

ONE IS NOT BORN
A WOMEN, BUT
BECOMES ONE

1) Introduction

Society constructs
the gender roles rather
than biological differences

2) Difference between sex and gender

3) Gender roles are socially constructed

a) Gender roles develop through
early childhood experiences
and learning

b) Societal expectations shape
the gender roles in a
society

- c) Social stigmas and discrimination construct the gender roles.
- d) Education system reinforces the gender roles.
- e) Role of media and religion in shaping the perception of gender.
- f) Patriarchal structure of society restricts women to perform specific roles.
- g) Legal and institutional barriers in constructing gender roles.
- h) Limited employment opportunities for women and division of labor

i) Violence and discrimination
against women in construction
of gender differences.

ii) Conclusion.

"Frailty, thy name is women" - (Shakespeare) Women are perceived as weak, fragile and unintellectual. They discriminated on the ground of gender roles which are constructed by society. Physical differences are not responsible for the standard social behaviors and norms. It is the society which pushes women to internalize their role in society and to behave in a specific manner. Children learn through early childhood experiences and they come to know the societal expectations and discriminations. Moreover, education system, patriarchal structure and division of labor are all the means to reinforce the gender roles.

Moreover, role of media and religion play their part in defining gender roles. Hence, society constructs the gender roles rather than biological differences.

There is a difference between the concept of gender and sex in defining the gender roles. Sex discrimination on the ground of biological differences including physique, hormones and chromosomes. Moreover, gender is a social construction of norms which are attributed towards women and set their roles in society. For example, theory of biological determinism justifies the discrimination of gender.

roles on the basis of biological differences. They perceive women as emotional, unintelligent and sensitive. ~~Furthermore~~ However, some critics argue that gender roles are purely the result of social construction. For example, Judith Butler in 'Gender Trouble' explains the gender performativity on the basis of social norms and values. Hence, sex and gender are two opposing concepts and perceptions which define the gender roles.

Gender roles develop through early childhood experience and learning. Differences between men and women and their roles are fixed by society. Children

learn these differences when they interact with their peers, parents and family. They internalize the differences between men and women and their roles according to their position and functions in society. For example, when they interact with their peers, they come to know that boys prefer to play with toys and girls prioritize to play with dolls. They shape their personality according to this internalization of gender differences. Psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud argues that children are unconsciously shaping their personality and behavior by interacting with same sex parent. Hence, gender

roles and differences are the result of early childhood experiences.

Societal expectations about the roles, behavior and practices shape the gender roles. Society has fixed some standards for both males and females. They are expected to perform in society according to these standards; otherwise, they are not accepted in a confined society and cultural norms. People are bound to follow the same standards while living in a society. For example, in Pakistani culture and societies, women are expected to behave and speak in a low tone which

shapes their behavior.

Moreover, beauty standards and dressing codes are different for women which shape their overall appearance. Radical feminism pointed all these objects which are related to specific gender. For example, they consider lipstick, heels and dress as a tool of women oppression and used the metaphor of 'trash can' to throw these objects which distinguish men and women. Hence, societal expectations shape the gender roles.

Social stigmas and discriminations constructs the gender roles. In constructing gender roles, society is

The ~~barrier~~ major factor which discriminates men and women. Many social stigmas are attached to women which shape their role in society. They are perceived as a tool of reproduction which defines their roles. They are discriminated on every ground including social, economic and political because they are considered appropriate for domestic roles. Furthermore, many stigmas are attached which bound them to stay in a limited boundary. For example, many employed women are considered immoral and wicked in rural areas. Co-education system and

western ideas have another set of bad perceptions and social stigmas. Hence, social stigmas and discrimination shape the gender roles by pushing women to perform their domestic task.

Education system reinforces the gender roles by teaching the children their role in a society. Children learn their roles when they go to educational institutions. They learn how to speak, behave and dress according to their gender. Moreover, punishments and reinforcements shape their gender roles. According

To Social Learning Theory, humans learn according to previous experiences.

Punishments and int reinforce-
ments further teach them
how to behave in a specific
situation. Furthermore,

discrimination on career
path and subject selection
further shape their identity.

According to a research,
there are more men in
STEM fields than women.

Hence, education system
shapes the role, identity
and personality of
children according to
their gender.

Role of media
and religion play a part
in shaping the perception
of gender roles. Media

portrays women as a weak, fragile and suppressed entity and men as an aggressive, rude and dominant. Economic independence of women and financial suppression are the ~~res~~ result of media perception and misinterpret^{ation} of religion. According to Erving Goffman in 'Gender Advertisements', gender roles are portrayed in advertising which perpetuates certain stereotypes. Moreover, restrictions on family planning, abortions and contraceptives are the outcome of religious misinterpretation. On the ground of religious teachings, women stay at their

homes and perform the gender duties. Hence, media and religion are the hurdle for women to chase their dreams and career opportunities.

Patriarchal structure of society restricts women to perform specific roles. It is perceived that women are dependent on men and men are dominant on women. Men are responsible to earn and women are responsible for childcare. To their roles are considered as an extension of their personality. Theory of 'structural functionalism' by Talcott Parsons argues that these gender roles

maintain the social stability and structure. Their roles and functions are according to their personality which is essential for a balanced society. This perception discriminates gender on the basis of their ability. Hence, patriarchal structure of society makes a woman suppressive and dependent on men.

Legal and institutional barriers are the major factor in constructing gender roles. Many institutions avoid the dominance of women in business, firms or offices. They have

The limited role in politics and decision-making process. Many countries have no legal laws which promote women in politics and parliaments. As a result, they cannot properly communicate their issues and participate in policy making process. These barriers push them to perform their roles at home. For example, globalization benefits elite women, and as a result, 70% of world poor are women (UNDP report). Hence, legal and institutional barriers construct the gender roles and position of women in society.

Limited employment opportunities for women and division of labor in a society construct the gender roles. Women get jobs according to their perceived ability and intellectual level. They are considered better to perform in garment shops, sweatshops and teaching as they are extension of their roles in a society. According to a report of International Labor Organization, only 28% women are at major managerial positions. Furthermore, gender pay gap and harassment at workplace force them to perform specific roles in a society. Hence,

limited employment opportunities for women bound them to perform the domestic roles which further define their position in a society.

Violence and discrimination are the tools of women oppression and ^{walks to} ~~the~~ construct their roles. Women are considered fragile, ~~op~~ suppressive and dominant. Men take it this as an opportunity to rule in a society. Women are considered to obey their male partners and shape their identity according to their will. Rape Culture Theory normalizes the violence against women. It is usually said, "boys

will be boys". These are norms, values and perceptions suppress the women & in a society and benefit the males. Hence, violence and discrimination play their part in social construction of gender.

In a nutshell, it is wrong to perceive women as a suppressive, weak and independent just according to the biological difference. Women are not weak on the ground of their sex differences, rather it is a society which defines their roles. Society constructs their roles by unconscious

shaping their personality and identity. Many tools including social stigmas, patriarchal structure and misinterpretation of religion are used to justify their roles in a society. Women are perceived for domestic work, childcare and reproduction which are the roles given by society. Men are perceived intelligent, strong and aggressive which suits their role of earning and ruling in a society. Hence, it is the society which makes women dependent on men and defines their role and position in a society.
