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Q No 1:

Analyze the significance of distinction between Sex and Gender for Gender Studies. Explain how the theory of Social Construction of Gender Challenges Biological Determinism.

Answer:

- I. While in ordinary speech, the terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably, in academic literature, the terms often have distinct meanings. 'Sex' is defined as the anatomical and physiological characteristics that signify the biological maleness and femaleness of an individual. 'Gender' is a socially constructed term to refer to assigned roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes of men and women. The significance of distinction between sex and gender making it possible to analyze how inequality is not rooted in nature but produced through social institutions. This distinction separates what is biological from what is social. Isaac Madison Bentley, an American psychologist, defined gender as

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the socialized obverse of sex in 1945, later on in the beginning of 1955, Sexologist John Money popularized this distinction through his work. In gender studies,

Sex

Biological
Natural
Narrow
Universal
Generally fixed
Identity

Gender

Cultural
Social
Wider
Changeable
Not Fixed
Role of persons

separating the sex (biological) from the gender (social), exposes gendered behaviors and expectations as mutable and open to change. It provides the analytical basis for understanding gender as a system of power that institutionalize the society.

Furthermore, the primary distinction of one being biological, natural, and universal while other being cultural, social, and not universal forms the political foundation for feminist critique, resistance, and advocacy.

for equality.

II. How Social Construction of Gender Challenges Biological Determinism

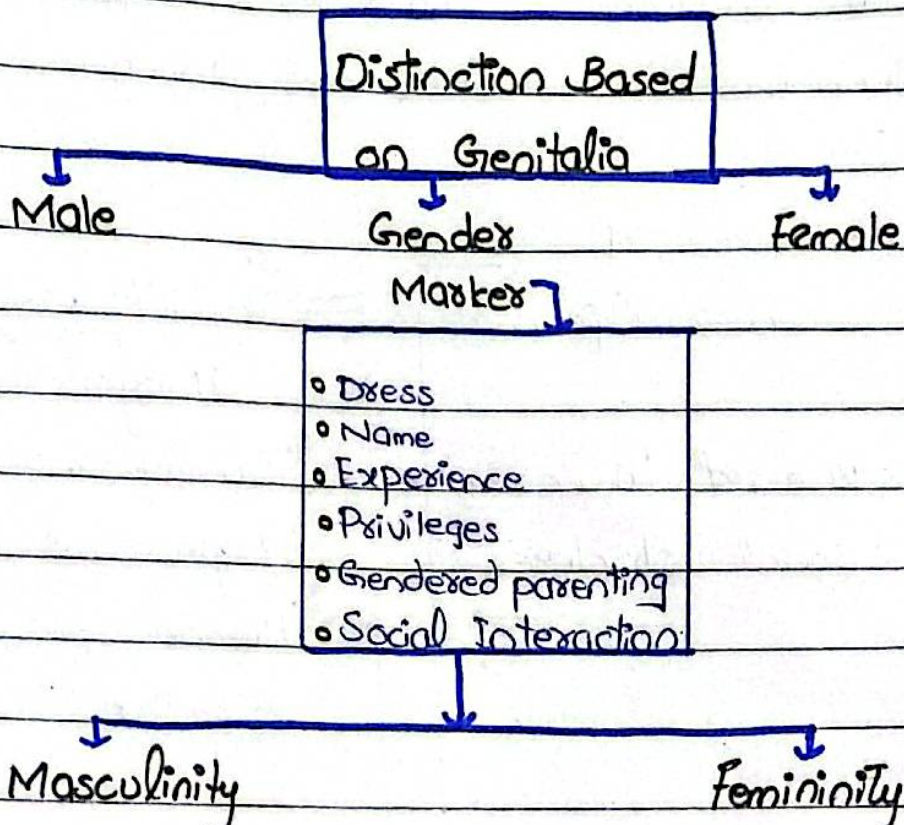
Social Constructionism was evolved in 1980s and further developed in 1990s. This theory examines the development of jointly constructed understanding of the world. It assumes that understanding, significance, and meaning are developed not separately within the individual, but in coordination with other human beings. Unlike, Biological Determinism, social constructionism is an ongoing, dynamic process and therefore shifts from one generation to the next.

Social Constructionism challenges Biological Determinism in Gender studies through:

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| 1. Source of Gender differences | ⇐ | ⇒ 3. Flexibility vs. Fixity |
| 2. Role of Power and social structures | ⇐ | ⇒ 4. Identity and Expressions |
| | | ⇒ 5. Human Behavior |

1. Origin of Gender Differences

Social Constitutionism argue that gender differences arise from social norms, socialization, and institutional practices, not from innate biology. The idea of Simon de Beauvoir that "One is not born but rather becomes, a woman," best describes that gender identity is produced through social and cultural processes, expectations, and learning. Furthermore, Judith Lorber asserted that the social construction of gender is manifested in childhood and then reinforced by gender markers.



2. Role of Power and Social Structures

Gender roles are tied to structures of power - patriarchy, labor divisions, and institutionalized inequality. Judith Butler argues that gender norms are enforced through repeated performance and sustaining power hierarchies. The best example to illustrate that social expectations define how gender is expressed, not biology is that of the authoritative reign of Queen Victoria in 19th-century Britain. Despite being biologically female, she wielded enormous political power which contradicts the biological determinism of gender.

3. Flexibility vs. Fixity across cultures

Biological Determinism refers to the fixed trait of sex that cannot be evolved. On the other hand social constructionism have rightly emphasized those aspects that vary across cultures, histories, and societies. The ideas of Masculinity and femininity differs across the world. Margaret Mead, a popular anthropologist, studied three distinct cultural groups and demonstrated that there was

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nothing inherently feminine about being subordinate to masculine. Different societies could organize gender in radically different ways.

4. Gender identity and Expressions

Scholars like West and Zimmerman asserted that gender is something we do not something we are. Social construction theory accommodates diverse experiences - transgender, non-binary, and gender-queers and allow multiple expressions unlike biological determinism that reduces gender to male-female binary. As contemporary gender studies emphasizes inclusivity, so social construction theory provides a conceptual room for identities and serves as an essential gender spectrum.

5. Human Behaviour and Possibility of Change

Social constructionism views gender as created through social interactions, it implies that gender ^{norms} can be change

transform, challenge, and resisted. Butler's notion of "gender performativity" suggests that individuals can subvert norms through alternative performances. Feminist movements from suffrage to queer and trans activism rely on the idea that gender roles are not destiny. So, constructionism provides theoretical basis for gender equality unlike determinism that undermines transformative politics.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, sex and gender are two distinct concepts in gender studies and also form the basis of biological determinism and social constructionism. One is natural, fixed, and biological, so creates the structures of power that leads to inequality. The other one reveals that what societies call masculinity and femininity is historically produced not innate. These distinctions provide the essential analytical and political framework in gender studies to expose social norms.