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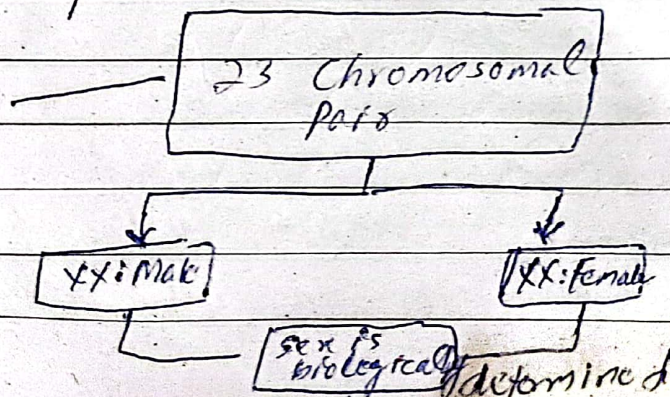
Is Sex socially determined too?

Introduction:

Generally, it is perceived that "sex is biological and gender is social." However Judith Lorber argues in her essay "Night to His Day: The social construction of Gender" that sex is socially constructed. Social construction begins with the assignment to a sex categories based on the appearance of genitalia" (Judith Lorber)

Biological Basis for sex:

Generally accepted categories of sex are two i.e. male and female. It is taught in school and colleges that XX Chromosomes make female and XY Chromosome male. On the basis of these genes are developed



However feminists argue and say sex itself is socially constructed category. In order to support their claim, quote example of Caster Semenya, a South African athlete who won world champion in 2009. Continuous winning of races grow controversies about her sex and it was debate critically whether she is she or really a he?

How sex is socially determined too?

(1) Nutrition and exercises play a vital role in effecting physiological changes:

It is widely accepted that nutrition plays a crucial role in shaping the physiological features in humans. Women owing to patriarchy and gender inequality, do not access to adequate food and nutrition in many parts of the world. The lack of food and proper nutrition to girls leads to their relatively smaller size, a features mistakenly associated with girls.

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“Uniformity in muscular shape, size and strength within sex categories is not caused by entirely biological features”

(Stanford.org)

Even the nature and amount of exercise influence the physiological feature. It is claimed that if women and men are allowed the same level of exercise, bodily distinction between them would disappear.

(2) Sex - A collection of Different Characteristics:

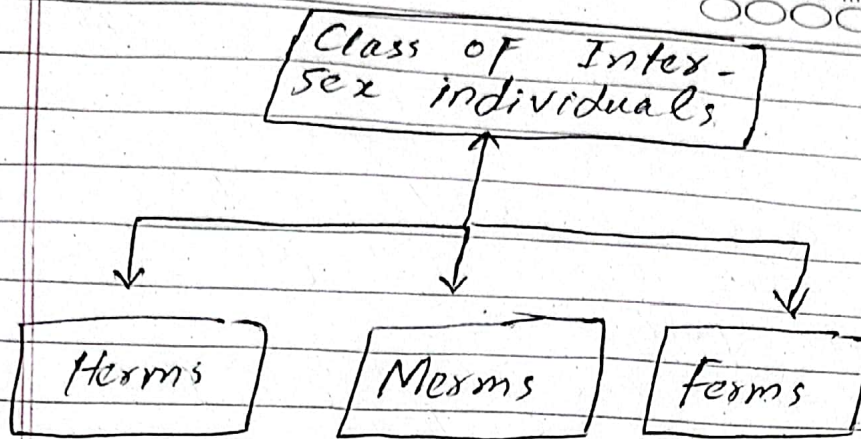
Sex of a person is generally decided ^{on the} basis of genitalia but according to feminists it is wrong too because sex is not a ~~one~~ single unambiguous. It is rather a combination of different characteristics most of which are biological.

Example:

Trans people have the characteristics of both sexes.

17% of the population fails to fall within the usual sex and possessing various combination of different sex

(Sterling)



Similarly, all physical features are associated with female or males are also subject to variation. For instance, breast-size, hair, and texture of voice can all come in different forms. It largely depends on the social & cum physical environment that a person is inhabiting.

(3) Sex May alter:

(3) In some cases, sex of a person alter upon reaching a certain age for example, a condition called 5 Alpha Reductase Deficiency cause male infants to appear female yet upon reaching puberty they developed into fully functioning males.

Example: Merit Patino - an Athlete
Patino, an athlete has female genitalia. However, her sex chromosomes (XY) are those of man. She was barred from competing in sports.

(4) Socio-economic standing impacts Physical characteristics.

Dearth of medical resources may induce female physical characteristics in men. Also, the social economic standing of a person, which is a social feature, may also interfere with one's sex.

(5) Hormones may not flow as instructed always:

It is assumed that a person's physiological development unfolds in accordance with the sexual chromosome which instruct hormones to work on the tissues and create sex specific characteristics. However, it is not completely true. Physiological changes and person's hormones are massively influenced by the environment, eating habits, exercise and the social environment. So, hormones may not always flow as instructed.

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Conclusion:

While sex have biological basis but other social factors such as environment, exercise, nutrition, socio economic standing and relation between hormones and environment influence the physiological or secondary characteristics to a great extent. This demonstrates that sex is socially determined as well.