

Gender study.

What is Gender?

Date: _____

Gender

Origin

(Linguistic term → later applied in anthropology & history)

Definition

(Process by which social & cultural attributes define masculinity & femininity)

Sex

(Biological concept: male, female
Intersex → have an chromosome, gonads, organ anatomy)

Key Issues

- Gender = socially & culturally constructed
- Not innate or inborn
- Learnt through socialization
- Dynamic → changes over time
- Relational → defined in context of society

Difference between Sex & Gender

Sex

Sex

- (Biological)
- Natural, ascribed
- Based on physiology
- Male / Female / Intersex

Gender

- (Social)
- Socially constructed
- Roles, expectations, responsibilities
- changeable across culture

Teacher's Signature: _____

incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity.

→ **Sex:** Sex is a concept that emerges from anatomical & physiological characteristics that differentiates males and females biologically whereas gender can be seen as a social construct manifested by masculine & feminine roles prevalent in a culture or a society. Thus gender can be seen as an artifact of social, cultural & psychological factors which are attained during the process of socialization of an individual.

Sex refers to a person's biological status. It is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex (i.e. typical combinations). There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia.

Key issues to be Noted in Definition of Gender:-

* It is socially & culturally constructed. This means that gender is a matter of socio-cultural construction or definition.

It is not innate or in-born. It is defined or assigned within socio-cultural domain.

* Gender role is acquired as a member of a community. Gender roles are learnt, especially through the process of socialisation. This also buttresses

that it is not a natural condition.
 * Gender is dynamic: it changes over time. within any culture, there could be re-definition of gender roles over time. Reeve & Baden (2000) averred that gender identities & associated expectations of roles & responsibilities are, therefore, changeable between & within cultures.

* Gender is defined in relational context. This is relationship b/w the sexes in any particular culture. These relationships show specific roles attributed to each of the sexes in terms of decision-making, power sharing & division of labour.

⇒ Difference between Sex & Gender:

Gender should not be mixed with sex. Sex is biological, ascribed & natural. Sex refers to the biological attributes that define a person as female or male. Sex refers to physiological attributes of female & male. Gender on the other hand is the social definition of what it means to be female or male in socio-cultural context. For instance, gender indicates that a female should know how to cook & should be in charge of cooking in the household while a male should be the breadwinner by providing the needs of family. The preceding instance is socially

constructed from prevailing religious or cultural norms of the society. The instance also indicates gender division of labour which has been challenged by gender scholars or feminists.

The terms "sex" & "gender" are closely linked, yet they are not synonyms. Robert J. Stoller, American professor of psychiatry at UCLA Medical school & a researcher at the UCLA Gender Identity clinic, in the 1960s, in his book sex & gender: the development of Masculinity & femininity has drawn the distinction between them. He suggested that the word "sex" be used to refer to the physical differences between men & women, while the term "gender" be used in connection to the behaviour & cultural practices of men & women. This distinction is the basis for all the definitions of "sex" & "gender" that are provided in the literature nowadays. Gender is the social significance of the difference in sex. Gender, according to Professor Lois Seligman, the chair of the women's studies Department at Northern Illinois University, is a social concept. Masculinity & femininity are the usual descriptors of gender, & they refer to a complex set of characteristics & behaviors that are prescribed for members of

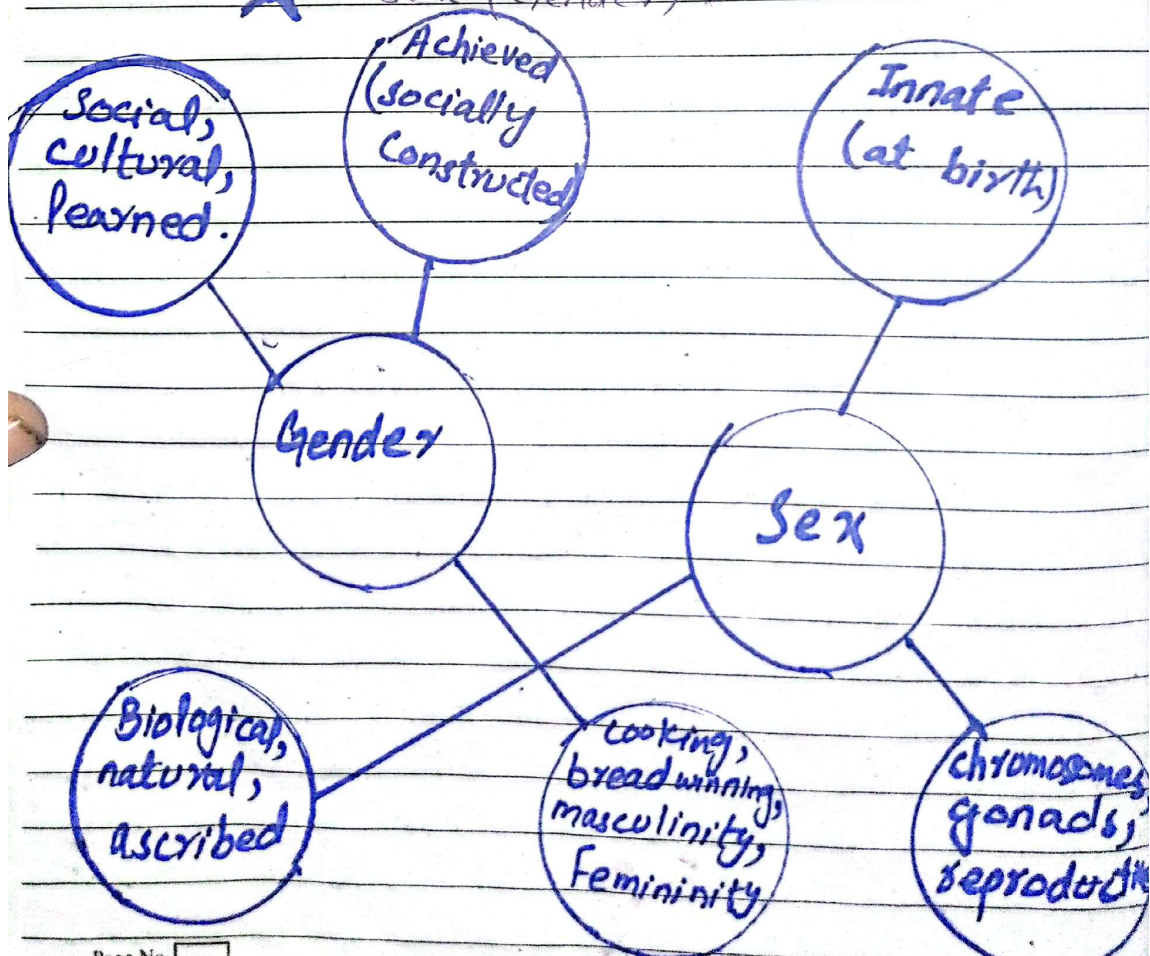
a particular sex category; it is an achieved social status. Some times it is hard to understand exactly what is meant by the term "gender" & how it differs from the closely related term "sex". Understanding of the social construction of gender starts with explaining the two concepts, i.e., gender & sex. Often these two terms are used interchangeably; however, they bear different meanings as concepts.



→ Gender Identity.

→ Sexual orientation.

→ sex (gender).



Date: _____

Sex

It is natural

It is biological.

It denotes to visible differences in genitalia & related differences in procreative function.

It is a universal term.

Gender

It is a social construct.

It is a socio-cultural

construct & it refers to masculine & feminine qualities, behavior patterns, related roles & responsibility, etc.

it is variable it changes under the influence of times geographical & socio-cultural settings.