

# Gender Studies

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**Question:-** Write a comprehensive essay on the 'Sex versus gender debate' in feminist philosophy and social sciences reflecting nature vs nurture debate.

(1) Introduction

(2) Sex Vs Gender

(3) Sex in a nature debate

(3.1) Binary system in sex

(3.2) Difference of male and female physical characteristics

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(4) Gender in a nurture debate

(5) ~~Factors~~ <sup>Parameters</sup> affecting the construction of Gender

(6) Parameters that shapes social construction of Gender.

(7) Theories of nurture debate of Gender

7.1 Gender role theory by John Money

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(8) Nature Vs Nurture debate

(9) Conclusion.

## ● Introduction

Gender Vs Sex debate is a controversial

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debate as some takes stance on whether they are biologically constructed or culture has influence on them.

Eleanor Storky in her book *Born or constructed?* debate on Gender studied that whether they are born or constructed. Sex is biological on the other side gender is socially constructed roles. Gender is all about roles. Sex vs Gender debate consists of physiological, anatomical and cultural point of view. Sex is related to nature and Gender is related to nurture which is explained below.

### • Sex Vs Gender

Sex is a physiological makeup but gender is socially and psychologically constructed as sex can not be changed but gender can be changed. Simone de beviour in her book "second sex" stated that:-

"One is not born a woman,  
but becomes one"

It is clear that gender is perceived by people according to the social norms and societies.

### • Sex in nature debate

Sex in nature debate is explained

below:-

- Binary system of sex:-

Binary system is exist in the sex. Sex is physiological concept. According to which there are two sex one is female and other is male.

- Chromosomal difference:-

According to biological make up male and female have different chromosomes. Male have XY chromosomes and female have XX chromosomes. Male and female have different chromosomal make up.

- Difference in male and female physical features:-

Male and female both have different physical features as female reaches to puberty earlier than male so, male has more construction of muscles and bones. Male and female both have difference in facial and body hair. Male and female have difference of few body parts which can be seen by everyone like adam's apple.

- Internal and external Genitals:-

Female has vulva as external and vagina as external genital but male has penis as external and urethra as internal genital.

## • Gender in nature debate :-

Gender is socially constructed as explained belows

- ~~Factors~~ <sup>Parameters</sup> affecting construction of Gender.

Following are the factors that affect the gender :-

### • Gender Identity :-

Gender is different from sex as in gender a person perceives his/her identity. A male can be identified as women or any other gender like gay or transgender. Gender is related to identity and to whom a person is attracted to.

### • Gender roles :-

Gender roles are the expectations which a society or culture expects from a women or man. A society expects the following from a women and man :-

#### Man

- Aggressive
- Decision maker
- Makes money

#### Woman

- Delicate
- Decision obeyer
- Home maker

A man is considered aggressive while a woman is considered as delicate and decision obeyer but male is considered as decision maker.

- Gender as an accomplishment ♥

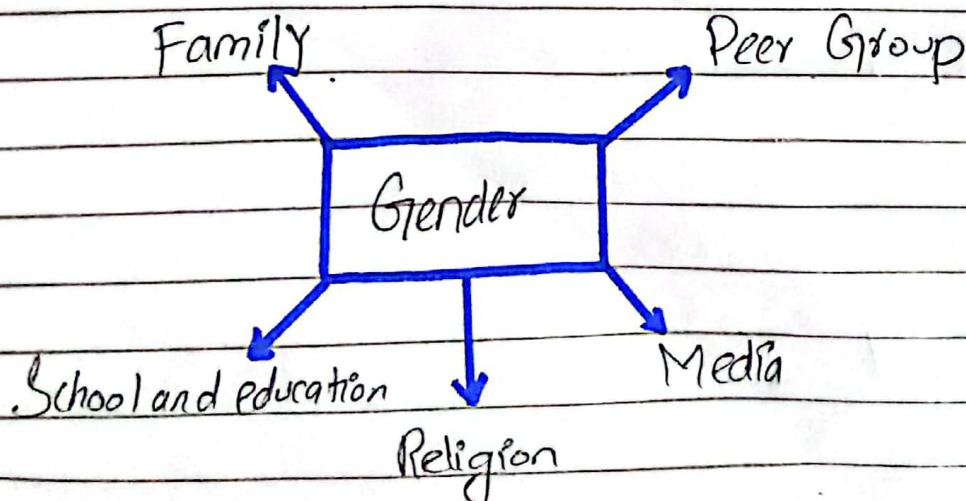
Roles are divided among man and woman and gender is all about doing. When someone creates or invents, it is considered as an accomplishment or when a man does more roles, he feels accomplished.

- Gender and belief:-

Gender construction is very much related to belief. How someone believes to be or how he/she sees themselves. Belief plays a major role in the construction of Gender.

### • Factors that shapes social construction of Gender

Some factors are very important in shaping the gender. They play the role of institutions.



Gender is socially constructed by family. A family treats girls with delicacy and try to protect them and help them to solve problem but a boy is encouraged to solve his problems by own, Ann Oakly called it manipulation in her book Gender sex and society.

Peer groups are very crucial as boys play with boys game like cricket and football whether girls are encouraged to play with dolls etc. School and education is also an important factor because when we see school on day care time, it is designed in a such way that boys play with the blocks and boys are considered good in maths while girls are told that which subject is better for girls and which is not ~~to~~ better to pursue for higher education. Media also plays a major role in shaping gender because whenever there are advertisement of dishwashing bars and detergent women are shown. Cartoons like Barbie and princess are designed for girls. While religion or misinterpretation of religion also shapes gender. In Hinduism women were expected to be themselves and do the practice of Sati.

## • Theories of Nurture debate

Following are the theories related to gender and nurture debate:-

### • Gender role theory :-

Doing is related to gender. The Gender role theory is presented by John Money who states that gender is related to role which a society assigns to a man or woman and expect them to follow.

### • Sex role theory :-

Sex is designed by nature and male or female identify themselves as woman or man. This is called sex role theory.

### • The Schema theory :-

Schema theory is presented by Sandra Bem which states that gender is related to cognition of mind and culture has influence on mind. So Schema theory is all about the cognitive apt abilities.

### • Psychosocial theory of Erikson :-

Psychosocial theory presents that every man or woman have to pass through 8 stages which built their gender. These stages are given below-

• Trust Vs mistrust - It starts from the age

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of 12 months.

- Autonomy vs Shame
- Initiative vs guilt
- Superiority vs inferiority
- Identity vs confusion
- Isolation vs Intimacy
- Masculine and Feminine culture theory -

Masculine and feminine culture means that now feminine culture is related to women being submissive and caring while man in a culture is expected to be successful. This theory is given by Geert.

- Functionalist approach -

Functionalist approach is given by Talcott Parson who describes that a woman is inferior and man is superior. A woman's gender inequality is right because a man is a good decision maker while women have to obey men.

- Doing Gender by Zimmerman -

According to Zimmerman gender is all about roles and gender can not be changed as roles are fixed while the actors can be changed. A woman can play the role of man and vice versa.

- Nature vs Nurture



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Judith Lorber stated in her book Gender Paradoxes that gender is socially constructed because gender is all about roles while sex is related to nature. A person born as male and female, this is called sex. Gender vs sex debate is related to Nature vs Nurture. Gender is related to Nurture.

### • Conclusion

Gender vs Sex is a debate that is explained with the help of Gender Nature vs Nurture debate. It can be proved with the help of theories and examples. Gender is constructed socially, psychologically while sex is about psy physiology and anatomy. Feminist and social sciences reflects that gender is nurture and sex is natural.

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