

Date: 23-12-24

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Gender Studies

Test : 02

Sabahat Nouseen

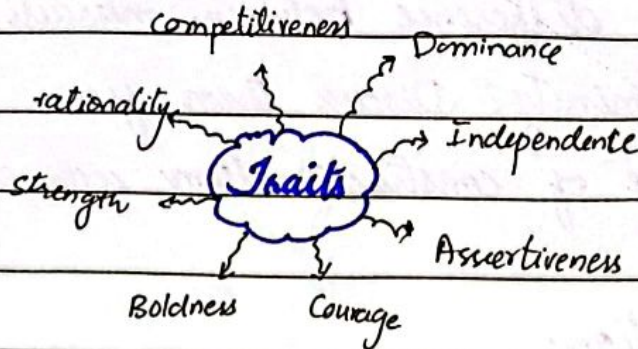
Q2. What is difference between masculinity and femininity? Discuss them from the perspective of constructionalism with examples.

Introduction:

From a Constructionist's point of view masculinity and femininity are not biologically inherited traits, but rather socially constructed roles. These roles are shaped by cultural narratives, social norms and historical development. Their view is contradictory to essentialists who believe in biological inherit of masculinity and femininity. Constructionists argue that femininity is socially determined for a female and masculinity for a male. Hence, it is society's expectation from a male to display masculinity and a female to portray femininity as described by societal and cultural narratives.

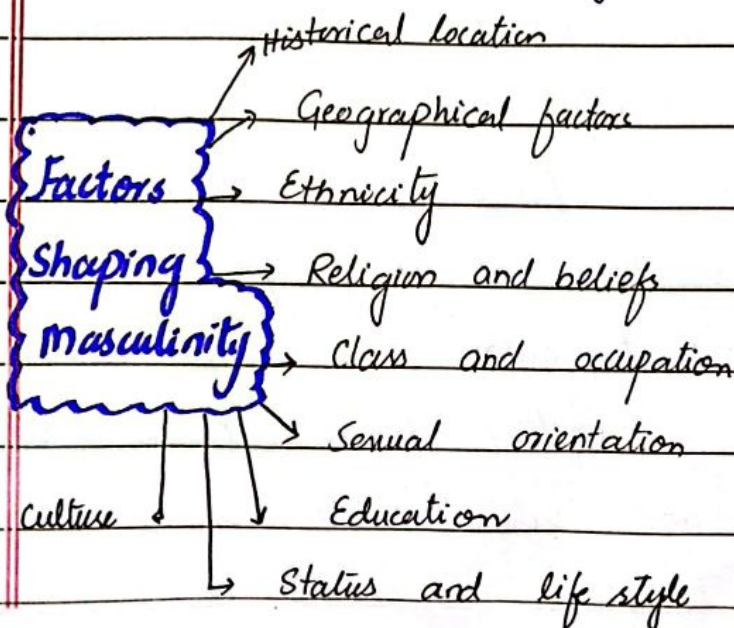
Masculinity in Constructionism:

Masculinity, manhood or maleness is behaviour, role of set of attributes traditionally liked with male.



Shaped by socio-cultural factors:

These attributes and behaviours are developed over the period of time and shaped by the socio-cultural factors of that society. Various factors play role in determining the roles association with masculinity, and femininity



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These manly and womanly characteristics are socially reinforced through upbringing, media and institutions.

Example of socially constructed Masculinity:

Example: 01 - In many societies men are not supposed to show vulnerability. Their attribute is socially constructed in a way to suppress their emotions and display strength. Phrases like "Men don't cry" portrays emotional stoicism as a masculine ideal.

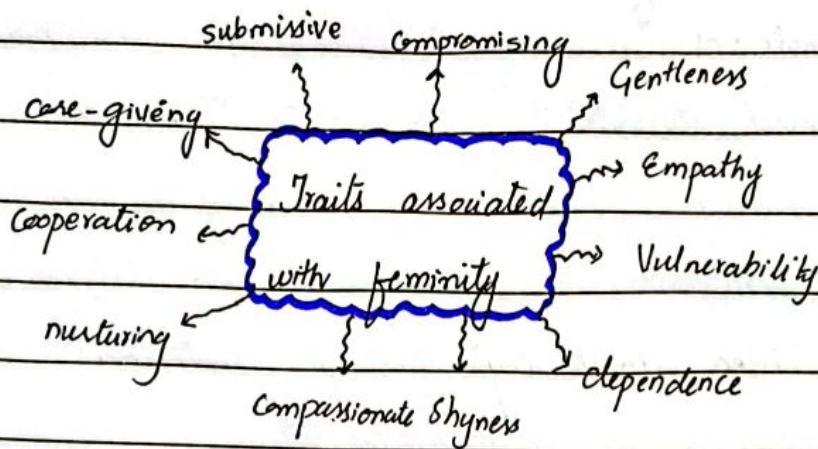
Example: 02 - Masculinity in some societal structures expect men to be providers for their families and not expected to do household work.

Critical Analysis:

The concept of masculinity is stereotypical, portraying the norms of a society. Men are not biologically born to suppress emotions or be assertive, rather their behaviour is shaped by socio-cultural environment of the society, of which they are a part.

Femininity in constructionism:

The femininity or womanly traits finated for woman are also shaped by society. Women are expected to possess certain traits and behave in a certain way to be "feminine".



Examples of Socially constructed femininity:

1) Women are perceived as natural caregivers.

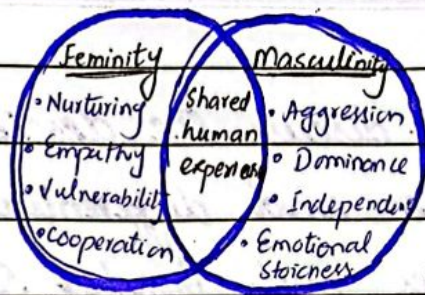
They have always been playing the roles of child bearers, rearers and care givers.

2) Women and girls are traditionally and historically are linked to beauty and grace.

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." (Simone de Beauvoir)

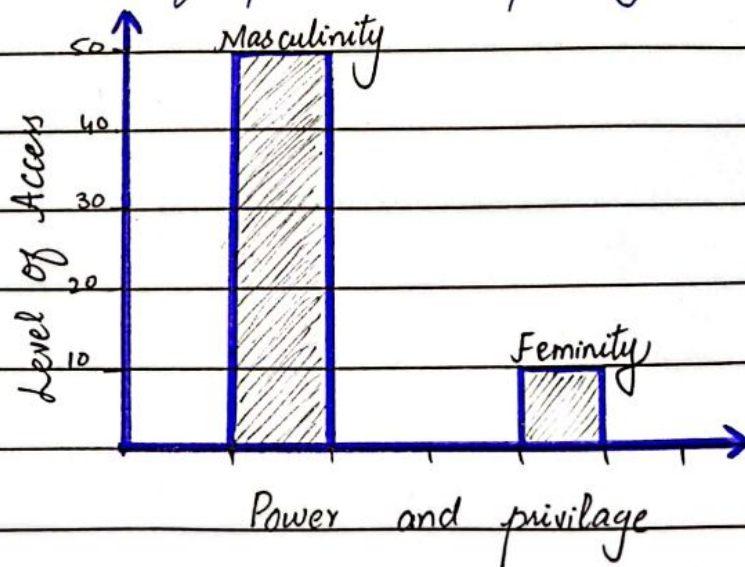
Genders roles determined by Society:

A comparison of gender roles constructed by societal norms to differentiate between masculinity and femininity.



Difference in accessibility to power and privilege

Masculinity indicates high levels of power and privilege while femininity is associated with lower levels of power and privilege.



Conclusion:

The differences in masculinity and femininity are embedded in the difference of their roles. Constructionism focuses on the view that these differences are not inherent rather constructed by society, affected by various factors over the period of time. By understanding the complexities of social construct of masculinity and femininity, we can change harmful stereotypes and deal with gender disparities.