

~~Ques~~ Nature says - there are biological differences between men and women. However, feminists argue: Gender is socially constructed. Argue.

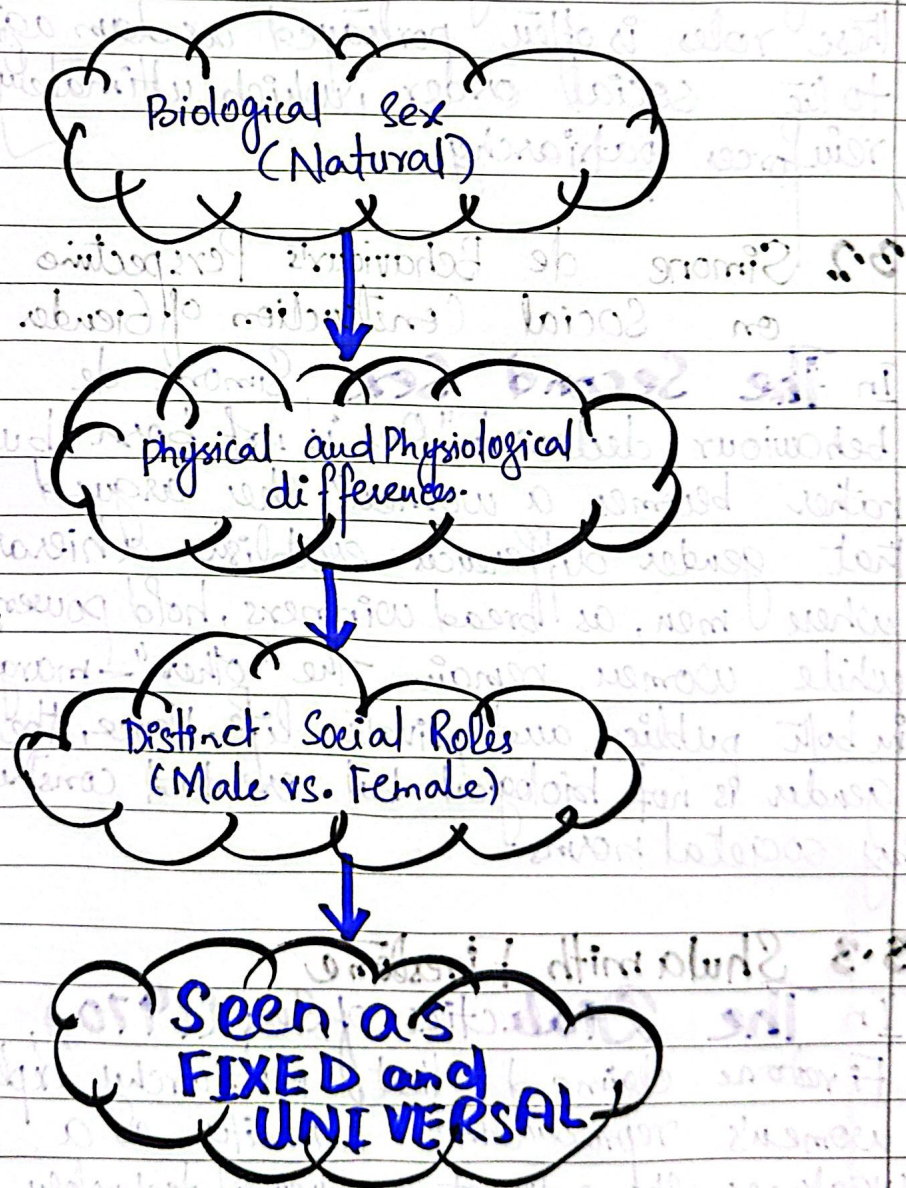
1. INTRODUCTION

Human societies have always created systems of classification to understand differences among people - whether based on race, class, caste, or gender. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations associated with being male or female. Nature's perspective holds that difference between men and women arise from immutable biological traits such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, and hormones. In contrast, feminist theorists argue that these distinctions are not determined by nature, but created and reinforced by societal norms, cultural traditions, and institutional power. While biology explains certain physical distinctions, feminists maintain the vast differences in roles, opportunities, and status are rooted in cultural constructions rather than natural laws.

2. Nature's Perspective Regarding Biological Differences between Men and Women

Nature's view emphasises that sex is biological and universal, determined at birth by physical traits. These

include reproductive systems, hormonal patterns, and genetic makeup. Proponents believe these biological differences explain variations in strength, capabilities, and behaviour, which in turn justify distinct male and female roles. However, critics point out that while biology sets certain limits, it cannot fully account for the broad range of gendered expectations seen across cultures.



3. Feminist View on Social Construction of Gender

3.1 Ann Oakley's Perspective on Social Construction of Gender

Ann Oakley, in **Sex, Gender, and Society** (1972), argued that women's roles as housewives and mothers are culturally imposed, justified through biological reasoning. She noted that challenging these roles is often portrayed as damaging to the social order, which ultimately reinforces patriarchy.

3.2 Simone de Beauvoir's Perspective on Social Construction of Gender

In **The Second Sex**, Simone de Beauvoir declared: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman." She argued that gender differences establish a hierarchy where men, as breadwinners, hold power, while women remain the "other" - marginalized in both public and private life. Hence, the gender is not biological but created constructed by societal norms.

3.3 Shulamith Firestone

In **The Dialectics of Sex** (1970), Firestone claimed that patriarchy exploits women's reproductive capacity as a weakness. She advocated using technology to free women from child birth and promoting communal living arrangements.

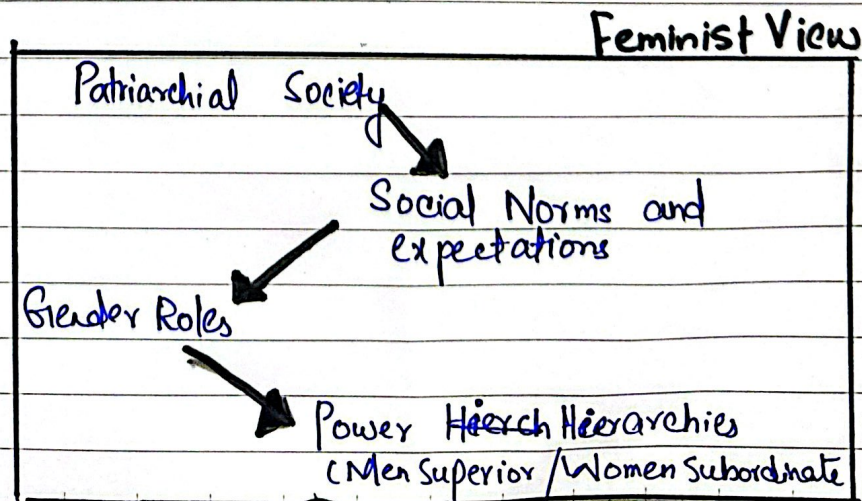
that reject monogamy and the nuclear family.

3.4 Moira Gatens's Perspective on Social Construction of Gender.

Gatens emphasized that male and female bodies carry different cultural values, shaping their consciousness. She noted that certain biological experiences hold deep cultural meaning, and masculinity is valued only when performed by biological males, reinforcing that even male body is a cultural norm, it is not inherent.

3.5 Judith Butler's perspective on Social Construction of Gender

Judith Butler introduced the concept of gender **performativity**, describing gender as an act performed within dominant social discourses. She challenged the strict separation of sex and gender, arguing that even sex is socially constructed and shaped by societal norms.



4. Conclusion

The question of whether differences between men and women are biologically or socially constructed is largely resolved in favor of the feminist position.

While biological differences exist, they cannot account for the extensive disparities in social roles, status, and opportunities.

Feminist theories have demonstrated that gender is primarily a social construct shaped by culture, institutions, and historical conditions. The significant shifts in women's roles since the 1960's - in education, employment, and political participation - prove that gender identities are flexible and subject to change when societal structures evolve.

Feminist View



biological differences



socially constructed