

Q) Define the term masculinity and femininity.

In your opinion where do traditional gender roles come from?

Introduction:

Masculinity and femininity are socially constructed notion, which asserts that masculine are strong and confident, whereas feminine are weak and emotional.

However, these are traits with no biological basis and no scientific proof.

Masculine are associated with men and feminine with women. There are several traits associated with masculine and feminine. Nevertheless, there are theories supporting these traditional roles such as biological basis for sex, and theories against gender roles such as queer theory, operant conditioning theory, and social cognitive learning theory. These theories explain whether these gender roles are biological or just socially constructed.

"Masculinity and femininity are not fixed, but historically constructed."
~ [Connell]

Masculinity:

Masculinity is a behaviour referred to a person's gender. The trait is associated with men. Men are considered to be dominant, self-confident, aggressive, rational, competitive, and focused.

Trait associated with Masculinity:

i) Dominant:

Men are considered as dominant, as they know what they are doing and act as a leader.

ii) Self-confident:

Self-confidence is another trait associated with men, as they can handle tasks with pressure.

iii) Aggressive:

Aggressive men are supposed to act aggressive in situations to hold their power and dominance.

iv) Competitive:

Men are competitive, they always try to win in any situation.

v) Rational:

Men are not emotional retess to rationality, they can handle task without getting emotional.

vi) Focused:

Focused is another trait associated with men, as if men are focused on thing they can do that.

Femininity:

Femininity is a behaviour associated with female. Female are supposed to act vulnerable, emotional, nurturing and accepting.

Traits associated with femininity:

i) Emotional:

Women are perceived as emotional person,

who cannot take their own decision and depends on someone.

ii) Weak:

Women are considered as weak, and they cannot protect themselves and they need someone to protect themselves.

iii) Nurturing:

Nurturing is a behaviour associated with women. Nurturing refers to caring someone, as women are supposed to care for all.

iv) Accepting:

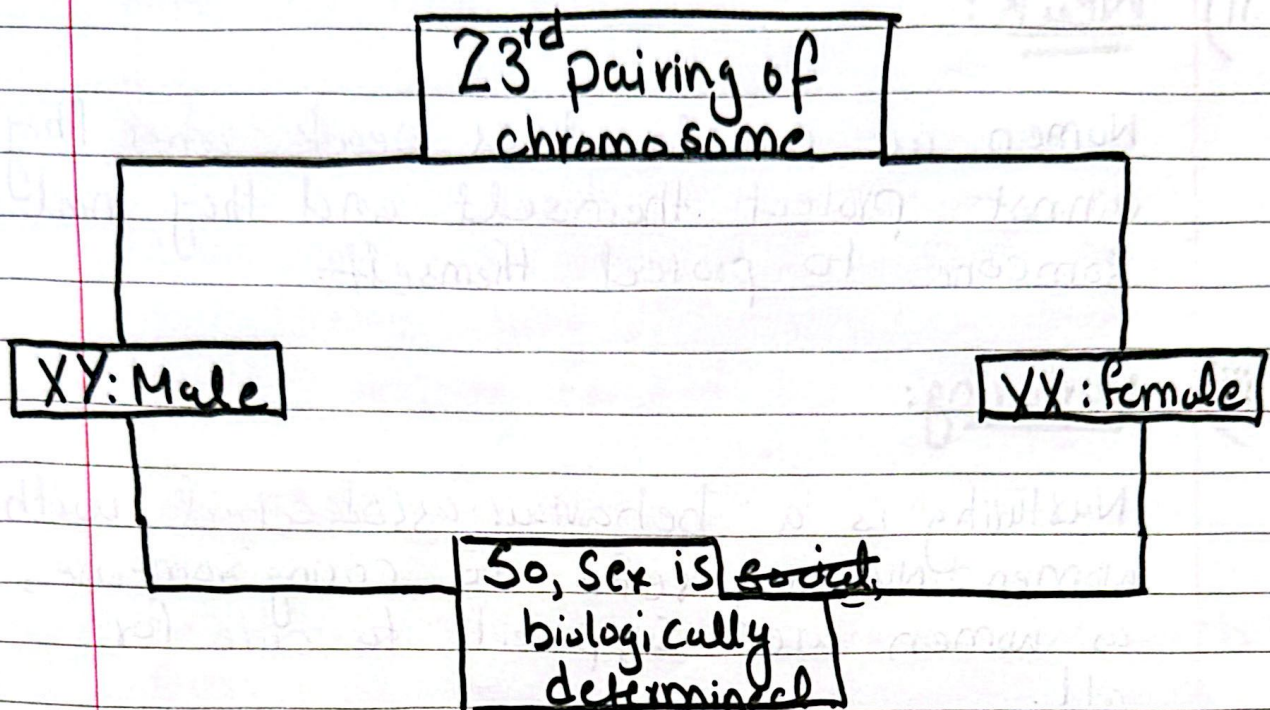
Women should accept any situation, is another societal perspective. Women are supposed to accept any torture, as this is in their nature.

Theories supporting gender roles:

Biological basis for sex:

People who solely believe that sex depends on biological factors, they

determined that pairing of chromosome results in different genders. The diagram is illustrated below.

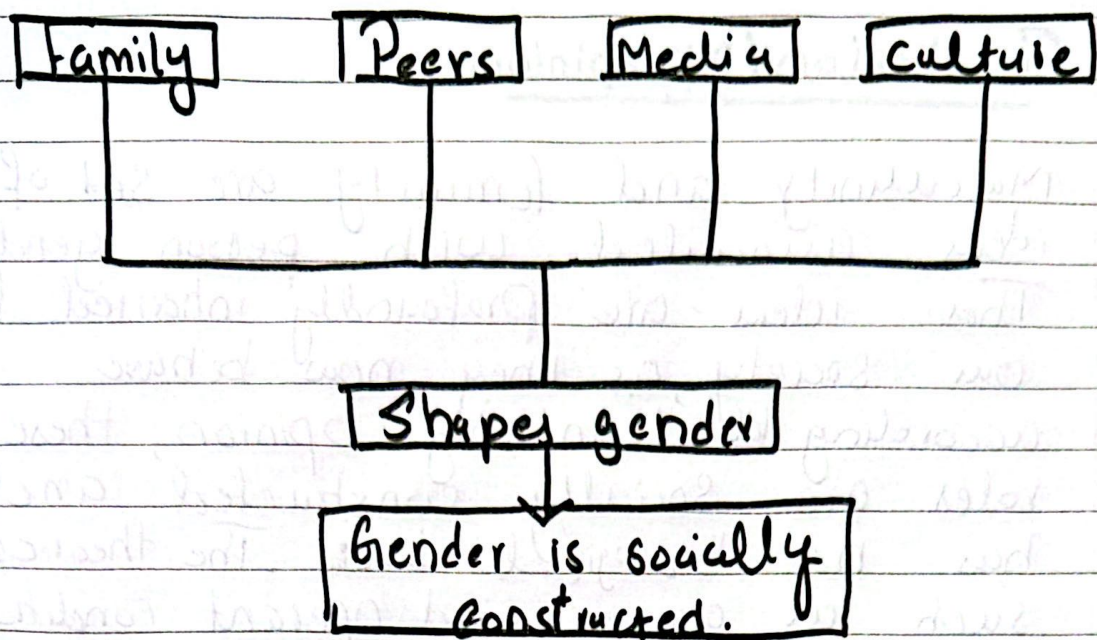


Theories against gender roles:

i) Queer theory:

The word 'queer' refers to strange or unusual. Queer theory denies the concept of two genders, and gave the fluidity of genders.

Queer theory supporting nurture side of gender:



The above flowchart illustrates the idea of queer theory, and how it supports the nurture side.

ii) Operant conditioning theory:

Operant conditioning theory asserts that gender is socially constructed. The theory interprets that behaviour is learned by its outcome or reward. If the behaviour is constantly rewarded, it is learned. The theory applies this idea on genders, and as a result boys are praised for being strong and girls are scolded for shouting.

Conclusion / My opinion

Masculinity and femininity are set of ideas associated with person genders. These ideas are profoundly inherited by our society, as they now behave according to it. In my opinion, these roles are socially constructed and has no biological basis. The theories such as queer and operant conditioning clearly states how a person gender is influenced by social factors. These traditional roles comes from our society and history.

"Throughout an individual life, their role, dress and behaviour is determined by the society".

~ [Judith Lorber].