

"One is Not Born a Woman, but Become One" - Simone de Beauvoir

1- Introduction

Thesis statement: 'Female' is a biological term, the nurture imposes certain feministic traits to ensure the social construction of a woman

2. Argument: Role of nature vs. nurture in making a 'woman'.

3. Role of woman vis-a-vis society

3.1- Treatment towards woman in Islamic History vs. Western History

3.2- Current differences in Gender construction: West vs. East

4- Construction of a 'Woman' in society

4.1- Narrative Building; assigning roles, bringing neopatriarchy. 'The Blue Room' by Nafisa Rizvi

4.2- Creating vulnerabilities; weak, submissive, shy. Views of Shakespeare, 'A Room of One's Own' - Virginia Woolf

4.3- Imposing Restrictions; limited fundamental rights, choice of marriage and economic independence

4.4- Shaping attitudes; Beautification,
objectification, normalization of violence

Case studies: 'A Girl in a River'
and 'Saving Face'

4.5- Setting Goals; housemakers, equality
is a myth, Jane Austin's, 'Pride
and Prejudice'

5- Gender Construction is not Permanent

5.1- Case study of Latin America;
different construction of woman

5.2 Study on Papua NE Guanea

6- Conclusion

'Woman' is a fragile and socially constructed term. Simon de Beauvoir in her 'The Second Sex' noted, "One is not born a woman, but become one."

In human history, the shift between masculinity and femininity by associating traits to specific gender lead to social construction of women. The matriarchal and patriarchal societies endured that male and female are constructed into man and woman, rather natural attributes. There are gender related traits which help them to become a 'woman'. There are many constructors of 'woman', from domestic to social level.

The idea of becoming woman starts from home and reconstructed throughout the life by interacting in society.

The attitudes, values, beliefs and social expectations associated to a gender are known as masculinity or femininity. The feminist school of thought in late 19th century recognized the social construction of gender and the debate of gender equality started. So, 'female' is a biological

term, the nurture imposes certain feministic traits to ensure the social construction of a 'woman'.

There is a significant role of nurture in altering the nature. This is not specific to gender but the nurture of even animals and plants alter their nature. The science fiction novel, 'Frankenstein' portrays that how a nurture turn an innocent animal into a monster. Importantly, this nurture in society shapes 'gender'. The concept of 'Tabula Rasa', signifies that a child has a clear slate mind. The atmosphere shapes his values, beliefs and attitudes. There is no doubt that biology plays a role, but in case of gender, society overturned stereotypes and overshadowed biological traits. The focus is mainly on societal standards associated to biological nature. The genitalia in male and female decides the pattern they will follow throughout the life. The association of pink colour with female, dolls, kitchen sets, nurtured her mind

to her future duties. In teenage and adulthood, the societal expectations and restrictions keep her attitude aligning with them. The 'Tabula Rasa' billed with 'femininity' ruled her life.

If the gender is not socially constructed then why different societies in history and in current era treated women differently. In age of ignorance, birth of a 'daughter' was associated with shame. The custom of burying daughters prevailed in pre-Islam Arabia. Woman became a symbol of shame.

The society constructed woman as a humiliation for her family. However, the arrival of Islam, gave respect to woman, constructed woman as honour.

Islam rejected the previous construction of woman as shame and humiliation.

Islam granted all rights to woman.

Ayesha binte Abu Bakar, opened the doors of education for women. Amir Muawiyah consulted Harrat Ayesha in political affairs. This depicted that woman is also intelligent, give consultation and

must get education. Hazrat Khadija binte Khuwailah, ensured that woman can be a business woman and holds her wealth. Islam constructed woman as equal to man, but also less burdenize them in responsibilities. On other side, Aristotle in his ideal world, didnt give right of education to women. Bonapart questioned that woman has born as a slave so what a foolish idea of demanding equality. Plato thanked god for not giving him birth as slave and as woman. Hence, different symbols are associated in different societies. In Islamic history woman was constructed as honour. Aristotle and Plato constructed woman differently.

In 21st century, the gender is yet constructed by society. The West including USA, EU accepting woman in different fields. They are empowering their women. Meloni in Italy and the upcoming queens in Spain and Norway. The Europe of Aristotle, Plato and Bonapart has changed over time and

to the gender. Whereas, the East side of the globe treats woman differently. Pakistan in Gender Gap Index, lies on 148th out of 148. The construction of women as poor, fragile, submissive and vulnerable. In Afghanistan, women are not allowed to get education. After domestic and social construction of gender, the state also reinforce the ideas of being a woman. So, the transition from advent of Islam to current situation of Islamic countries, the shift in attitude towards women in West. It signifies that 'woman' is constructed and become a different woman in different eras.

There are different steps and events which help in becoming a woman in society. It starts from narrative building in society. The narrative of authoritative men and submissive women. The female assigned different roles to perform and align those roles to the narrative, infiltrated by the society. The narratives get matured and

and turned into neopatriarchy. Firstly, the male members by strategic communication enforce narratives and roles. Later, the females whose minds are caged into patriarchy, become a symbol of patriarchy and ensure the construction of ^{younger} 'women'.

Nafisa Rizvi in her 'The Blue Room', portrays a typical Pakistani family and their standards of becoming a woman.

Rizvi highlights the little girls are not allowed to attend expensive educational opportunities even if they belong to upper class. The headship of a female (neopatriarchy), her justifications for violence and definition of being a good woman. The narratives rule their lives and they become 'woman'.

Vulnerability is a weakness, a loophole which can be exploited.

In national security, vulnerabilities weaken state and a state without any vulnerability is not easy to breach. The question is, who created woman as vulnerable and why women never tried to find a treatment. The security of

a woman is most used vulnerability to
stick woman at home. Shakespear writes,
'Fragility thy name is woman'. Meanwhile,
Sophocles mentioned, 'Silence gives proper grace
to woman'. They constructed woman as
shy, weak and submissive. So the woman
follow these traits to be called a
'woman' in society. In contrast, Virginia
Woolf agreed that woman is not
weak, ignorant, insecure rather she
became like this when she surrender
to society. 'A Room of One's Own',
Woolf argues that sister of Shakespear
held the same intelligence but her
lack of education and economic dependence
pushed down her qualities. In Pakistan,
women can not go outside freely because
she is not secure. The question is 'from
whom she is insecure?'. These vulnerabilities
and weaken forced her to become a
woman. Otherwise, she also holds equal
intellectual wealth.

The society also imposes restric-
tions on woman so that she surrender
to social setups. The limited fundamen-

rights never let her to break the chain of 'becoming a woman'. A woman can not choose her life partner freely in most of the societies. A woman must not be economic independent. An allegation that an educated and economically successful woman is not a good woman. It restricts other woman to stock at homes and become a good woman. In Pakistan, recently, a man filed a case in Supreme Court as he refused to give back the stuff of his ex-wife. He claimed that she should not be called as 'woman' because she can not give birth. The criteria of becoming a 'woman' lies to be a mother. Meanwhile, (Judith Butler)* Betty Friedan said, 'The choice to have a child can change the whole experience of motherhood'. The restrictions, lack of fundamental rights and vague standards for becoming a woman, ensure the shaping of a female into a woman.

The most significant criteria given by society for becoming a

woman is beauty. In media advertisements, woman is portrayed as symbol of beauty. It trapped the woman's mind to make herself beautiful. Then, she turned into an object, a tool ~~for~~ to be showcased. Even if she is not beautiful, she will be an object. Tehmina Durrani, in 'My Feudal Lords' said, "I was merely a possession for him". Women become a symbol of beauty, possession and objectification. All these lead to the acceptance of violence. Woman is expected to accept violence and restrict her resistance. In 'A Girl in River', Sharmin Choudhury showed how a woman is expected to surrender to society. Firstly to her father by obeying his order in marriage and then her in-law and society by forgiving her criminals. It claimed that she suffered because she is not right woman, as she did not surrender. The society created an example for other women that they must be submissive and obedient.

In struggle of becoming a woman, the responsibilities ^{which} are associated

to woman is to take care of her home only. Jane Austin in her, 'Pride and Prejudice', wrote, 'Marriage is a ultimate goal for woman'. After centuries, now marriage is not ultimate goal for women, in the very society about which Austin wrote. The idea of becoming a woman has changed over time. Therefore, the movements for equality started. Now the woman is performing in many field of life. But, only where the society evolved with time. In south Asia, ^{gender} equality is a myth even in 21st century. In Pakistan, death penalty removed from stripping off woman from her clothes in public, to maintain GSP-plus status by EU. It clearly shows, that society still treats women as least priority. In Punjab, the serving CM is a female but in far flung areas woman is sentenced to death on name of honour. So, different societies and social status significantly change the traits of becoming a woman. However, woman is created by environment.

rather born in a way.

In Latin America, before the discovery of America, there was matriarchal societies. Even in Africa, the Europeans bring matriarchal setups along with colonialism. The 'Mayflower' from Britain, ended the independent and strong woman characters in native Americans. Ultimately, with time the shift in society brought a shift in gender associated traits.

A study on 'Papua New Guinea' showed that there are three societies. In one society, matriarchy ruled. In other, patriarchy ruled but woman is not submissive. In last society, they all are equal. So, the lives, attitude, traits, beliefs and activities of woman are shaped by society.

Hence, both the genders are neutral and the nurture of women make her life according to social standards. The ideas of becoming a woman and treatments towards woman were different in human history. Similarly,

in (pres) present century, the woman's life is different in East and West.

The domestic, social and then state actors ensure the femininity of woman.

The narrative building lies since childhood, the creation of vulnerabilities to make her weak and restrictions in accessing

fundamental rights shapes life of a woman.

The standards of beautification, objectification and normalization of violence also helps

in creating boundaries around woman. The

idea of 'woman' is not rigid and it

is flexible which is in constant shift,

from history to present and from society

to society.