religious and political fields

A. Roles

B. Norms

C. Power

D. Status

15. Status is determined to a great extent by the _____ enjoyed by men and women in the domestic and social spheres

A. Power

B. Education

C. Role

D. Mobility

Answers for Self Assessment

| l. | B | 2. | B | 3. | A | 4. | A | 5. | A |

| 6. | B | 7. | A | 8. | A | 9. | A | 10. | A |

| 11. | A | 12. | A | 13. | B | 14. | A | 15. | A |

Review Questions

1. Examine status of women during the colonial era.

2. Critically examine the changing status of women during colonial and post-colonial period.

3. Discuss power and status in understanding women's status in India.

4. Write a note of different parameters to measures women's status in Contemporary India.

5. Discuss Contemporary women's status highlighting the decision making areas in both domestic and public spheres.

Further Reading

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Unit 11: Demographic Profile

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Objectives

This unit discusses the demographic profile focusing on the gender gap in India. From this unit, students will be able

- To understand the gender demographic profile in Indian context
- To aware the imbalance of literacy rate and sex ratio between male and female.
- To learn theaging population between male and female in India
- To inculcate the problem of gendered health and nutrition.
- To understand the gender inequality in the area of work, and ownership of property.

Introduction

Researchers and statisticians believed that India's population was relatively youthful. Both its birth and mortality rates are comparable to the world average. Less than one-fourth of the population is over 45 and more than half is under 30. Men and women may expect to live to be roughly 68 and 70 years old, respectively.

A fundamental model for describing population dynamics has emerged, and it is called the Demographic Transition model.The model posits four stages in the evolution of the population in a society.

a) High fertility, high mortality (pre-industrial)

b) High fertility, declining mortality (industrializing)

c) Declining fertility, low mortality

d) Low fertility, low mortality (stable population)

Prior to the last several centuries, the pre-industrial period predominated over the globe. Because high birth rates, which were essential for population survival in Stage 1, remain ingrained in the cultural, religious, economic, and political fabric of pre-modern cultures, rapid population increase

has happened in Stages 2 and 3. Until society adapts to the new reality and fertility declines, population growth is rapid as economic and public health advancements reduce death rates.

The alterations in the two main drivers of growth—fertility and mortality—were substantially responsible for the changes in population size and growth. Total fertility rate (TFR) significantly declined globally, as well as in both more and less developed areas, between 1950 and 2015.

In general, the entire spectrum of demographic structure indicators—size, composition, e.g., age, sex, civil status, household structure, race and ethnicity, employment, income and education—are all crucial factors to take into account when evaluating human needs and providing explanations for both individual and group behaviour. Demographers believe that age and sex are the two aspects of human populations that are most significant and meaningful.

The division of labour in traditional societies is mostly determined by sex and age. A population's age distribution changes have an impact on social, political, and economic life. Age and sex distribution in a society has significant effects on socioeconomic and demographic growth, as well as labour force participation and gender relations (Keyfitz 1965).

With this explanation on the general understanding of demography, now we will turn into the demographic profile related to gender gap in various aspects in Indian context.

11.1 Population of India

As of March 1, 2011, there were 1,210 million people living in India. Between 2001 and 2011, it climbed by 17.64 percent, which is thought to correspond to an average yearly growth rate of 1.64 percent. This is a slowdown from the 1.95 percent yearly increase between 1991 and 2001, although it is a very little one. It's conceivable that the 2011 Census was more accurate than the 2001 one because of the emphasis on counting women, statistically amplifying the rise during the previous ten years. It is necessary to consider a few features.

First, according to preliminary data, there has been a very noticeable rise in the literacy rate, which today stands at 74% and increased by about 10% between 2001 and 2011.Gender differences do remain but there again the gap between men and women has narrowed from 22 percentage points in the 2001 Census to 17 percentage points now.

Literacy Rate

One of the causes of gender disparity, which demonstrates a significant discrepancy between men and women, is illiteracy. According to the 2011 Indian census, 74.04 percent of Indians are literate, with male literacy standing at 82.14 percent and female literacy at only 65.46 percent. Not only are one-third of women and one-quarter of all Indians still illiterate, but the literacy rates are also below the planning commission's 2011–2012 target of 85%. Despite Kerala, none of the states with a larger population have accomplished reaching this number.

Between 2001 and 2011, there were 217.8 more million people who could read and write. Out of this, 131.1 million live in rural regions, while 86.6 million live in metropolitan areas. In utter Pradesh, there are the most literate rural residents. Additionally, Maharashtra has the highest urban literacy rate. Additionally, it has been noted that rural regions have had a two-fold increase in literacy rates compared to metropolitan areas between 2001 and 2011.

Sex Ratio

Contradictory developments in the sex ratio of the general population and among children under the age of six are another phenomenon. The number of females for every 1000 males in the general population has slightly increased from 933 in the 2001 census to 940 in the 2011 census.This indicates an improvement in female mortality. However, one thing which is worrying is that over the same period there has been a sharp drop in the child sex ratio from 927 to 914.
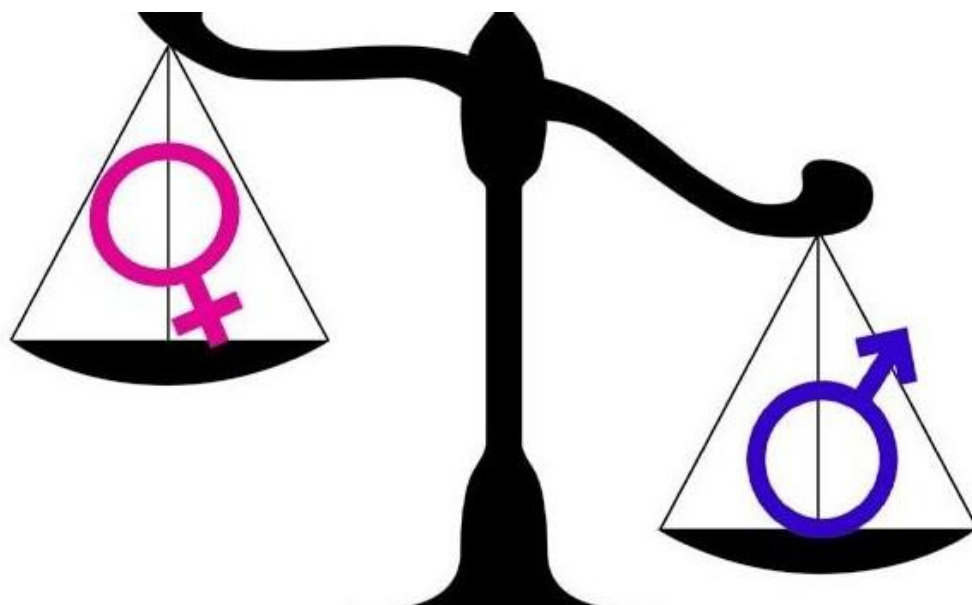
This indicates that while adult female mortality has decreased, the birth sex selection rate for girls has increased. The odd thing about the movement of the child sex ratio is that a path of decline has been formed in other states as well, including Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa, where the statistic is either stable or has even slightly decreased. That related to the overall sex ratio. Although things have improved after 2001, the larger problem of a high child sex ratio still exists.

In this kind of inequality, boys are preferred over girls in many male-dominated civilizations. Gender inequality can take the form of parents preferring their new baby to be a boy over a girl. Gender inequality and notions of gender-appropriate behaviour are heavily influenced by cultural institutions in India, notably those of patrilineality (inheritance through male descendants) and patrilocality (married couples living with or close to the husband's parents). Poorer outcomes for female children are associated with culturally engrained parental preferences for boys, which stem from their importance as caregivers for elderly parents.

Another institution that oppresses women is the dowry system, which entails a payment in cash or in kind from the bride's family to the groom's at the time of marriage.

In all areas and social strata, the prevalence of dowry payments, which are frequently a sizable portion of a household's income, has been continuously increasing over time. When the dowry is deemed insufficient or used as a tool to demand further payments, this frequently leads to dowry-related violence against women by the women's husbands and in-laws.

However, due to the social nature of the issue, the legislation banning dowries has not had the desired effects on our culture. This issue may be resolved by appealing to people's social and moral consciences, granting women access to education and economic independence, and vigorously enforcing laws that prohibit the dowry system.

These behaviours encourage parents to avoid having female children or to make less investments in the health and education of girls. In India, the sex ratios are becoming more and more masculine, reflecting these parental choices. This perpetuates Indian women's low status and increases the likelihood that they may experience violence in their married homes.

11.2 <u>Male-Female Aging scenario in India</u>

Another still-emerging topic to consider in the current setting is the aspect of ageing. The percentage of people 60 and older in the population is used to describe how old a population is. In affluent nations, population ageing has become a major source of worry. But India has just recently begun to pay attention to this issue. The percentage of old people has continuously increased since the early 1950s. The ageing process has accelerated in recent years due to a persistent fall in both fertility and death rates, and we anticipate that our senior population will increase three times as quickly as that of affluent nations.

The ratio of the elderly varies greatly amongst the various Indian states. Kerala outpaces other Indian states in terms of the percentage of men and women who are over 60. Kerala has a 20% greater percentage of older women than the rest of the nation. While Kerala had a greater percentage of older males, it was only by 9%. If we look at the percentage of women in each state, it seems that in two-thirds of them, the ageing process is a little bit more advanced for women than it is for males. In order to divide the elderly population among women into the three age categories of 60–64, 65–69, and 70+, all states other than Kerala and Haryana were excluded.

Sex Ratio among elderly:

Males have continuously outnumbered females in India's population makeup during every census era. Although the general tendency is relatively similar, this sex ratio appears to somewhat improve among the elderly in India, especially among the extremely elderly. This Indian trend is different from how things are going in the majority of Western nations. Contrary to Kerala, the country as a whole has more women than males, but only when it comes to those who are really old — those who are 70 or older. There are more old men than elderly women in each of the other three age groups, or there are 100 more elderly men than elderly women. In Kerala, the sex ratio is disproportionately in favour of women compared to figures for all of India.

Extension of life:

The prolongation of life is one of the effects of the population's ageing. The likelihood of living to various ages is one indicator of this. Indian women's life expectancy at birth was only 32.5 years as late as 1951. Prior to the birth of their first child, over one-third of the women were likely to have lost their own mothers, and nearly half of the women were likely to have lost at least one parent. 90% of women will live to become grandparents as the average life expectancy at birth rises to over 60 years.

Male life expectancy was greater than female life expectancy in India overall at birth, but that difference has since shrunk from 1.5 years to 1 year, a 33 percent reduction. In India, the gender gap is anticipated to remain in favour of males well into the next century, but it is anticipated to close even further between 2000 and 2005. Only towards the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century will women in India have higher life expectancy rates.

11.3 Health and Nutrition

One of the most important underlying causes of poor nutrition in South Asia and India is gender discrimination. The fundamental cause of problems like restricted availability to nutrient-dense food, limited time and control over time, and limited access to sanitary facilities is poverty. In the context of India, there are two approaches to examine gender bias in child health and nutrition: one is through "selected discrimination," and the other is through "generalised generalisation." Das Gupta (1987) proposed the idea of selective discrimination when he asserted that gender discrimination was dependent on the birth order and sex of a child's older siblings. According to Das Gupta, the main cause of excess mortality for second and third daughters was the insufficient parental provision of essential resources (such as nutrition and medical care) to those daughters. Das Gupta demonstrated that "daughters with at least one sister had a higher risk of mortality." He said it was the result of deliberate calculations and judgments regarding the relative worth of each daughter. While the generalised prejudice mentioned by Ranjan and Morgan (2018), which is a result of the patriarchal social framework, impacts all girls. Parents give their boys more attention in this form of discrimination than they do their girls. As a result, all girls go through a type of "naturalised deprivation," in which family members embrace the gendered perspective that women are secondary.

South Asian society has long been known for its son-preference and anti-girl discrimination, which are both ingrained in and support patriarchy. A daughter's standing within the family has historically been poor in India due to a mix of social, economic, and religious circumstances. The long-standing preference for treating men better in order to maintain the family lineage is the basis for strong patrilineal descent, patrilocal residency, and gender-biased inheritance laws. In a patriarchal country like India, gender roles in the household go beyond simple labour allocation to include positions of superior and inferiority. The best care has been given to the male family members since it is believed that males are superior to women.

The health of Indian women is also inextricably tied to their social standing. High death rates affect Indian women, especially while they are young and productive. In India, women come from a variety of socioeconomic situations and are occasionally overlooked or discriminated when it comes to receiving basic healthcare. Thus, the majority of research discovered that there was a significant desire for sons, which is thought to be the cause of several other discriminatory behaviours against females in education, health care, and even eating.

11.4 Gender Inequality in Work and Payment

Women frequently experience larger barriers than males to employment and career advancement. Even while countries like Japan and India may be relatively equitable in terms of basic amenities and higher education, advancement to higher levels of job and vocation appears to be considerably more difficult for women than it is for males. Unpaid care work and uneven remuneration at employment are two examples.

With regard to the idea of the traditional division of labour between men and women, this is also quite significant. Men and women really appear to split labour in almost every known community, from the prehistoric hunter-gatherer way of life through agricultural and herding groups, all the way up to the modern, industrialised world. Although there are some universal characteristics, the form it takes may occasionally and in different cultures vary.

Men are more likely than women to occupy employment with higher monetary incentives due to the gender divide in the workforce. Women's low socioeconomic standing led to their dependence on males. This domestic labour divide has a negative impact on women's employment opportunities. The hierarchical domestic division of labour is then maintained by the labour market, and vice versa.

One of the problems is the gender pay gap, which in India refers to the salary disparity between men and women in paid work in the labour market. The Indian Constitution acknowledged the concepts of "Right to Work" and "Equal Pay for Equal Work" for both men and women.

In the context of work or occupations, salary differentials relate to wage inequalities or discrimination between men and women. Men and women are paid differently, as evidenced by the fact that women are paid less than men. Wage inequalities are common and may be found in many different countries and economies. The position of women in the home and in public life is related to the financial gap between men and women.

Additionally, it encourages the exploitation of women in the workplace, the family, the community, and in public life. Without a doubt, India's constitution guarantees equal employment opportunities and require the state to provide everyone with a good standard of living, equal pay for equal work, and fair working conditions. Despite government initiatives, women's economic position remains behind that of men's by a wide margin.

11.5   Inequality in Property Ownership

Property ownership may be quite uneven in many societies. Even fundamental resources like homes and land can be distributed extremely unequally. Women's voices may be diminished by the lack of property rights, but it may also be more difficult for them to participate in and succeed in commercial, economic, and even certain social endeavours. The majority of the globe has experienced this kind of inequality, however there are some regional variances. As a result, there is now a sizable disparity in property ownership between men and women.

In many countries across the world, social norms, customs, and laws restrict women's access to property, lowering their economic status and reducing their chances of escaping poverty. Even in countries where women make up the majority of small farmers and carry out more than 75% of the agricultural labour, women are frequently denied the right to own the land that they produce and depend on to support their children. Owning land and property gives women more power because it offers stability and income. Women who lack access to resources like land have little say in household choices and no assets to fall back on in times of need. Women and their families experience poverty without the safety of a home or a steady source of income, and they struggle to get basic rights like education, sanitation, and healthcare.

Similar to women in other nations, Indian women's property rights have developed as a result of a protracted conflict between conservative and progressive forces. Although Indian women's

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property rights have greatly increased over the past century, they still have fewer rights in terms of both quality and quantity than men.

Property rights for Indian women are potentially unusual in that, like many other personal rights, there is a significant internal conflict among Indian women on these rights. India, which has a population of many different religions, nevertheless lacks a unified civil code. As a result, every religious sect continues to be governed by its own set of unique laws, which may include include restrictions on property rights. Even within religious organisations, there are sub-groups and local customs and norms, each with its own set of property rights.

11.6 The Global Gender Report

The gender gap in India has widened to 62.5%, largely due to women's inadequate representation in politics, technical and leadership roles, decrease in women's labour force participation rate, poor healthcare, lagging female to male literacy ratio, income inequality.

In 2021, India dropped 28 positions and was rated 140th out of 156 countries that took part in the rankings, according to this research. Pakistan and Afghanistan do worse than it, whereas Bangladesh performs the best among the South Asian nations. According to the survey, the nation performed the lowest in terms of political empowerment. It is among the bottom five performers in terms of health and survival. On the front of educational attainment, India stands in the 114th place, while the economic participation and opportunity gap experienced a reduction of 3% from 2020.

Scores on the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), which analyses the disparity between men and women in four dimensions—economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment—are provided in the Global Gender Gap Report. India's score has decreased significantly from 2020, mostly because of the Political Empowerment factor. Given that India has granted women a 30% reservation at the local self-government level and that women now make up more than 30% of local self-government organisations, it is expected that India would have one of the highest scores in the world in this category. The World Economic Forum, however, solely considers the representation of women in parliament.

However, the Government of India has made great efforts and given it top priority to close the gender gap in India by lowering inequality, enhancing women's health, raising their socioeconomic position, and boosting their engagement in a variety of professions. The following are some significant actions the Indian government has done to close the gender gap in all spheres of social, economic, and political life:

i) Economic Participation

- Working Women Hostel scheme, launched in April 2017 ensures the safety and security for working women that is designed for meeting the housing requirements of working or helpless women.
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY-U) (June 2015) aims to provide housing under the name of the woman.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana aims to enable a large number of Indian youths including women to take up industry-relevant skill training in securing a better livelihood.
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna - Under this scheme girls have been economically empowered by opening their bank accounts.
- Skill Upgradation & Mahila Coir Yojna is an exclusive training programme of MSME aimed at skill development of women artisans engaged in coir Industry.
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme is a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector.
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana provides access to institutional finance to micro/small business.

ii) Education related schemes

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 22nd January, 2015 to ensure the protection, survival and education of the girl child.

- Samagra Shiksha Scheme inter alia has provisions of gender segregated toilets in all schools and teachers' sensitization programmes to promote girls' participation, Rani Laxmi Bai Atmaraksha Prashikshan and stipend for girl children with special needs.

- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) have been opened in educationally backward blocks for girls belonging to disadvantaged groups.

- University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) are implementing various fellowship/scholarship schemes. 159 Women Studies Centres have been established in various Universities and Colleges to undertake research and develop curricula in the areas of gender equity, economic self-reliance of women, girls' education, etc. In order to improve Gender Balance in Undergraduate Programmes in IITs, 5039 supernumerary seats for female students have been created since 2018-19.

iii) Health and Nutrition

- Government has announced Mission Poshan 2.0 to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition.

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandna Yojna aims to provide maternity benefit to pregnant and lactating mothers.

- Implementation of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health plus Nutrition (RMNCAH+N)

- Rollout of Comprehensive Primary Health Care including health promotion through Ayushman Bharat-Health & Wellness Centers (AB-HWC)

- Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) to provide financial assistance to pregnant women for encouraging institutional delivery.

- Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) to provide comprehensive and quality ANC to pregnant women on the 9th of every month.

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana empowers women and protects their health by providing LPG cylinder free of cost.

iv) Political Participation

- To bring women in the mainstream of political leadership at the grass root level, government has reserved 33% of the seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions for women. Capacity Building of Panchayat Stakeholders including Elected Women Representatives is conducted with a view to empowering women to participate effectively in the governance processes.

Summary

Demographers believe that age and sex are the two aspects of human populations that are most significant and meaningful.

According to the 2011 Indian census, 74.04 percent of Indians are literate, with male literacy standing at 82.14 percent and female literacy at only 65.46 percent.

The number of females for every 1000 males in the general population has slightly increased from 933 in the 2001 census to 940 in the 2011 census.

Parental preference for boys, which stems from their significance as carers for parents in old age, is connected to worse outcomes for female children in the deeply ingrained patriarchal society.

The percentage of people 60 and older in the population is used to describe how old a population is. The ageing process has been exacerbated by a consistent reduction in mortality and fertility rates, and we anticipate that our senior population will increase three times as quickly as that of affluent nations.

Understanding gender discrimination in Indian health and nutrition requires an understanding of both "selective" and "generalised" discrimination. In India, there is a strong desire for boys, which is said to be the cause of a variety of discriminatory behaviours against females in the areas of education, health care, and even nutrition.

Between men and women, there is a sizable disparity in wage inequality in the workplace.

Frequently, women are not allowed to own land. Being a patrilocal and patrilineal culture, the family's land and possessions are passed down through the male line from generation to generation. Similar to women in other nations, Indian women's property rights have developed as a result of a protracted conflict between conservative and progressive forces.

Keywords

Demographic prolife

Literacy rate

Aging

Health and nutrition

Gender inequality in work

Gendered property ownership

Self Assessment

1) Scholars and statistical analyst considered that India's population is_____
A. Young
B. Mature
C. Old
D. None of the above

2. The Demographic Transition model is a fundamental model which has developed to describe _____
A. Fixed population
B. Unchanged population
C. Population dynamics
D. Gender population

3. According to Demographic Transition model, high fertility and high mortality is a significant features of _____
A. Industrial society
B. Pre-industrial society
C. Stable population
D. All the above

4. Low fertility, low mortality is a characteristic of _____

A. Stable population
B. Pre-industrial society
C. Industrial society
D. All the above

5. The changes in population size and growth were due largely to shifts in the two principal components of growth, _____

A. Both fertility and mortality
B. Fertility
C. Mortality
D. Education

6. _____ is one of the factors responsible for gender inequality.
A. Female illiteracy
B. Imbalance sex ratio
C. Both a and b
D. Only a

7. Cause for imbalance sex ratio
A. Preference for female child
B. Preference for male child
C. Increase rate of unmarried individuals
D. Increase of divorce rate

8. The 'ageing of a population' is defined in terms of the proportion of persons _____ in the total population.

A. Aged 60 and over
B. Aged 50 and over
C. Aged 70 and over
D. Aged below 60

9. The concern about ageing population has been quite prevalent in the _____

A. Under-developed countries
B. Developing countries
C. Developed countries
D. Third world countries

10. One of the implications of the ageing population is _____

A. The expansion of education
B. The extension of life
C. The extension of economic system
D. All the above

11. _____ is one of the most significant underlying factors for poor nutrition.
A. Gender discrimination

B. Gender neutrality

C. Gender equality

D. Gender diversity

12. Gender discrimination based on the birth order and sex of child's older siblings.

A. Generalized discrimination

B. Selective discrimination

C. Opted discrimination

D. None of the above

13. A type gender discrimination in which parents provide significant care to sons compared to their daughters especially in the context of food and nutrition.

A. Generalized discrimination

B. Selective discrimination

C. Opted discrimination

D. None of the above

14. This gender segregation in work means that men are more likely than women to hold jobs with higher monetary rewards.

A. True

B. False

15. _____ in India refers to the difference in earnings between women and men in the paid employment and labor market

A. Gender pay gap

B. Balanced gender pay

C. Both a and b

D. Neither a nor b

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	C	3.	B	4.	A	5.	A
6.	C	7.	B	8.	A	9.	C	10.	B
11.	A	12.	B	13.	A	14.	A	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Write a short note on sex ratio and illiteracy rate.

2. Discuss aging population.

3. Define work. Discuss the gender inequality in nature of work and gender gap in payment.

4. Define gender discrimination and examine the gender-bias in access to health and nutrition India.

5. Critically examine women and property ownership.

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Unit 12: Development of Women's Studies in India

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Summary

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Objectives

This unit explains the development of Women's Studies in India. From this unit, students will be able:

- To understand the development of women's studies in India.
- To acquaint the relation between women's struggle and the rise of women's studies in India.
- To understand various agencies for undertaking women studies and the expansion of women's studies
- To awarethe concern areas as well as the challenges in the development of women's studies.

Introduction

Since the mid-1970s, this new area of research has grown and flourished, focused on women, their lives, and their difficulties. Currently, the field is extremely broad, extending well beyond any traditional specialty. The notion of the union of academic critique and actual radical transformation underpins Women's Studies. It owes its beginnings and presence as an academic field to the specific practise of the Women's Movement, which gained traction in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Public disputes concerning women and their standing, on the whole, date from the eighteenth century. This was also the century of major social changes, which were largely spearheaded by males; but, towards the end of the century, some women had acquired entry to the public sphere. Thus, themes of rights and equality, as well as terminology like feminism, were first heard in the early twentieth century, whether claimed or rejected by women themselves.

The majority of study in the discipline of Women's Studies was driven by the demands of the movement and was ultimately intended to lead to social action that would emancipate women. Women's Studies may thus be seen of as starting with social action and finishing with social action, with analysis, theory, and prediction serving as a bridge between the two.

Women activists in the movement recognise that their fight for societal change must include not just the restructuring of patriarchal relations, but also the existing intellectual legacy that has contributed to their subjugation throughout history. Women have also felt compelled to reform the

entire body of "scientific" knowledge. This would entail a situation whereby activists should combine activism with research and correspondingly researchers should combine scholarly pursuit with some degree of participation in social protest and with some commitment to the broader goal of social transformation. This is, however, easier said than done. For both research and activism call for different kinds of skills and finally it is a matter of one's inclination and aptitude & which in fact could be developed if academic disciplines were to reorient their training programmes.

12.1   The First National Crisis and the Birth of Women's Studies

The late 1960s and early 1970s were the first significant turning point in India's post-independence social and political history. The Indian Constitution established equality between men and women as a basic right in 1950. The nation's post-independence historical knowledge of its institutions and peoples, political processes, and the ideas and disputes that saturated them all is just beginning to be written.

In two decades, the ethos of legitimacy that preceded the foundation of the new nation state had worn down, with increasing criticism and public protests in a variety of places and forms. Urban unemployment, food shortages, and drought cast serious doubt on the Nehruvian model of planned development, as well as Indira Gandhi's Congress administration. Not only were political panics throughout the ideological spectrum garnering support, but ostensibly apolitical groups were also coming to the streets, signalling a new degree of political activity.

Students and housewives in places like Gujarat, for example, have fought against rising prices, corruption, and hoarding, and have even caused the state administration to quit. Students, physicians, scientists, and others fled their cities to join rural groups and conflicts, such as the Bhil adivasis in Maharashtra and militant left-wing peasant organisations in Bihar, Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala.

In Ahmedabad in 1974, Gandhian-inspired agitation took the form of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), the first organisation of women workers. In 1974, a nationwide strike by an estimated one million railway employees brought the rails to a standstill for three weeks, setting a new high for trade union action.

'It was in these alternative development initiatives, mass struggles and agitations that middle class and working class women joined in large numbers and with militancy,' according to women's movement historians Nandita Gandhi and Nandita Shah. The most obvious origins of what, by the early 1980s, had become a democratic uprising on numerous fronts, including a women's movement in its own right, were the mounting economic and political crises, which was mostly aimed against the state. Other processes, however, were also set in motion in the early 1970s, that were less well known, but equally significant for understanding the emergence of women's studies and its complex relationship to the women's movement and to the state.

By a decree of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, the Government of India established the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) in 1971. Members of this committee were tasked with compiling a complete analysis of women's rights and status, with a particular focus on education and employment, in light of the relevant constitutional, legislative, and administrative provisions. The goal was to provide suggestions that would "allow women to play their full and legitimate part in the nation's development."

The findings of their investigation into the social, legal, educational, economic, and political position of women came as a great shock to the committee members because they were academics, social workers, policymakers, and politicians who were directly beneficiaries of national development. For the 'Towards Equality' study revealed that, with the notable exception of middle-class women's access to education, which had exploded following independence, the great majority of women's conditions had been deteriorating since the 1950s, frequently at a faster rate. Whether it's the first evidence of a diminishing sex ratio, or women's isolation from capitalism and modernization processes.

12.2   Early Attempt Towards Setting up Women's Studies

The first push for the establishment of women's studies in India came from a generation of social scientists who became more skeptical of their own position within higher education. The early 1970s were a time of increased radicalization, with women taking part in a variety of battles, but it

was not yet a moment when women's causes had received public prominence and a place of their own. This indicates that the first explicit name of women's studies, which occurred in a women's university in 1974, came before the start of a new phase in India's women's movement.

Neera Desai, a sociologist at Bombay's SNDT Women's University, recalls the identity struggle she went through as someone who was carrying on the now-uncontroversial legacy of social change, women's education. The disturbing findings of the Towards Equality report provided the push for realising those women's lives, especially those of poor rural women, needed recognition and transformation, in the context of her growing dissatisfaction with the university's ambivalent approach to modernising courses while fostering a conservative upper caste vision of women's domestic role. In order to do this, a women's studies research unit was founded in 1974. A fundamental shift was thus inaugurated from women as subjects to be educated to 'women' as new subjects of investigation and study. 'A theoretical view of systemic women's subordination was not yet on the horizon, but women's studies was already being identified as an instrument of change' (Krishnaraj 2004 , 87).

In 1975, the ICSSR, the country's apex research body, began a sponsored programme on women's studies, with broad consent that included the generation and analysis of data to uncover significant trends in women's positions, the development of new perspectives in the social sciences, and the revival of the debate on the women's question (ICSSR 1977).

The Executive Committee members & Local Organisers
First row - Meenakshi Apte
Middle row - Ratna Kumari, Nirmala Banerjee, Kamala Bhasin, Kalpana Kannabiran, Chhaya Datar, Manjeet Bhatia, Rohini Gawankar
Last row- Usha Kanhere, Bhavana Mehata, Poornima Chikarmane, Manu Bhaskar, Gabriele Dietrich

Source: Source: Indian Association of Women Studies.org

The ICSSR's multi-pronged programming structure clearly established the importance of women's studies, not just in terms of data collecting, but also in terms of putting a claim on the social sciences and political participation. The subject of women continues to invite a variety of responses. A common view at the time was to approach women's issues as characteristically social problems, harking back perhaps to the era of social reform itself, and co conceptions of the low status of women, which tend to engender attitudes of upliftment rather than critique.

12.3 Women's Studies and the Women's Movement

As more and more groups sprung up, bringing new topics into public discourse when battles deepened, these crucial beginnings were able to join other forces, particularly a developing women's movement, as the Emergency was lifted in 1977. This also depicts the confrontation between women's studies and a newly developing women's movement in the 1970s. The "Towards Equality report" inspired many feminists and activists, and it is considered a founding text for the feminist movement.

Both the movement and women's studies shared a common driving force that of introducing a change of vision compared to the past, whether this be past struggles, earlier perspectives on women or the dominant orientations of academic research. Thus, Nandita Gandhi and Nandita Shah opined that the emerging phase of the movement as being 'also concerned with violence against women, although not with the earlier issues of sati and ill-treatment of widows, but with rape and wife battering; with marriage, but not widow or child marriages, rather divorce, maintenance and child custody; with legislative reform, not the enactment of more laws but in amendments and with the implementation of the existing ones; with education, not merely spreading educational facilities but attacking sexist and stereotyped textbooks, with equality, not only equal rights, but equal opportunities to work and with equal pay' (1992, 21). These new perspectives and issues were therefore constantly in focus. The situation was not very different in early reviews of women's studies.

Vina Mazumdar and Kumud Sharma published "Women's Studies: New Perspectives and Challenges" in 1979, which was the first debate on the scope of women's studies. In light of the history of social reform, women's political mobilisation during the nationalist struggle, and constitutional guarantees of equality, they drew attention to a range of new research, particularly studies that challenged older theses on the role of "tradition" or "culture" in explaining women's low status. Instead, they called out for more studies on women's participation in agriculture, in the urban informal sector, the effects of modernization, women's declining political representation, the nature of contemporary socialization processes, and so on, to argue strongly for a 're-examination of conventional theories and strategic for women's development' and a recognition of' the complexity and the magnitude of problems of women and development'.

Women's organisations gathered in Bombay in 1980 for the first national conference on a perspective for the Indian women's movement. The following year, the same city held the first national conference on women's studies, which received a similar enthusiastic response from over 400 delegates. On the one hand, the women's movement conference was the culmination of a coalition of groups, organisations, and individuals, spearheaded by the autonomous Bombay-based Forum against Rape, who wished to carry forward the nationwide protests sparked by the publicity surrounding a police rape, the Mathura case, who wished to take forward the nationwide protests sparked by the publicity surrounding a police rape, the Mathura case.

The SNDT Women's University held the women's studies conference, which received widespread support from a variety of government institutions, ministries, and organisations to help 'initiate the long overdue process of incorporating women's perspectives and responsibilities in academic studies' (National Conference 1981). Whereas the movement conference focused on organisational concerns and laying out a plan to oppose violence, the women's studies gathering focused on research agendas and syllabi critique.

The intriguing topic here is how we should think about the link between women's studies, the feminist movement, and educational issues. It's important to remember that college and university instructors, students, and researchers were key participants and leaders in both. Furthermore, successive women's studies conferences were far from ivory tower gatherings, with topics that reflected on and attempted to intervene in the most pressing concerns of the day. In other words, all stories indicate that women's studies benefited from some kind of government backing and were closely linked to a thriving movement. The most challenging and illusive component of the history of women's studies is assessing the influence of women's studies on the higher education system. The agenda for the inaugural conference on women's studies could not have been clearer: Women's studies was a critical viewpoint, not a field, and certainly not a unique issue that needed to be articulated across all disciplines, institutions, studies and fields. This was a hugely ambitious mission, a reflection of the optimism and vigour of the day, when views were broadening in scope. Separate women's studies programmes and courses were referred to as a 'temptation' by none other than the chairwoman of the University Grants Commission, Madhuri Shah, who opened the meeting. 'The ideal state would be reached when women's concerns, perceptions and problems have been so internalized by different disciplines at different levels of the educational process, that there will be no need for promoting women's studies separately' (National Conference 1981, 10). The dominant mood was one that voiced the idea of setting up autonomous centres or degrees in women's studies as a move to be opposed, however tempting it might appear to some.

12.4 The Identity of Women's Studies: Past Challenges in India

Many in the Indian context have been perplexed by the identification of women's studies from the start because it was not intended as a separate area of study but rather targeted to the whole

academic community. Unlike in other areas of the globe, particularly the United States, where feminist pressure pushed women's studies to become a significant independent force in higher education, we found no one here who was interested in establishing women's studies departments. The desire was for intervention and reform in education, and higher education was the best place to start. Only after the event, with the advantage of hindsight, can we see some of the inconsistencies that this viewpoint implied.

There are little indications that these issues were recognised at the time. For one thing, the Institute of Social Studies Trust (1980), the Centre for Women's Development Studies (1980), and the Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies were among the first institutions to house women's studies, followed by the Institute of Social Studies Trust (1980), the Centre for Women's Development Studies (1980), and the Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies (1985). It was not by chance—in some cases, it was a conscious choice—that they were predominantly, if not entirely, research centres, separate from the day-to-day operations and structures of university and college departments. Research was frequently envisioned as a type of outreach, connecting a politically informed class of women and men in higher education to the lives and reality of women outside of the classroom. The belief and hope was that research and activism would become increasingly connected, whether through influencing state policy, or in relation to the women's movement.

This widely proclaimed need for fresh understanding about women, emphasised by everyone concerned—the state, international agencies, academics, and activists—fueled the expansion of women's studies in the 1980s. While there were disagreements about what sorts of viewpoints and study were needed, there were no voices of opposition to the broad mandate and scope of women's studies.

12.5 Women's studies and their Concern Areas

'Women activists in order to fight oppression look up to Women's Studies for conceptual and analytical tools that would enable them to interpret the origins and forms of their oppression and the mechanism through which it is perpetuated. Women's Studies has highlighted women's contributions to history and their significant role in the production and development of culture in the process of reinterpreting existing social science theories; in short, Women's Studies has made women academically visible. However, if significant change in women's positions is to be achieved, academic exposure of women must be accompanied by political action. All agreed that Women's Studies, as a field within any academic discipline, may make a significant contribution to the process of conscientisation that is necessary for any political movement.

After identifying the connections between women's organisations and Women's Studies, the participants proposed some activities that the new Women's Studies centres may undertake to aid the Women's Movement.

As previously said, studies on women arose as a direct result of the nineteenth-century Social Reform Movement and the debate on the woman question that erupted as part of the independence fight from the 1920s onwards. Indologists, social historians, social workers, sociologists, and anthropologists were the primary researchers for these works. Many of these studies were heavily influenced by the ideologies, concerns, and contradictions of the Social Reform Movement, which displayed an ambivalence between (i) a secular outlook which criticized customs like child marriage, purdah, the oppression of widows, denial of education and property rights to women, etc.; and (ii) cultural and religious nationalism that tended to glamorize the position of women in earlier periods. Only a few radical thinkers believed the subjugation and oppression of women was an instrument for maintaining the social order based on inequalities of caste, race, and sex.

During the 1950s, a few studies on women focusing, for example, on the history of the women's movement, on problems faced by women, and on women's situation in different periods of history. Studies on marriage and family and on tribal and village communities also included as important components on women.

According to a review of women's research trends, until the 1970s, the primary focus of research was on women's roles in the family, kinship, and other social institutions, with studies on women and education coming in second. During the 1960s, research on "working women" were mostly focused on urban, educated working women. They addressed professional issues to some extent, but their major focus was on role conflicts, as well as familial ties and conventional views and

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beliefs. These studies were limited in scope in terms of the overall number of working women in the nation, and they were significantly affected by Western analytical frameworks.

In the economic area, study concentrated mostly on women joining the contemporary sector, where their share of the workforce remained minuscule. It's astonishing that agrarian studies, which grew swiftly after independence, overlooked women's significant contributions to agriculture. The approach taken by most economists was a defining element of the social sciences' understanding of women's concerns. The vast majority of them thought that women's economic engagement was influenced by cultural views and hence unimportant to them. This notion was justified by the fact that the data was inadequate and that women's economic involvement could only be accomplished via increased education, urbanisation, and modernisation. During the 1970s, however, a few economists made significant contributions to women's research. The development of women's education and their enhanced involvement in decision-making, according to a large body of research on family planning and population concerns, would help population control and improve women's status. These studies made minimal effort to link reproductive behaviour to other important factors of women's status, such as job, family income, social class, and caste.

The Dantwala Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates underlined the necessity for labor-force statistics to be broken down, "taking into consideration such factors as religion, sex, age, rural and urban location, worker position or class, and educational attainments." Increasing preoccupation of social scientists with poverty and equality contributed most to the new interest in women's studies.

The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) Programme of Women's Studies took shape with three major objectives:

 (i) to improve policies for women's socioeconomic development;

(ii) to increase public consciousness and revive the debate on the woman question; and

(iii) "to develop new perspectives in the social sciences- through examining basic assumptions, methodological approaches, and concepts concerning the family, household, women's work, productivity, economic activity- to remedy the neglect and under-assessment of women's contributions to the society.

Purposive and problem-solving research that can aid policymaking in the area of women has been stressed in the ICSSR programmes. The Council promoted study on rural women, particularly those from lower socioeconomic groups, in order to better grasp the overall issue of development's negative impact on women.

12.6 Agencies that Promote Research on Women and the Expansion of Women Studies in India

The Indian Council of Social Science Research- an autonomous agency created by the Government of India- is the major research promotion agency that adopted, in the early-70s, the status of women as a priority area when it commissioned studies for the CSWI. This concern was developed further in 1976 through the sponsored Programme of Women's Studies. year. The following priority areas were identified for research during the first phase: (1) Changes in occupational structure: emerging trends; (2) Evaluation of development programs; (3) Patterns of family organization and socialization practices; (4) Causes and consequences of excess of female over male migration; (5) Women's movement; (6) Role in the decision-making process.

Promotion of women's studies is one of the possible items of support in the UGC's Sixth Plan plan. It remains to be seen what route this advertising campaign will take. Other national research funding bodies, such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Indian Council of Medical Research, and the Indian Council of Historical Research, have yet to formulate a policy or set of priorities for promoting women's research. A few studies have received funding, mostly as a result of requests from government entities dealing with women.

The establishing of cells inside the Ministries of Rural Reconstruction, Labour and Employment, and Social Welfare was one of the tactics used after 1975 to strengthen government attention to women's issues. To strengthen their programme design, they financed research in certain areas of interest, largely applied research.

The S.N.D.T. Women's University Research Unit on Women's Studies, which was created in 1974, was the only special unit conducting research on women until 1981. Various women's studies centres have now been established across India. Kanpur University has chosen to establish a comparable women's studies centre. Within the universities of Rajasthan and Warangal, special units have been developed.

In addition, a few women's colleges have started developing programs for teaching, research, and action related to women. These include I.T. College, Lucknow, Lady Doak College, Madurai, St. Christopher Teachers' Training College, Madras, Sophia College, Bombay; and Stella Maria College, Madras. Many of these programs were still in a formative stage during this phase.

The Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) was established in 1980 and has started a new trend that is institutions focusing entirely on women's issues. Some of these institutions have grown out of the concerns of women's groups engaged in action programs for women's development: for example, towards southern India that is Bharathi, Madras (Chennai); and Research Centre on Women, Calcutta in Eastern India. In response to a resolution by the National Conference on Women's Studies (NCWS), the Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS) has recently been established with the following objectives: providing a forum for interaction; developing and disseminating information; organizing specific action programs; and assisting institutions to develop programs of teaching, research, and action. Founding members of this Association include S.N.D.T. Women's University and the Center for Women's Development Studies.

Along with universities, non-academic spaces like autonomous research centres were also established in the 1980s, Institute of Social Studies Trust, Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), the Institute of Social Studies Trust in Delhi, the Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies in Hyderabad and Chetna in Ahmedabad being some of the earliest ones. There were in total 16 autonomous organizations with focus on women and 26 women's rights organizations promoting women's studies. With these, though it started in Bombay, western India, the women studies have been developed and expanded in different zones- North, South and East India. Later on, there was no state where women's studies do not open.

At present, the UGC has been funding 22 Centres in the Universities, and 11 Cells in the Colleges, under this scheme since 1986. The budget allocation for these centres has risen from Rs.50 lakhs to Rs. 2.15 crores. The introduction of women's studies in the higher education system was a major achievement for women's movement in India. Women's studies were envisaged as playing an interventionist role by initiating the gender perspective in many domains in the generation of knowledge, in the field of policy design and practice.

Conclusion

The women's movement, as well as other progressive social movements fueled by a desire to eliminate systematic disparities, have given birth to women's studies. The Indian women's movement has had its share of ups and downs, and the scars of its battles have provided depth and scope to the academic work done under the banner of women's studies at higher education institutions. After the publication of the Towards Equality report in 1974, which highlighted chronic, obvious gender imbalances across the board, the necessity for a systematic critique of entrenched systems became even more evident. Many women's studies researchers have examined the growth of women's studies and its link to the women's movement, as well as the ongoing conflicts between activity and theory.

As a result, the academic discourse that makes up women's studies arose alongside its associated movement, with many early feminists taking part in both. However, the academic subject of women's and gender studies is still predominantly concentrated on institutional settings such as classrooms, libraries, and conference halls, rather than the streets and byways where underprivileged women and men face everyday problems.

Summary

- Since the mid-1970s, this new area of research has developed and flourished, focused on women, their lives, and their challenges. In fact, the notion of the union of academic critique and actual radical transformation underpins Women's Studies.

- The majority of study in the discipline of Women's Studies was driven by the demands of the movement and was ultimately intended to lead to social action that would emancipate women. Thus, women's Studies may be seen of as starting point with social action and finishing with social action, with analysis, theory, and prediction serving as a bridge between the two.
- Women activists in the movement recognized that the struggles for social reform must include not just the restructuring of patriarchal relations, but also the existing intellectual legacy that has contributed to their subjugation throughout history.
- The first women's studies took
- The Government of India established the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) in 1971. Members of this committee were tasked with compiling a complete analysis of women's rights and status, with a particular focus on education and employment
- The Indian Council of Social Science Research- an autonomous agency created by the Government of India- is the major research promotion agency that adopted, in the early-70s, the status of women as a priority area when it commissioned studies for the CSWI. This concern was developed further in 1976 through the sponsored Programme of Women's Studies.
- At present, the UGC has been funding in various centres in the Universities, and colleges. The budget allocation for these centres has also risen from some lakhs to some crores. Thus, the introduction of women's studies in the higher education system was a major achievement for women's movement in India

Keywords

Women's studies in India

Towards Equality Report

Status of women

Women's movement

Identity of women's studies

Self Assessment

1. The late 1960s and early 1970s were the first significant turning point in India's post-independence _____

A. Social and political history
B. Religiousand political history
C. Educational theory
D. Social and economic theory

2. The Indian Constitution established equality between men and women as a basic right in _____.

A. 1920
B. 1930
C. 1940
D. 1950

3. In Ahmedabad in 1974, _____ agitation took the form of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), the first organisation of women workers

A. Nehru-inspired
B. Gandhian-inspired
C. British-inspired
D. Bose-inspired

4. SEWA stands for

A. Self Employed Women's Association
B. Assured Employed Women's Association
C. South Asian Women's Association
D. None of the above

5. The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) was established by the government of India in _____

A. 1981
B. 1971
C. 1961
D. 1991

6. Which of the following was the major agency for promoting research initial stage of women's studies?

A. Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
B. University Grand Commission (UGC)
C. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
D. The Indian Council of Historical Research

7. The Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) was established in _____

A. 1950
B. 1960
C. 1980
D. 1990

8. The first women's studies was started in _____

A. S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay
B. Calcutta University
C. Hyderabad University
D. Madras University

9. Among the following, which one is appropriate with regard to identity politics in the feminist studies in India?

A. Caste and dalit issues
B. Gender, Caste and race issues
C. Gender, class and ethnicity
D. Gender, caste, race,class and minorities

10. Among the followin feminists who referred Women's studies as 'the academic arm of women's movement', a potent instrument, playing a deliberate and active role in the battle for people's minds' and 'autonomy continues to be battle cry of both'.

A. Neera Desai
B. Uma Chakravarti
C. MaithreyiKrishnaraj
D. Veena mazumdar

11. Which of the following is considered as a founding text for the feminist movement in India?

A. Towards Equality report
B. Gender equality report
C. Towards women empowerment report
D. Towards equal rights report

12. "Women's Studies: New Perspectives and Challenges" in 1979 is authored by

A. Vina Mazumdar and Kumud Sharma
B. Vina Mazumdar and Uma Chakravarti
C. Uma Chakravarti and Kamla Bhasin
D. Meenakshi Apte and Veena Mazumdar

13. The first debate on the scope of women's studies was highlighted in the book, _____

A. "Women's movement in India"
B. "Women's Studies: New Perspectives and Challenges".
C. "Feminist's Studies: New Perspectives and Challenges".
D. None of the above

14. The first national conference on women's studies was held in _____

A. Madras
B. Delhi
C. Bombay
D. Calcutta

15. The Institute of Social Studies Trust (1980), the Centre for Women's Development Studies (1980), and the Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies were among the first institutions to house women's studies.

A. True
B. False

Answers for Self Assessment

l. A	2. D	3. B	4. A	5. A
6. A	7. C	8. A	9. D	10. D
11. A	12. A	13. B	14. C	15. A

Unit 12: Development of Women's Studies in India

Review Questions

1. Discuss Development of women's studies in India.
2. Critically examine women's movement and the rise of women's studies in India.
3. "Towards Equality report" inspired many feminists and activists, and it is considered a founding text for the feminist movement'. Discuss.
4. Write a note on identity of women's studies.
5. Explain early important agencies in the development of women's studies and also explain the growth and expansion of women's studies in India.

Further Readings

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Unit 13: Women's Movement in India

Objectives

The present unit highlighted women's women in India especially focus on women in national freedom movement. After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Elaborate women's movement in India especially during independence.
- Understand women's role in national freedom movement
- Learn various reform movements with relation to women's status.

Introduction

Under British colonial authority in India, the problem of women's liberation was intertwined with two major movements: one a political movement of challenge and opposition to imperialism, and the other a social movement to alter old systems. Hinduism, which had more or less taken on its current shape in the 5th and 4th century BC, served as the religious foundation for these conventional constructions.

Hinduism places a high value on the notion of karma. The conformance of an activity with dharma, the sacred rule, determines whether it is ethically proper and results in good. The result is favourable if one follows the dharma's instructions to the letter. Hinduism's social system was built on four caste structures: Shatriyas, Brahmins, Vaisyas, and others.

As civilization progressed, many sub-castes arose, each associated with a certain sort of employment. Caste was rendered hereditary, and the performance of one's caste became associated with ethical activity, ensuring the system's survival. Marriage and inter-caste commensality were prohibited. The emphasis on heredity made the family the social unit. Women were often submissive to males in patriarchal families. Male offspring were treasured because crucial religious ceremonies could only be performed by a son. Women were known to self-immolate on their husbands' funeral pyres, and widow remarriage was prohibited.

Later developments, on the other hand, limited this practise by subjecting the choice of spouse to caste and ritual practise, and by subjecting the choice of husband to caste and parental authority. By 1823, the British had either conquered practically all of India or had gained indirect control of it through agreements with princely kingdoms. The British army was strengthened, roads and railroads were built, a civil service was formed to manage the nation, and the infrastructure of a colonial economy was established during the final aggression so that the subcontinent could be more readily exploited and controlled. Several changes in society were brought about by the colonial government, such as the creation of modern schooling to support the British administration.

13.1 Forms of Resistance in India

Resistance to British imperialism erupted in several parts of the world. It lasted over 200 years and was lengthy and continuous. For example, in 1757, the Bengal rural opposed foreign aggressors and the British; in 1764, the princes of Bengal and Oudh combined in a fruitless challenge to the British; and in 1780, the king of Mysore attempted to expel them as well. There were numerous clashes in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, led by the Mahrathas, who fought foreign control, and brutal combat in the Punjab between 1846 and 1848, which resulted in its annexation.

However, opposition to the imperialists peaked in the 1857 "Indian Murthy" - the first war of independence – which began with a mutiny by Indian troops in the British army and extended to a broad region of North India, including Meerut, Delhi, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and Allahabad. Many of the British-appointed landowners and tax collectors, on the other hand, were against it.

The demise of the East India Firm was one effect of this conflict; the Indian Act of 1858 disbanded the company and established the British government's direct administration. The challenge of imperial dominance, as well as the attempted imposition of an alien culture, philosophy, and religion on India, sparked a number of religious and social reform movements among Hindus and Muslims.

These reformist groups, like as the Brahmo Samaj, which began in Bengal in 1828, aimed to rid Hinduism of certain corrupt traditions and counter missionary propaganda by portraying Hinduism as a religion that was open to advancement and change. Social reform became a prominent topic among Indian intellectuals, who were motivated to abolish or reform by either a liberal perspective of social development or the desire to avoid extreme social upheaval.

The political response to imperialism began in the late 1800s with the rise of Indian nationalism, which was centred on the Indian National Congress. Initially, the congress was led by moderates, but by 1900, more militant elements, inspired by B.G. Tilak in Maharashtra and Aurobindo Ghosh in Bengal, had gained influence. Following Bengal's division in 1905, mass-based nationalist agitation expanded across the country, including a push for Swaraj and Swadesh, as well as a boycott of British-English institutions and British commodities.

There were other agitations in the following years, and Gandhi started a non-cooperation campaign that included hartals, a boycott of all politicians, foreign commodities, and official activities, and a refusal to pay taxes. The ensuing crackdown, which included the slaughter of an unarmed crowd at Amritsar in 1919 and the imprisonment of Gandhi, Nehru, and other leaders between 1921 and 1922, only strengthened the movement in the 1920s. By the turn of the century, the movement had resurfaced around the topic of Swaraj. In 1931, Gandhi led the legendary Salt March, which kicked off a campaign of civil disobedience, non-cooperation, and nonviolent resistance. Nationalist movements continued after unit independence was gained in 1947, involving enormous masses of men and women.

13.2 Struggles against Certain Dreadful Experience

Women's position in India has fluctuated throughout time and in different parts of the country, and has also been subjected to discrimination based on class, religion, and ethnicity. Whether the women in question came from a peasant family and were forced to work in the fields and at home or came from a high-caste family and lived a life of leisure, they were victims of a set of values that demanded implicit obedience to male dominance, as well as many other social practises that circumscribed their lives.

In the early nineteenth century, reform movements against social problems affecting women began in India. The issues addressed by the reform movement, including as sati, widow remarriage, polygamy, and women's property rights, were concerns of a certain social strata, mostly affecting Hindus of upper castes and classes. Some reformers also believed that the prevailing social problems threatened middle-class family arrangements. One example of such a menace was the prostitution of certain high-caste widows who had been ill-treated and banned from remarriage. The desire to avert family dissolution, which persisted among both English educated and non-westernized intellectuals, was a motif in both North and South literature.

Since all sectors of social change touched the family, the reforms may have had the effect of increasing conservatism and for from freeing women, just to make concisions inside the family structure less odious, especially for bourgeoisie women. While some Indians advocated for social reform on the basis of liberal sentiments, many conservatives thought otherwise. Rather of destroying the structure, the reformer should remove the sick overgrowth and excrescences and restore the social organism's vigour and energy. Furthermore, many social reformers supported child marriage and opposed widow remarriage in their own households.

Even before India's nationalist movement became politically active, social reformers began to raise concerns about two of these issues: the practise of sati and the prohibition on widow remarriage. These could be monitored with relative ease since they did not exist in ancient times, were restricted to the top castes and classes, and, if corrected, would give India the illusion of being "civilised" without jeopardising traditional family systems.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a Bengali who was influenced by western liberal ideas and strove to reform and rejuvenate Hinduism, was a pioneer in the fight for women's rights in India. Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian were among Roy's early classical studies, and by 1800, he was proficient and well-read in the English language. He was exposed not just to dissident British radicals, Unitarians, and free-trade proponents in Calcutta, but also to European liberal political thinkers like as Locke, Bentham, Montesquieu, and Adam Smith.

This was a time in Europe when the issue of women's liberation was hotly debated. Roy's mobilisation of Hindus against the sati system generated enough public opinion for the government, which was also under pressure from missionaries on the topic, to make the practise illegal in 1829. Although ancient Hindu law allowed widows to remarry in certain situations, remarriage was outlawed by the higher castes by the mediaeval period of Indian history. Between the 1830s and the 1850s, the problem arose, and movement for legal change erupted in various regions of India.

The young Bengal movement, for example, was a proponent of social change and women's liberation in its newspaper, which was created in the 1830s. Hinduism reform became a critical topic if Indians were to oppose British insults and criticisms, and eventually, if they were to resist British dominance. In 1828, Roy and other enlightened Bengalis founded the Brahmo Samaj, which drew inspiration from a variety of religions and sought to reform the prevalent Hinduism. Many of the subsequent activists who took up concerns of women's emancipation were from this group of Brahmo Samaj reformers, who fought all types of obscurantism and ritual as well as female subjugation linked with orthodox beliefs.

13.3 Growth of the Reform Movement

During the 1850s, the reformist effort became more passionate, and one of the most ardent activists on widow remarriage was Iswar Chandra Viday Sagar, a Bengali who wrote a pamphlet called "Marriage of Hindu Widows" in 1856 and filed a petition to the government on the subject. With support from the press and British officials, Debendranath Tagore, an activist of the Brahmo Samaj, formed an organisation to campaign for widow remarriage and against other evils affecting women, and another movement for the purification and revival of Hinduism. The agitation led to the Act of 1856, which legally permitted widow remarriage. However, legislation had a hard time changing social customs, and only the most courageous were able to define tradition.

The movement was carried on, particularly by Vidyasagar, who produced pamphlets exposing the horrors of polygamy in the 1870s. However, government policy at the time was against excessive meddling in traditional family traditions. The issue of child marriage was also addressed by 19th-century social reformers. Child marriage was common among Hindus, unlike sati, polygamy, and the prohibition on widow remarriage, which only impacted the upper classes. The "upper" castes

saw it as a religious and social responsibility, while the "lower" castes saw it as a way to safeguard their daughters from men with economic power. It was also a cost-cutting measure because dowries for male children were smaller.

The reformer best known for their agitation on this issue were Keshab, Vidyasagar, and Gopal Hari Deshmukh. K.C. Sen stated that child marriage was a perversion of the scriptures, writing, "The habit of early marriage, as it exists in our nation, is harmful to the people's moral, social, and physical interests, and is one of the greatest barriers to their growth." Because many of the child brides were bereaved at a young age, Vidyasagar noted in 1850 that child marriage was connected to the problem of Indian widows. With the Marriage Act of 1872, which imposed higher age limitations for marriage, 14 for girls and 18 for men, considerable progress was made.Further agitation and publication by reformer like BehramjiMalban, who had used the press for the campaign against child marriage, led to the age of consent Bill of 1891, which raised the legal age of consent for sexual intercourse from 10 to 12 for girls.

Property rights for Hindu women was another point of contention for the social reformers. The Hindu widow, who had no claim on her husband's property beyond the right of maintenance, was particularly vulnerable to her husband's family according to existing unwritten tradition. The Right of Property Legislation of 1874 provided a widow a life interest in her husband's portion of the property, as well as a share equivalent to that of a son; nevertheless, the act did not give a widow the right to possess or dispose of the property, and daughters were still barred from the right of inheritance.

The subordination of women is critical to the general hieratical organisation of caste society, as Omvedt has pointed out, and the anti-Brahmin movement in India was thus linked to the women's struggle. One of the first to make the connection between caste oppression and women oppression was the most radical social reformer of the nineteenth century. Jotirao Phule (1827-90), a Maharashtrian of "low" caste who spearheaded the anti-Brahmin movement and advocated for women's education and widow remarriage.

In the 1850s, Phule established a girls' school in Pune, as well as two schools for "untouchables," and in 1863, he founded a Home for the Prevention of Infanticide to care for widows' unwanted children. In opposing sati, Phule speculated about whatever any husband would become a sati by being immolated on the funeral pyre of his wife. Omvedt has written on Phule's concern for women's rights. The Marathi and Gujarati reformers of the 19th century were in the forefront of several controversies over women's rights, and important public debates on caste and women's oppression raged in western India.

Another aspect of the ongoing development of women's education was in the artistic areas. Shantiniketan had been turned by Rabindranath Tagore into a centre for the renewal and resurrection of Indian culture and art, while being open to influences from other countries. Shantiniketan was welcoming to women, and Rabindranath stressed the need of creating the right conditions for women to unleash their creative potential. Not just in his pedagogical work, but also in his well-known poems and short tales, he demonstrated this. He speaks out against archaic customs and behaviours while embracing a modern perspective on women's roles and standing in society.

Non-Brahmins in south India also opposed Brahmin hegemony, "questioning the Brahmins' legitimacy to control top-class positions and to preserve the illusion of a superior culture." In the 1920s, E.V. Ranaswami Naicker, also known as periyar, spearheaded a "self-respect campaign" against the Brahmins, which targeted the caste system as well as all types of religious ceremony and idol worship. Women's equality was promoted, and marriages based on "self-respect" were fashionable. This meant that both the man and the woman must consent to the marriage and that no priests should be present to administer the ceremony. Several male authors and poets in South India were outspoken supporters of women's liberation. One was the leading Tamil poet Subramaniya Bharathi, who belonged to that stream of radical thought in Asia and the middle fast which advocated modernity and reform. He championed Indian independence while denouncing caste oppression ill-treatment of immigrant Tamil workers in Fiji, the inequitable distribution of wealth in India and the subordination of women.

13.4 Agitation by Women

Pandita Ramabai: Despite the fact that the primary social reformers in the nineteenth century were men whose goals were to purify and strengthen family life, women began to overstep the

reformers' expectations for home and family life. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were a number of female activists and pioneers, the bulk of them were tied by birth or marriage to families in which the males had participated in religious or political reform movements.

Pandita Ramabai, a respectable Sanskrit scholar whose daring and autonomous work on favour of women's concerns made her the preeminent female agitator of her day, was one of the most famous pioneers among the women we do know. Although orthodox on other issues; she took an uncompromising attitude towards the education and the marriageable age of girls. Because of such views, the family was hounded from place to place and lived the life of nomadic scholars, wandering all over India. As a child, Ramabai not only acquired mobility and experience, but learnt Sanskrit and theology from her parents.

 In 1878, Ramabai and her surviving brother travelled to Calcutta, where her critique of Hinduism gained her notoriety in Bengali reforming circles, and she was given the title of Pandita for her knowledge of Sanskrit. She also lectured on social injustice for a woman to be well-versed in theology, in a society where religion is all-pervasive, has always been an advantage when challenging social evils disguised as religious orthodoxy.

Ramabai waged a full-court press against the orthodox priests, claiming that women had occupied significant positions in ancient India. She had to fend for herself after being widowed with a newborn daughter, and she had to deal with criticism for not following the usual widow's department. Shri Dharma Neeti was her book, in which she pushed for women's freedom and criticised detrimental conventional behaviours. She had also learned English by this time, having signed a contract with Christian missionaries in Pune. In 1883, she travelled to the United Kingdom, where she met Dorothea Beale, a pioneering female educator and administrator of Cheltenham Ladies College, where Ramabai studied and taught for a period.

13.5 Women and Nationalist Struggle

Women in India began to actively participate in life outside the house during the political campaigns against imperialism, and they had the backing of many nationalist political leaders in doing so. By the late nineteenth century, the increase of women's education and entry to colleges had created a number of English educated, middle-class women who made their presence felt in political activities.

Bengal had been influenced by the British since the 18th century and was at the forefront of both westernisation and political and reform movements associated with national rebirth and nationalism. The Bengali bourgeoisie's women were also among the first to push for change and political activism. Swarna Kuman also founded a women's organisation in 1886 with the goal of promoting local handicrafts manufactured by women. The heroine of an unfinished song is westernised and marries a doctor who has studied in England and is pro-rights, women's yet she maintains some orthodox values and the traditional ideal of feminine religious devotion.

In the 1890s, women continued to participate in congress politics, including Pandita Ramabai and women professionals like Dr. Kadambini Ganguli. In the early twentieth century, with the rise of nationalist movements, women became increasingly interested in politics. Mass struggle of self-rule including the boycott of British goods, took place during this period. These was also increased militancy, bomb throwing and assassinations, especially in Punjab and Bengal violence accused after the participation of Bengal in 1905.

Many foreign theosophists also participated in the nationalist and women's movements the foremost being Annie Bezant (1847-1933), feminist and fusion who, in the 1880s had created a stir in Britain with her campaign for birth control and her leadership of the match girls strike. Margaret cousins was another theosophist concerned in the situation of Indian women. Dorothy and Jinarajadasa, who founded the women's Indian Association in 1917 with Bezant and cousins, were Irish feminists who arrived in India in 1915 and participated in many of the social and political reform movements of the time, including being one of the founders of the all India women's conference in 1927. Margaret Noble (1867-1911), who arrived in India in 1895 and acquired the name Sister Nivedita under the influence of Swami Vivekananda, worked in Bengal. Her activity in education, artistic activities, and agitation for Swaraj was characterised by revolutionary fervour, and she is reported to have had relations with Irish revolutionaries.

13.6 Women in Political Actions

Despite the male leaders' repeated declarations of good intentions, most of them still considered a woman's function as essentially that of a housewife within a conventional family structure. Women activists became engulfed in the political battle; they were rewarded for being good Satyagraha campaigners, but the underlying concerns that bothered them as women were dismissed by the males. Furthermore, the few women's concerns that were addressed were ones that were of interest to a middle-class women's group, such as suffrage issues.

Sarojini Naidu, Margaret Cousins, and a group of women, for example, met the viceroy in 1917 and made a case for female franchise, and in 1919, Sarojini Naidu was part of a Home Rule League deputation that travelled to Britain to campaign for reforms and franchise rights. The Indian National Congress backed the right of women to vote in 1918. Women were first allowed to vote in Madras province in 1921, when the anti-Brahmin Justice Party won a majority. Women were given the power to vote in the legislature in 1926, with Dr. S. Nathulakshmi Reddi becoming Madras' first female legislative councillor that year.

Women's participation in the mass movements of the 1920s and 1930s was evident in acts such as the Khadi campaigns, the pocketing of shops selling foreign goods, and the Salt March of 1930, as well as in general political demonstrations and mass agitations that resulted in Congress's call for civil disobedience. Thousands of women were imprisoned across India as part of the battle for freedom. The congress delegates in Karachi in 1931 hailed the women "who rose in their thousands and supported the nation in the battle for liberation." Sarojini Naidu and KamaladeviChattopadhya were two women linked with this time of struggle.

13.7 Women's role in Revolutionary Nationalism

Despite the fact that the Indian National Congress, which had chosen a nonviolent strategy under Gandhi's leadership, was the leading nationalist organisation, certain Indian nationalist organisations pursued a more militant programme of revolutionary and violent action. These organisations were active both in India and overseas, where they could canvass and mobilise support. Evelyn Roy (wife of N.V. Roy) and Agnes Smedley, who collaborated with Indian revolutionaries in exile in New York and Berlin, were among the foreign women related to these revolutionaries and communists.

Bhikaji Cam, who hailed from an affluent Bombay family of Parsee Social Reformers, was the most well-known Indian woman in revolutionary circles in Europe. She married RustomjiCama, a pre-British lawyer, in 1885. She became involved in nationalist politics after divorcing her husband, attending Congress meetings in Bombay. In 1901, she travelled to Britain for medical treatment, where she was influenced by Indian rebel Nationalist Krishnavarma. Her belligerent comments drew attention, so she fled to Paris to avoid imprisonment, where she remained in exile.

Cama was a member of the British delegation to the international socialist congress in Stuttgart, where she spoke out against British imperialism and unfurled the Indian flag. Cama becomes the epicentre of Indian revolutionary activities in Europe in Paris. She was also linked with the more revolutionary and radical Indians. The British intelligence service was alert to Cama's influence, reporting in 1973 that she was "one of the recognized leaders of the revolutionary movement in Paris", with contacts with revolutionary groups in exile from other countries.

Several young Parsee ladies suspected of being under her influence were placed under police observation around this time, one of her acquaintances being Paris Captain, the granddaughter of moderate nationalist DadabhaiNaoroji. She arrived in Paris in 1905 to study at the Sorbonne and, with Cama, attended the first Egyptian National Congress in Brussels in 1910. She then became involved with the Indian National Congress.

During the different times of unrest in India, two women were involved in militant and violent behaviour. SarladeviChaudhurani, for example, who worked with the Suhrid Samiti, backed the male revolutionaries. In the late 1920s there was another phase of violent action in India in which women participated in Delhi, Roopati Jain, aged 17 was in charge of a factory which produced chemicals for bombs.

Bhagat Singh, the Punjab revolutionary, and Durga Devi, who joined the liberation fight at the age of 16 and shot a policeman in Bombay, both did so on multiple occasions. In Calcutta in 1928, a group of female students created study circles, recruited and trained women revolutionaries, and taught cycling, driving, and armed warfare. Some of them were billeted at a hostel where

explosives were concealed and supplied to insurgents. Kalpana Dutt, who often dressed as a man and was jailed and deported for life for her involvement in the Chittagong Armoury raid of 1930, and Preeti Waddedar, who was arrested and deported for life for her role in the Chittagong Armoury raid on a railway officer w/b in 1932, were members of this group.

During the late 1930s and World War II, communist women participated in the nationalist movement and relief efforts for the Bengal famine, often in collaboration with the All-India women's congress. The ladies of Bengal, a region that had been in the forefront of the nationalism movement, were particularly engaged. In 1938, there was a strong movement in Bengal for the release of political prisoners who had been imprisoned in the Andaman Islands by the British for "terrorist" activities. Women from various political groups in Bengal joined this agitation, which was the first attempt to form a United Women's Organization with political women at the forefront.

In 1942, some of the active women of the left, Kamala Chatterjee, Manikuntalasen, RenuChakaravartty and Ela Reid, formed the MahilaAtmaraksha Samiti which grew rapidly throughout Bengal. The tragic events of the Bengal famine of 1942-44 brought women of all classes into relief work and political agitation.

Summary

The problem of women's liberation during colonial India was intertwined with two major movements- one a political movement of challenge and opposition to imperialism, and the other a social movement to bring reform in the old systems.

Reform movements against social problems affecting women began in India in early 19th century. The issues which were addressed by the reform movement includes sati, widow remarriage, polygamy, and women's property rights, and also were concerns of a certain social strata, mostly affecting Hindus of upper castes and classes.

Nonetheless, women's militant engagement in political conflicts, as well as their activity in strikes, working-class marches, and peasant insurrection, all demonstrate that Indian women have long played a significant role in anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and democratic protest movements. In opposition to the conventional image of women, there is another legacy of militancy and bravery in social and political activities.

Keywords

- National freedom movement
- Growth of reform movement
- Women in national freedom movement
- Struggles against Certain Dreadful Experience
- Women in political action

Self Assessment

1. The issue of women's emancipation in India under British colonial rule was closely linked with two important movements, one a political movement of challenge and resistance to imperialism and the other, a social movement _____

2. In a patriarchal society, women were generally _____

A. superordinate to men

B. subordinate to men

C. subordinate to women

D. All the above

3. The Indian Act of 1858 abolished the _____

A. East India Company

B. West India Company

C. Calcutta based Company

D. None of the above

4. Brahmo samaj

A. A reform movement

B. A revolutionary movement

C. An environmental movement

D. Women's movement

5. Brahmo Samaj which started in _____ in 1828

A. Madras

B. Bengal

C. Punjab

D. Hyderabad

6. Social reform also become a popular issue among Indian intellectuals, who inspired either by liberal view of social change or in the hope of preventing drastic social change, were to launch movement to abolish or correct.

A. True

B. False

7. The political response to imperialism was initiated late in the 19th century with the growth of_____, centred on the Indian National Congress in the early years.

8. The status of women in India has varied in different historical and in the different regions of the country.

A. True

B. False

9. Movements of reform against the social evils that affected women began in India in the_____.

A. Late 19th century

B. Early 20th century

C. Early 19th century

D. Late 21st century

10. The pioneer in the agitation for women"s rights in India was Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

A. True

B. False

11. Jotirao Phule

A. Non-Brahmin struggle

B. Women's education

C. Child marriage and widow remarriage

D. All the above

12. The expansion of women's educations and their admission to universities had produced a number of English educated, middle class women by the late 19th century and they made their presence felt in political activity.

A. True

B. False

13. Women social reformers during the independence movement? Mark out the incorrect option.

A. Jotirao Phule

B. Sorojini Naidu

C. Pandita Ramabai

D. Raja Ram Mohan Roy

14. Women's militant engagement in political conflicts, as well as their activity in strikes, working-class marches, and peasant insurrection, all demonstrates that Indian women have long played a significant role in anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and democratic protest movements.

A. True

B. False

15. Reform movements against social problems affecting women began in India in early _____

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	To reform traditional structures	2.	B	3.	A	4.	A	5.	B
6.	A	7.	Indian Nationalism	8.	A	9.	C	10.	A
11.	D	12.	A	13.	D	14.	A	15.	19th century

Review Questions

1) Elaborate the role of reformers and nationalist movement in bringing change in the status of women in India.

2) Discuss the role of social reformers for empowerment of women in Indian Society.

3) Discuss women's struggle during national freedom movement.

4) Write a short note on growth of reform movement.

5) Examine women in political action in India.

📖 Further Readings

1. John, Marry E. (2008). Women's studies in India: a reader. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
2. Jane Pilcher & Imelda Whelehan. (2004). Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies. London: Sage.

Unit 14: Women's Movement and Social Change

CONTENTS

Objectives

This unit discusses women's struggle and social changes in the post-independent India. From this unit, students will be able

- To understand the social situation in India pertaining to women's issues especially after independence.
- To understand women's movement in Post-independent India.
- To elucidate women's consciousness in relation to violence against women.
- To inculcate the challenges in the women's movement during 1980s and 1990s a transition from liberal to post-liberal scenario.

Introduction

A disturbing aspect of the social situation in India is the slow erosion of concern for women's issues, after independence. In the decades preceding the attainment of national independence, prior to 1947, there was an outstanding record of women's participation in political struggle and through it of articulating their rights. Particularly until the early seventies, there has practically been no concerned action towards achieving the goal of equality.

Feminist is essential because of the current challenges of a globalized economy and paradoxically of fragmented ethnic and religious identities. Consequently feminist politics has no longer confined itself to gender politics. It has critiqued community, national and global concerns from the standpoint of women. This brings us to the critical question of how do we define a women's movement? Is it one in which only women participate? Or is it one, which includes men and women, but focuses on gender issues? And how do we view women's participation in people's movements? Is there a possibility of forging links with other people's movements?

The answers to these questions are not easy; and may fundamentally alter our conception of movements. It would require feminist politics to address the socio-economic and political concerns of women from grassroots.

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14.1 Women's Movements in Post-Independent India

Like in the west, the decade of the 1950s was a period of tremendous optimism; the assumption was that the Constitutional guarantee of equality would in some way improve the condition of women. The All India Women's Conference, formed in 1927 through an amalgamation of various regional parties to campaign for women's rights, became less radical. Many of its members were integrated into the government's social welfare programmes. They assumed that, through the government initiated social welfare and development programmes for the restructuring of the nation; the issue of gender equality would be realized. This did not mean that there was no simmering discontent among women or women did not feel the need for more drastic measures to change the status quo. They were in particular disillusioned by the ways in which women's voices were silenced and the ways in which legislative measures tended to get diluted when perceived to be against male self-interest.

The Hindu Code Bill (1955), for instance, was passed only after the proposal to ensure equal coparcenary rights (i.e., inheritance rights in ancestral/parental property acquired by birth) for women was deleted; while the proposal for a uniform civil code was shelved to an indeterminate future. They realized that so long as the issue of equality between the sexes remained an abstract principle, it was rarely contested. But when concrete measures were suggested to make that principle a reality, there was opposition from men as it meant curtailing male privileges (GOI 1974:8). This dissatisfaction led to the setting up of other women's organisations such as the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) 1954 and the Samajwadi Mahila Sabha (1959). These organisations were mass – based and closely involved in trade union activities.

Among their demands included the reservation of jobs for women in government and quasi – government organisations (Gandhi 1988). The mid–1960s was a period of overwhelming social upheaval followed by State repression. Impatient with the slow pace of social transformation, mass movements emerged on the political landscape; peasants, industrial workers, and Tribals began to organize and protest against the prevailing development models sponsored by the State and other welfare oriented bodies. The movements grew out of the growing disenchantment with the development policies that were impoverishing tribal/peasant communities and industrial workers.

As the opposition to these development trends (that emphasized heavy industrialization and agricultural capitalism) within the framework of electoral politics was lukewarm, many people's movements emerged. Spearheaded by both the radical Left and Gandhian/Sarvodaya groups, these political struggles were brutally repressed by the state. Meanwhile, inspired by the successes of the Sarvodaya leader Jayaprakash Narayan, seemingly apolitical groups such as the students and even housewives in Western India organized themselves to protest against the escalating prices in 1974 (Gandhi & Shah 1992 : 18-20,22).

Nevertheless, it was in these alternative political forums that he marginalized groups, including women found a forum to express their political aspirations. For one of the fall-outs of this

mobilization of women through various tribal/peasant movements in different parts of the country was that it also brought into the open the prevailing systems of sexual exploitation of lower-class / caste women by the landlords. As rape was used as a method of political intimidation, it came to be defined in the context of class struggles. In the course of time, the focus of discussion, however, broadened to include women's sexual exploitation in their intimate relationships. The militancy of some of their attempts to counter male sexual aggression was perhaps fuelled by the overriding apathy of the community and the state. Indubitably, male leadership determined the nature of women's political participation. Nonetheless, the participation enabled women to become aware of their struggles and organizational potential. It contributed significantly to the development of the autonomous women's movements in the 1970s (Sen 1990: 1-18).

It was in these alternative development struggles and agitation that the middle class and working class women found space to express their political leanings. Indubitably, the leadership, circumstance and the manner of their involvement was still dictated by male leadership; nonetheless, it helped women to become aware of their strengths and organizational potential. The mobilization of women through the tribal and peasant movements in Dhulia, Naxalbari and Srikakulam brought into the open the prevailing systems of sexual exploitation of lower class / caste women by the landlords.

As rape was used as a method of political intimidation, it came to be defined in the context of class struggles. In course of time, the focus of the discussion broadened to include women's sexual exploitation in their intimate relationships. The militancy of some of their attempts to counter male sexual aggression was perhaps fuelled by the overriding apathy of the community and the State. The tribal women, who were part of the ShramikSanghatana in Dhulia, an organisation set up by Magova (a radical group based in Pune and Mumbai), garlanded sexual offenders with slippers and paraded them on donkeys. Wife beaters were thrashed with brooms and forced to take a pledge that they would not beat their wives (Patel 1988).

At the outset, the left political parties supported the empowerment of women. In 1975, the Lal Nishan Party, a splinter group of the Communist Party of India (CPI) mooted the idea of holding a women's conference which was organized by the Joint Women's Committee. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) also organized a national seminar on women in Kerala. At about the same time, several other camps for women were organized in various parts of the country on such smaller scale. In these camps issues of domestic violence and alcoholism came to the forefront. With the exception of women representatives of left political parties such as the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (M), the overwhelming opinion was that women needed separate organisations to take up their issues and concerns (Gandhi & Shah 1992). Along with the mobilization of women through mass-based political organisations, there were several parallel currents flowing, which finally coalesced into what is today described as the new women's movement.

Among these are included: The Chipko movement (to save the sub-Himalayan region from deforestation); the protest politics in university campuses (against the growing corruption, unemployment and educational mismanagement) and the critical questions raised by academic women about the lack of information on women. The existing data on economics for instance, did not reflect the condition of women in the unorganized sector who constituted 94 per cent of the working women in the country. It was from one such concern that the Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNDT Women's University was established in 1974 (SNDT 1990).

Did You Know?

The Chipko struggle was first took place in early 1973 in Chamoli district, by the villagers of Mandal, led by Bhatt and the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM)prevented theAllahabad-based sports goods company, Symonds, from felling 14 ash trees.Chipko hasacquired many facets, primarily as a conservation attempt by the poor people, a struggle for local control of natural resources and an effort by women to protect their environment.

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In response to this growing concern for women, the Government of India set up the Committee on the status of Women through a resolution adapted to the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in 1971. Adopting the Constitution as its frames of reference, the Committee indicated beyond the most pessimistic predictions that the ongoing process of development since independence had exacerbated the existing gender inequity. The transformation of the economy from an agrarian, community based system of production to industrialization hastily introduced through centralized planning adversely affected women who were unable to enter the new labour market.

The educational policies and programmes had failed to check the growing gap between the male and female literacy rates. Apart from presenting irrefutable statistical and qualitative data on women's low status (as seen from their mortality and morbidity; economic and political participation as well as their access to the resources of the community etc.) the Towards Equality report identified the erroneous assumptions about women's lives which informed development policies and programmes. Instruments of change designed through legislation, executive action and communication, tended to ignore the differential and often contradictory impact of development on women's lives (GOI 1974).

14.2 The 1970s and the women's Consciousness

In the post-Emergency period (1977) civil liberties groups, progressive organizations and political parties brought to light numerous instances of police atrocities, torture and lawlessness. Around the time, an open letter written by four lawyers questioned the Supreme Court verdict in the rape of a 14- year old tribal girl called Mathura by two policemen while in custody (Baxi et al. 1979, cited in Gandhi & Shah 1992: 38). The judgement had set aside the conviction of the police personnel by the Bombay High Court on the rather ambiguous notion of consent, based on the past sexual history of the victim. The letter triggered a nation-wide protest, initiated by a group of women, from different organisations. Their effort culminated in a national conference in December 1980 and the establishment of the Forum Against Rape. This coming together of 32 women's groups from across the country for the first time, revealed other similar cases from different state as well as the escalation of dowry deaths.

Since then, many organisations including the Forum Against Rape (now Forum Against Oppression of Women) began taking up issues of violence against women. These organizations attracted a host of professional women such as lawyers, doctors, professors, as well as students and working women.

Notes: The Forum against Oppression of Women is a Mumbai feminist organisation. It originated asthe Forum against Rape in 1980, organising protests in the city to the judgement in theMathura rape case.

With the growing strength and visibility of women, political parties hastened to strengthen their women's wings. Various feminist journals and newsletters in Hindi, English and regional journals such as were published. The idea was to make feminism acceptable to the masses (Patel 1988). Rallying around specific instances of violence against women, the feminists sought to create public awareness through protest marches, sit-in strikes and media publicity. The women's movement since the 1970s comprised a loose-knit conglomeration of autonomous groups, which specifically addressed the issue of women's subordination under patriarchal systems across national, geopolitical and historical boundaries. The emerging feminist voices, because of their different ideological and theoretical underpinnings, developed in multiple and different directions. Despite differences, these voices have broadly located women's subordination in the prevailing production, reproduction and sexual relationships. From the very beginning there was resistance to any attempt to bring the movement under one umbrella organisation. Despite differences, these groups continued to remain united through an underlying commitment to women's empowerment and supportive actions on specific issues. This was a carefully deliberated decision to avoid any kind of hierarchies, power struggles or rigid structures which could affect the essentially democratic spirit of the movement.

Over the years, feminist discourses have become increasingly complex; this is partly because of the theoretical locations of these discourses and partly because of rapidly changing socio-political and economic milieu confronting feminist politics. Some of the critical feminist debates in the 1970s centred on the roots of women's subordination. Was it biologically ordained or rooted in the process of gender socialization? Also, what was the economic basis of women's subordination and sexual division of work? These ideas arising out of western feminisms infused the women's movements across the world.

Feminist political action internationally sought to ensure better legal protections for women and stringent implementation of law while dealing with gender specific crimes of rape, domestic violence and dowry deaths; it also aimed at enabling women to access the existing goods and services in society. The political confrontations of the women's movement aimed at making the state more accountable for the welfare of women. As evident in the landmark towards Equality (1974) report from India, it also articulated a critique of the ongoing development process, which marginalized women.

14.3 The Challenges of the 1980s

In the 1980s, these battles became more complex because of the prevailing socio-political and economic upheavals. Feminist theorizing increasingly critiqued the prevailing masculine ideology; it pointed to the interconnections between women's subordination and the destruction of the

environment. These ideas infused the various environmental, peace and anti-nuke movements across the world. The rich variety of feminist thought during this period percolated into art, culture, religionand literature. Feminism was increasingly resonating through multiple voices. Women of colour and from developing countries were pointing to the ways in which race, class and gender were intersecting in complex ways to modify their lives. These ideas breached the private/public, mind/body, nature/culture divide in western theorizing. It indicated that the habit of thinking in binary opposites was in many ways responsible for the "othering" of women, races and ethnic minorities.

The politics of the women's movement during this decade aimed at dismantling state patriarchy by addressing poverty and development issues from the standpoint of women. Based on a conscious attempt to articulate the multiple voices of women, feminist politics critiqued the notions of dominance encoded in the construction of masculinities, which was responsible for the destruction of the environment, and armed conflicts across the world. In its confrontations in India, feminists noticed the inconsistencies in the responses of the state to the issues raised. They found that the state was quick to enact stringent amendments to the existing laws against rape and dowry deaths and legislate against amniocentesis; yet it also succumbed to political expediency and vacillated about justice for women in the Shah Bano (1985) and the Roop Kanwar Sati (1987) incidents.

Contrasting with these inconsistencies were some conscious measures by the state to address gender issues in its development policies. This tilt is evident in its development policy statements (such as the Shramshakti Report of the National Commission on Self Employed Women (1987), and Challenge of Education (1985) revised and updated as a National Policy on Education (1991) and The National Policy on Health (1983). It is also evident in the attempts made to address women's grievances by setting up the National/State Commissions for Women, the All Women Police Stations and Family Counselling Cells. These developments signalled to the women's movement the importance of participation in electoral politics and in the ongoing development processes. At the same time, it found that contrary to the demands by women's groups, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act (1983) retained the patriarchal definition of rape; it did not recognize marital rape.

Further, it introduced a clause, which made the revealing of a victim's name a criminal offence. The only positive point was that the law instituted more stringent punishment in cases of custodial rape. Similarly, the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act (1983), intended as a deterrent against domestic violence, was narrow in its scope and referred mainly to dowry harassment.

These factors led to a growing realization within the women's movement that the State is usually eager to pass ostensibly pro-women laws which increase its punitive powers; but it does not have the same commitment to implement social legislations that would help to change gender relations.

14.4 The Challenges of the 1990s

The 1990s have brought radical challenges; women's issues were increasingly articulated in international forum, such as the Vienna Congress on Human Rights (1994) and the Fourth World Conference for Women at Beijing (1995) and feminist theorizing acquired a degree of acceptance in the academia. Influenced by post-modern discourses, feminist theories began to dismantle notions of power/powerless, sexuality and the notions of fixed gender identities. It was also a period, when free market economies were deified and the political basis for a welfare state undermined.

The decade witnessed the increased importance of IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank in determining national policies. At the outset, the various Structural Adjustment Programmes and the new trade regimes of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) weakened state authority and regulatory powers in the name of free trade. The subsequent founding of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in January 1995 to replace the GATT dismantles state monopolies in key sectors such as telecommunication, railways, natural resources, investments in all direct industries and services. The instrument to achieve this is the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

As a result, nation states are becoming answerable to multinational corporate interest rather than to their citizens. Along with other progressive groups, feminists are drawn to protests against these trends, which erode wages for the majority of workers, expand temporary/piece work, displace farmers and Tribals by agribusiness, timber and power sectors, and undermine existing labour laws and environmental regulations. For apart from the economic costs of development borne by poor women, these trends are lending credence to religious, racial and ethnic fundamentalist movements

round the world. The rise of global conservatism is because of the economic and cultural insecurities of the people.

Fundamentalist movements are identifying the decline in traditional values as at the heart of the problem. Drawing on these traditional values, which clearly relegate women to the home; these movements detract attentions from the failures of the present economic processes. Additionally, the state/international policies are also explaining their failures by resurrecting the bogie of the "population bomb" which targets women from poor developing countries in the various population control programmes.

Paradoxically, the 1990s also saw the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments aimed at the progressive devolution of political powers to local communities. Through these enactments, more than one million women for the first time in history enjoyed political power within local communities. And yet, despite the success of these experiments, the women's movement has not been able to muster enough support to ensure that passage of the 81st or the 84th Amendments through which women could represent their interests as a "critical mass" in the Parliament and state legislatures. Nonetheless, even if women were to get sufficient representation in electoral politics, the situation would not be easy. Given the ways in which caste, class and gender identities intersects, the question would remain as to how to make women elected representatives accountable to the women's movement. In other words, who should speak for whom? This situation is made more complex with the political reality of fragile coalitions, the rise of regional and OBC/Dalit assertiveness in party politics.

Grappling with these diverse factors, feminist politics is in a state of flux; past strategies aimed at the state have proved less effective. Confronted with an increasingly unresponsive state, which no longer maintains the fiction of social commitment, it needs to develop new political strategies and theories. We need to understand how the system works not just the impact of liberalization, privatization and globalization policies but also rather the processes of decision making which results in the sudden privatization of certain key sectors. This understanding of policy making processes and implementation will enable us to intervene and if necessary alter the negative trends in development. It is not enough to theorize on alternative people centered development paradigms, but rather to pragmatically examine the current processes to devise workable strategies. This would require that instead of merely looking at the impact of economic reforms on women and documenting reduction in social sector, expenditure or employment, feminist politics must grapple with institutional changes that have occurred and the new reformulations within them. This would require that we re-examine our beliefs, our theories and to develop conceptual clarity on strategies what will energize people's collective power.

This would also mean a critical assessment of feminist politics and theory in the past three decades, to understand the gains and shortfalls. This introspection would also require a fresh assessment of the state policies that have had negative implications for women. So far documentation on the feminist movement has revolved around its history and the key issues it took up. In this symposium, we propose to chart the underlying premises of feminist action to assess their implications in the light of the present political reality.

14.5 Strategies and Programmes of Autonomous Women's Groups

Consciously different in strategies and programmes from women's organizations established in the pre-independence days, the autonomous groups have consistently attacked the anti-women bias in society. They have undertaken gender sensitization programmes, provided support to women in distress and remained vigilant against sexist bias in national policies and implementations. These include: invasive reproductive and family planning technologies; discriminatory practices in education and employment; laws that countervail gender equality. Through their activism, research, documentation and writing, these groups have been able to place issues of gender justice firmly on the public consciousness. In their organizations they have preferred the flexibility and creativity of non-hierarchical organizations to formal structures. However, because of the extent and diversity of women's issues, sub-committees are formed to grapple with different interest areas. By and large, the members are educated and professional women, subscribing to different political ideologies. Since these groups are structurally similar to the feminist organizations in the west, they have been able to network with international feminist groups (Desai & Patel 1985: 62 – 72; Gandhi 1988: 168 – 172).

Women's movement and Social Change: in post-independent India

Summary

Women's organizations have existed since pre-independence times. But the issues which were involved then and now are different. Today women's organizations are involved in agitations, propaganda since oriented work and research on women's issues. The decade of the 1950s was a period of remarkable optimism; the assumption was that the Constitutional guarantee of equality would in some way improve the lot of women. The All India Women's Conference, formed in 1927 through an amalgamation of various regional parties to campaign for women's rights.

They adopt direct and indirect method of bringing awareness. They are active in launching struggles, against price – rice, unemployment, low – wages, dowry, violence in the family, alcoholism, sexual discrimination at work place etc. several independent organisations have come up all over the country tackling issues regarding women. They have even succeeded in bringing about amendments in laws.

These struggles and agitationsare that the middle class and working class women found space to express their political leanings. Indubitably, the leadership, circumstance and the manner of their involvement was still dictated by male leadership; nonetheless, it helped women to become aware of their strengths and organizational potential. The mobilization of women through the tribal and peasant movements in Dhulia, Naxalbari and Srikakulam brought into the open the prevailing systems of sexual exploitation of lower class / caste women by the landlords.Studies, SNDT Women's University was established in 1974 (SNDT 1990: 1-5).

In response to this growing concern for women, the Government of India set up the Committee on the status of Women through a resolution adapted to the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in 1971.In the post-Emergency period (1977) civil liberties groups, progressive organizations and political parties brought to light numerous instances of police atrocities, torture and lawlessness. With the growing strength and visibility of women, political parties hastened to strengthen their women's wings.

During 1980s, feminist's battles became more complex owing to the prevailing socio-political and economic turmoil. Feminists increasingly critiqued the prevailing masculine ideology focussingon the linkages between women's subordination and the destruction of the environment. In addition, the politics of the women's struggle during this decade aimed at dismantling state patriarchy by addressing poverty and development issues from the perspective of women.

The 1990s have brought radical challenges; women's issues were increasingly articulated in international forum.

Keywords

Women's struggle in India

Violence against women

Women and social change in India

Women's organization

Self Assessment

1. The decade of the 1950s was a period of tremendous optimism; the assumption was that the Constitutional guarantee of equality would in some way improve the lot of women.

A. True
B. False

2. The All India Women's Conference was formed in _____

A. 1927
B. 1937
C. 1947

D. 1957

3. NFIW stands for _____

A. National Federation of Indian
B. National Federation of Indigenous Society
C. National Forum of Indian
D. None of the above

4. The mid-1960s was a period of overwhelming _____ followed by State repression.

A. Social upward movement
B. Social upheaval
C. Economic growth
D. Social harmony

5. The mobilization of women through the tribal and peasant movements in Dhulia, Naxalbari and Srikakulam brought into the open the prevailing systems of _____ of lower class / caste women by the landlords.

A. Sexual exploitation
B. Political exploitation
C. Educational exploitation
D. None of the above

6. As rape was used as a method of political intimidation, it came to be defined in the context of class struggles.

A. True
B. False

7. With the growing strength and visibility of women, political parties hastened to strengthen their women's wings.

A. True
B. False

8. The women's movement since the _____ comprised a loose-knit conglomeration of autonomous groups, which specifically addressed the issue of women's subordination under patriarchal systems across national, geopolitical and historical boundaries.

A. 1970s
B. 1860s
C. 1750s
D. 1910s

9. Feminist theorizing increasingly critiqued the prevailing masculine ideology; it focuses to the interconnections between _____

A. Men's subordination and the destruction of the environment
B. Men's subordination and the protection of the environment
C. Women's super ordination and the destruction of the environment

D. Women's subordination and the destruction of the environment

10. The politics of the women's movement during this decade aimed at dismantling state _____ by addressing poverty and development issues from the standpoint of women.

A. Matriarchy
B. Patriarchy
C. Matriarchy and Patriarchy
D. None of the above

11. _____ was also a period, when free market economies were deified and the political basis for a welfare state undermined

A. 1970s
B. 1980s
C. 1990s
D. 2000s

12. The decade, _____ witnessed the increased importance of IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank in determining national policies.

A. 1970s
B. 1980s
C. 1990s
D. 2000s

13. The _____ also saw the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments aimed at the progressive devolution of political powers to local communities. Through these enactments, more than one million women for the first time in history enjoyed political power within local communities.

A. 1990s
B. 1880s
C. 1870s
D. 1920s

14. Women's organizations were mainlylead by _____

A. Educated middle class men
B. Educated lower class women
C. Educated middle class women
D. Educated upper caste women

15. Women's organizations have existed since _____

A. Pre-independence times
B. Post-independence times
C. Colonial period
D. None of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

l.	A	2.	A	3.	A	4.	B	5.	A
6.	A	7.	A	8.	A	9.	D	10.	B
11.	C	12.	D	13.	A	14.	C	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Critically examine the status of women during the independence period.

2. Examine the role taken by women's organization for the upliftment of women in Post-independence India.

3. What were the challenges faced by the women during 1980s and 1990s.

4. Discuss women's movement in post-independent India.

5. Discuss feminist's women in India.

Further readings

- John, Marry E. (2008). Women's studies in India: a reader. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Jane Pilcher & Imelda Whelehan. (2004). Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies. London: Sage.