

Changing gender roles: issues and prospects

Outline

I- **Introduction:** An emergent phenomenon is the growing flexibility and changes in the gender roles of men and women. However, this growing phenomenon has certain challenges for the society but on the brighter side it has prospects too. The challenges can be reduced with pragmatic measures.

II- **Changing gender roles - an overview**

III- **Changing gender roles - the manifestations:**

a. Shift of roles from traditional to non-traditional.

b. More involvement of women in politics and leadership roles

c. Increased participation of women in workforce

d. Changing family dynamics and structure - men's increased participation

IV- **Changing gender roles - the issues:**

a. Cultural restraints for changing gender roles - patriarchal society

b. Less acceptability of female workforce

c. Historical stereotypes - defining roles for men and women

d. Gender discrimination and the glass ceiling - unequal wage gaps and opportunities

- e. Rural and urban divide
- f. Less protection for women, legally and socially

V - Changing gender roles - the prospects:

- a. Reduction in patriarchal norms
- b. Economic empowerment - closing the gender pay gap and economic equality
- c. Social and cultural diversity - enhanced women inclusivity
- d. Political empowerment - increased representation of diverse genders in leadership roles
- e. Women representation in sports

VI - Efforts done so far to overcome issues of changing gender roles

- Sustainable development goals

VII - Further efforts required to overcome issues of changing gender roles:

- a. Awareness through education in challenging gender stereotypes
- b. Active role of civil society in advocating women's acceptance in public sphere
- c. Legal protection by state against gender discrimination
- d. Gender mainstreaming through popular media

VIII - Conclusion

Changing Gender Roles: Issues and Prospects

Early societies had rigid roles for men and women with attributes labelled as being masculine and feminine. Man was considered as provider of basic necessities for family and woman as the child bearer and caretaker of home. An emergent phenomenon is the growing flexibility and changes in the gender roles of men and women. The changes and flexibility in gender roles which are being evident today has its roots in the changing social structure. Post colonial world and growing globalization set the foundation for gender transformative world. The gender transformation has been taking place in all spheres of society: political, economic and social. Women are getting more involved in workforce and politics, whereas, men are trying to balance work and family life. However, there are certain challenges attached with the changing gender roles. These challenges are myriad and have roots in patriarchy. Regardless of the challenges,

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there are prospects owing to changing gender roles. These prospects entail challenging patriarchal values, political and economic empowerment, and a women inclusive society. ^{Nevertheless,} Changing roles to accommodate the social or professional pressures has become a common phenomenon. The flexibility in gender roles needs to be taken to the extent where finally the concept of respective gender roles is done away with.

Gender roles have often been defined by a separation of men into public spheres, such as business and leadership, and women into private affairs spheres, such as homemaking and motherhood. But the new ideas in the long nineteenth century - like nationalism, communism, and industrialization - challenged these roles. That is when gender transformation started. In Pakistan, changing gender roles took a new pace in the last quarter of twentieth century. Today, women in Pakistan are seen more involved in politics, workforce

and overall in society.

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