

THEORIES OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER: -

1. Introduction:

→ claim that gender behavior is mostly due to social conventions.

- Gender stereotypes are embedded in personality since birth either by parents or society. As males learn their ways by their dexterity and physical strength while girls learn to protect themselves.

GENDER CONSTRUCT :- ~~OR~~ BT

Refers to idea that gender roles, behavior and identities are shaped by societal expectation, norms, culture rather than sole practice by individual.

2. Key Theories :-

2.1 :- FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH

TALCOTT PARSON'S VIEW :-

a) Articulated in 1940s and 1950s

Developed by Talcott Parsons.

(b) This theory suggests that gender roles and gender inequality exist to maintain societal stability. Gender ineq-

uality exist as a means of division of labor or a social system where the roles to each gender are assigned. The male take on instrumental role (provider) and females take on expressive roles (care-giver).

Gender contributes to society and stability as a whole like other institutions-

• CRITIQUES:

→ Critics argue that this theory justify inequality.

→ It rectifies and doesn't reflect gender role.

→ discriminatory

→ According to feminists functionalism neglects suppression of women in family structure.

2.2 GENDER PERFORMATIVITY:-

JUDITH BUTLER :-

- No inherent truth to gender.
- In "Gender Trouble" (1990), Butler introduced concept of "gender performativity" or ~~'doing gender'~~
- Gender is not stable descriptor of an individual.
- An individual is always doing gender.
- Gender is a repetitive performance of behaviour and actions, proscribed by culture & norms.
- Gender is a fluid ^{and} dynamic process.

2.3 Zimmerman's Theory:-

• According to this theory, gender is actively performed in everyday life.

• Originated from 1987 paper "Doing Gender".

• Gender is a routine, accomplishment in achieved through social interactions.

• Refers to the idea of "doing gender".

• Zimmerman and West argue that gender is not a fixed attribute but an accomplishment achieved by everyday tasks, interactions, performance.

• unconscious production of gender norms.

2.4 SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY:-

ALBERT BANDURA:-

• Individual learn gender role through observation, imitation and reinforcement.

• eg children internalize gender norm by observing role models like media, family, society.

• Gender roles are learnt directly through reinforcement, rewards and indirectly through observation and imitation of gendered behaviour.

2.5: Conflict Theory :-

- Rooted in Karl Marx's ideas.

- gender inequality arises from power struggle between men and women.

- Men, being dominant, maintain their power at the expense of women's freedom.

- Women are considered subordinate group.

- Example is how patriarchy functions.

2.6: Intersectionality :-

→ Derived by Kimberlee Crenshaw.

→ Gender doesn't exist in isolation.

→ Gender intersects with other identities.

eg:- race, class, ethnicity.

→ social construct varies across cultures and societies.

2.7. Existentialist Perspective:

- Deviced by Simone de Beauvoir.
- In his book "The Second Gender", he argued "One is not born, rather becomes a woman".
- Gender is result of social conditioning,
- perpetuated through social & and cultural practices.

3. Conclusions:-

Theories of ~~Gender~~ Social construct of Gender presented by various individuals, argue about how Gender is not an isolated entity entitled biologically to an individual. Gender, rather, is an outcome of various cultural, social and ethical practices.

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