UNIT 1 UNDERSTANDING BASIC GENDER CONCEPTS

Structure

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss basic gender concepts with the help of examples and case studies. It aims at explaining the social construction of gender and how all forms of gender discrimination start from this notion of social construction only. The unit will introduce some of the significant concepts of gender including the gender/sex difference, gender dynamics, gender needs, gender analysis and the notion of equity and equality debate. All these concepts are interrelated and intersect with other structures of society including class, caste, community, education, economics, polity and so on. Therefore, an understanding of these basic concepts will enable the learners not only to understand some of the gender discriminatory practices but also enable them to take gender positive action towards creating a gender inclusive society. Let us interrogate some of the key concepts of gender studies which primarily argue that gender is not a biological construct but has its origin in society and culture.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand what is the meaning of gender;
- Explain the difference between sex and gender;
- Comprehend some of the key concepts of gender studies which encourage critical thinking.

1.3 GENDER AND SEX

Gender is not a biological category but is acted out by the individuals in society. Therefore, gender is understood as socially constructed against the category of sex, which is a biological construction. Individuals have been divided into female and male depending upon their biological characteristics. For instance, women have breasts and men have beards (Lips 2014). The notion of feminity and masculinity is created by the society but one can question that even within the category of individual woman and man, how closely are they associated with the society's notion of feminity or masculinity? Therefore, the question of gender is complicated and its understanding varies across societies and cultures. Hilary M. Lips (2014) argues that sex and gender in some ways are intertwined, for instance, social acceptance of feminity in some ways is shaped by the biological construction, i.e., a woman gets pregnant and gives birth. This is a reproductive act which is attached to the biological notion of the female body. So, separating sex and gender is not always possible. Gender is multidimensional in nature. One dimension is gender identity, meaning individual's identity as male or female. Another dimension is gender role- females or males are performing or acting in a certain manner which is socially or culturally appropriate. Third dimension is sexual orientation: attractions to members of one's own and/or other genders (Lip, p. 3). Let us understand these dimensions of gender with focus on trans-gender identity.

The sex/gender debate has eventually led to an explosion of research on gendered sexuality and the emergence of the field of trans-gender studies across countries. 'Transgender' is an umbrella term referring to people who do not conform to culturally defined traditional gender roles associated with their biological sex (Lindsey 2015: 36). Transsexual is the term historically used by the psychiatric community to diagnose people who feel their biological body doesn't match with their sense of self or gender identity. Transsexual people are genetic males or females but believe that they are members of the other sex. They feel "trapped" in a wrong body hence they may undergo Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) to conform to their gender identity. Transgender is a more inclusive term to describe people who have a specific way of expressing or describing their gender identities. "The concept of "transgender" is used as an umbrella term to describe individuals whose gender identity or expression does not conform to the conventional expectations of masculinity or femininity" (Sabatello 2011: 45). Therefore, the term transgender encompasses physical/psychological aspects of transsexual identity and include various sexual orientations. As Susan Stryker points out, "transgender refers to: all identities or practices that cross over, cut across, move between, or otherwise queer socially constructed sex/gender boundaries" (referred in Sabatello 2011: 45). Transgender people perform specific social rites and functions in diverse cultures. For instance, *hijra* community in India, *Xanith* of the Arab state of Oman and *mahus* of Tahiti. *Hijra* community in India performs certain cultural roles and they often think of themselves more as females. Though hijras have defined gender roles in Indian culture which legitimizes their function as rituals performers, they are one of the most marginalized communities in India. They are often harassed and mocked and lack access to education and employment. With policy interventions in India, perception of people towards transgender community is slowly

changing and transformations are seen regarding their access to education and decent work. Let us briefly read the story of Manobi Bandyopadhyay who is the first trans-gender person to become the college principal at Krishnagar Women's College in West Bengal. She writes her story as:

> "When a boy was born after two girls in the Bandyopadhyay family, everyone rejoiced. However, it wasn't long before the little boy began to feel inadequate in his own body and started questioning his identity. Why did he constantly feel like he was a girl even though he had male parts...What could he do to feeling so incomplete? It was a cruel joke of destiny which the family refused to acknowledge. But unknown to them, the boy had embarked on his journey to become Manobi………………………." Manobi Bandyopadhyay tells the story of her transformation from a man into a woman in her book entitled, *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* (Jhilmil Mukherjee Pandey 2017). The book narrates how a deeper understanding of one's own self is required to discover one's gender identity in which access to education also plays a key role to win the struggle.

Teaching transgender as a concept will help us more to explore gender constructions beyond the binary category of male/female. Transgender communities and their lives are as diverse and heterogeneous as other social categories. Introducing the students to transgender subject matter will invite a variety of questions; therefore, classroom environment needs to be sensitive and comfortable for understanding such issues. Within sociology and in gender studies, a variety of topics such as: subcultures/countercultures, social inequality, employment discriminations, social institutions and health care can be taught from the perspective of transgender community (Wentling *et.al* 2008). Instructors can use websites, online forum, lectures, transgender support organizations to facilitate learners' understanding about transgender communities and lives.

Gender is a learned behavior therefore it can be named as gender socialization. Gender socialization is a process in which individuals learn certain gender norms and behavior and identity. Let us think about gender socialization in our everyday life by looking at some of the hypothetical questions like:

- What was the reaction of the parents when a child is born as a boy or girl?

- What colour would the parents use to decorate the baby's room?

- How to think about different names for a baby boy or a girl?

- What kind of toys will everybody get for the baby boy or baby girl?

- How the teachers will make two different lines for boys and girls in the school?

- How families and schools assign different natures of work to boys and girls?

Think about these questions and internalize the notion of gender differences which people experience in their everyday life. Oakley in her book Sex, Gender and Society (1972) made a clear distinction between sex and gender which says:

'Sex' is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible difference in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. 'Gender', however, is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into 'masculine' and 'feminine' (Adapted from Freedman 2002, p. 15). Gender includes social relationship, labour, power, emotion and language. It is interpreted differently in different societies and cultures. Let us look at an appropriate quote to understand gender:

"Not all women are poor, and not all poor people are women, but all women have the potential to suffer from discrimination" (Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1996), see Holmes and Jones, 2013, p. 17).

Check Your Progress I

Notes : a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1)   Is gender socially constructed? Discuss with an example.

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1.4   GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Gender discrimination explains the vulnerabilities of individuals based on their gender identities. The systematic exclusion and differential treatment of individuals based on gender is called gender discrimination. It denies individuals their rights, opportunities, and access and control over resources based on gender identities. For example, women are denied access to basic education, healthcare, political participation and property rights across societies. Women's differential access to power and control over resources is the central question of discrimination which gets reflected across institutions, i.e., family, market, community, school, scientific establishment and so on. Within the family, women and girls face forms of discrimination regarding distribution of resources, like food, allocation of gender roles and entitlement to property. Unequal distribution of food leads to high degree of malnutrition and anemia among girls. Similarly, the culture of son preference in India manifests through gender discriminatory practices like sex selective abortion, female feticide and infanticide. In the labour market, you can find gender based discriminations, i.e. women are into low paid and contractual work and there are instances of gender differential wages. Similarly, if women are not represented in decision-making bodies, this process of gender discrimination reinforces women's lack of access to schooling, healthcare and law. This form of gender-based discrimination primarily doesn't treat women's right as an issue of human rights. Therefore, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEWAD) in 1979 focused on the dimension of women's right to be free from all forms of discrimination. Gender discrimination is the ultimate result of patriarchy and deep social

inequalities. Debates are on about the extent to which addressing poverty among women can eliminate gender inequalities in societies? The answer to this question is very complex because women's poverty includes their access to land, agency in decision-making, legal rights within family, vulnerability to violence, self-respect, over-work, time-deficiency, dependency and powerlessness (Johnsson-Latham 2004, Chant, 1997, Kabeer, 1997 and Sen, 1999). These forms of discrimination cannot be removed through income generating activities alone, one needs to look also into the patriarchal structure and socio-cultural norms. Gender discrimination has a huge impact on any nation's economic growth and its development. Let us look at the relationship between gender discrimination and economic development briefly.

Impact of Gender Discrimination on Economic Growth

- Investing in addressing gender inequality and women's empowerment can lead to increased productivity and higher social development.

- The UN estimates that the Asian region alone loses about $47 billion of yearly output due to lack of female participation in the labour force.

- Eliminating barriers that prevent women from participating in certain occupations can increase the productivity gap between male and female and increase the output level per worker by 3-25 %.

- Nations with educated and empowered women can have higher economic growth.

- Improving women's endowment, opportunities and agency can have positive outcome for their next generation.

- Increasing women's control over the household resources and income is changing the household's expenditure pattern which has a positive impact upon their children. In China, an increase in female income by 10 percent which in turn increases the average household income has a positive impact on the schooling of both girls and boys.

- When girls are educated, it leads to positive changes in the life-cycle approach. For instance, education of girls can lead to delayed marriage and motherhood, a reduced risk of HIV and AIDS, increased household income, lower net fertility, better survival, health and education outcome for the next generation, increased decision-making level within the household and community and reduced gender-based violence rate. (Holmes and Jones, 2013, p18-19).

Gender discrimination can be multi-dimensional in nature and its impact cannot be measured by any single indicator like income poverty among women. One can address gender discrimination through achieving gender equality and gender equity in policy and its proper implementation at the grass-root level. Education is a basic tool to talk about gender discrimination in the schools and can create a positive change in the life-cycle approach of the person.

1.5 GENDER DYNAMICS

Gender dynamics explains the power difference that exists between women and men. Let us take the example of a family in which father/husband/brother is the head of the household. Majority of decisions with regard to finance, allocation and distribution of resources rest with the man in the household. Women in the family on the other hand, belong to the subordinated class position in which they are responsible for carrying out the tasks but not necessarily take part in the decision-making process. Gender dynamics helps us to understand the gender relations (power relation between men and women) within the family, and outside of it. Let us take a simple example of sexual division of labour. This concept explains that there is a visible difference between women and men in taking up responsibilities related to running of the family. This concept originated during industrialization in which men were primarily responsible for managing financial matters related to family and working outside the home for earning wages. Women were responsible for managing the housework such as laundry, cleaning, shopping, cooking and care-giving to the children and elders. Women have been doing this care giving and domestic work without any wages, and this domestic labour is unpaid, invisible and unrecognized within the family and even outside of it. This is an example of gendered division of labour that explains the power dynamics that is present between women and men in the family.

Gender dynamics can also be explained with help of the concept of gender relation. Gender relations mean social relations between women and men that are primarily originated from the biologically different sexes. Gender relations can be relations of cooperation, conflict, mutual support, competition, difference and inequality. It helps us to understand how power is distributed between women and men in society. The difference between these two sexes also creates systematic inequality between women, men and other gender identities in relation to their social positions and conditions. For example, we have just read in the above section how certain responsibilities are allocated based on gender within the family and similarly how different social values are attached to women's work vis-a-vis men's work. Women are responsible for child care and doing domestic work which is called reproductive labour and men are attached to the production of goods and services that is called productive labour. Now more and more women have joined paid work but still there are inequalities present in the labour market and home. Let us take the example of women's invisible labour from the work of Swasti Mitter (2002). Women's work is referred to suitably as 'labour of love' or unpaid labour, and society expects women to function with the idea of unpaid labour even if they are working outside the home. Whether in market-oriented economy or in socialist countries, increasing women's access to paid employment simply means burdening women with two kinds of jobs.

Labour of Love

Have you many children? The doctor asked.

God has not been good to me. Of fifteen born, only nine live he answered.

Does your wife work?

No, she stays at home.

I see, how does she spend her day?

Well she gets up at four in the morning, fetches water and wood, makes the fire and cooks breakfast. Then she goes to the river and washes clothes. After that she goes to town to get corn ground and buys what we need in the market. Then she cooks the midday meal.

You come home at midday?

No no she brings the meal to me in the fields— about three kilometers from home.

And after that?

Well, she takes care of the hens and pigs and of course she looks after the children all day…………. then she prepares the supper so it is ready when I come home.

Does she go to bed after supper?

No, I do. She has things to do around the house until about 9 o'clock.

But of course, you say your wife doesn't work?

Of course, she doesn't work. I told you she stays at home.

1977, Mitter 2002: 114)

The story above shows how women's work is invisible and unrecognized within home and how such work is outside the Perview of economic calculation. Have you ever thought how the labour market is gendered in nature? Women in the labour market are highly represented as typists, nurses, receptionists, teachers, domestic help, gynecologists, agricultural labourers and so on. You could see more women in informal sectors such as: bidi making, construction work, tea gardens, garment factories and so on. Even within these sectors majority of women are unskilled and do informal work. In a construction site, how many women you can find who work as masons? Masonry is always considered to be a man's work and there will be many women working as casual labourers in the construction sites, carrying heavy loads on their heads. These examples tell us how gender dynamics or relations is present in every sector including education, law, policies, science, and health. Proponents of gender and development studies argue that more attention needs to be given to gender dynamics to be able to achieve gender-equitable development. Gender dynamics affects vulnerability, risks and shocks in several ways. According to Meinzen-Dick et al. (2011),

- Women and men experience shocks differently within the home and community. For example, ill health affects women more as they are not only affected by their own health but also take the responsibility of care giving to the other family members.

- Women and men have different abilities to be able to deal with shocks. Women have lower access to irrigation, agricultural training and water-harvesting methods.

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- Women and men apply different coping strategies to deal with shocks. Women's assets are disposed of more quickly to cover the expenses of family illness whereas men's assets are used for covering marriage expenses and dowry.

- There are shocks that can affect women specifically. For instance, divorce or death of their husbands can lead to women losing their assets, when marriage is governed by the customary laws.

Check Your Progress II

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2) Define the concept of gender dynamics and give an example from primary or higher education to explain the gender hierarchy existing in education.

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1.6 GENDER NEEDS

Gender needs are understood as a concept in the context of Gender and Development approach. There are two policy perspectives/approaches, i.e., Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) which relate women with development. WID approach aims to include women in development process as beneficiaries of the development projects and to integrate them with the economic development of any country. On the other hand, GAD approach aims at addressing inequalities between women and men that exist in their social roles, relations, conditions, organizations and cultures. The shift of developmental policy from WID to GAD approach introduced concepts like gender needs and gender relations (Elson 1995; Kabeer 1994, cf. March et.al 1999). Societies are patriarchal in nature; therefore, organization's culture, structure and practices are based on male values and attitudes. These institutions fail to recognize women's contribution towards the organization and women's needs or interests become invisible in organization, development process and society. The male bias present in organizations re-create gender inequalities and hierarchies in the wider world and societies. GAD approach argues that to make the development process more gender sensitive or inclusive, it is important to look into the gender needs that are different for women and men.

Gender needs are divided into Practical Gender Needs (PGNs) and Strategic Gender Needs (SGNs). PGNs and SGNs were coined by Maxine Molyneux in 1985 and later these two concepts were developed as a tool by Caroline Moser for improving the conditions of women. Practical gender needs aim at addressing the immediate needs of women and men for improving the lives of women. These needs include women's access to education, health, employment, water and sanitation. At the policy level, if the nation addresses these practical needs of women, it will impact the living conditions of women

at the larger level. The SGNs are those needs which help in transforming the unequal power relationship that exists between women and men. These needs are related to the concepts like gendered division of labour, unequal power sharing and unequal access and control over property. The examples of strategic gender needs of women include legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over her body. These needs /interests are not easy to be challenged but women can express and articulate their needs to improve their social position in the society. Women from a different caste, class, religion or tribe can share and listen to the strategic gender needs to raise their collective conscious. Men will also have their strategic needs like transforming their own roles in the family by participating in childcare or taking responsibility of some domestic work (March et.al, 1999). These two types of needs cannot be separated from each other and are important for making gender-inclusive policies.

1.7 GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender Analysis is the tool or framework to reduce gender inequalities both at the levels of policy and social action. These frameworks are designed to integrate gender analysis in social research and policy planning. It is known as a practical guide to understand issues, roles, relationships and social positions which affect women and men's lives differently. For example, women's/girl's engagement in productive roles such as: agriculture, income-generation activities and others compared to men's/boy's engagement in productive roles. In this example, we can find the difference between gender roles in the context of income-generating activities. This will help any person or institution to design the project in a gender-sensitive manner. Gender analysis framework considers issues such as: work, access to and control over the resources, status and role, and condition or position of women and men. Let us take some simple examples:

- *Work:* Who does what type of work?

- *Access to Resources:* Who has access to productive resources like wealth, credit and agricultural land?

- *Control over Resources:* Who has the power to decide the distribution of resources and who can have access to resources? For example, women can have access to the agricultural field as family labouers but they may not have control over the land or agricultural produce.

- *Status and Role:* What value is placed on women's work vis-à-vis men's work?

- *Condition and Position:* Condition implies the immediate material situation in which women and men live. For example, how will education be accessible to a girl child? Nation and states make affirmative policies such as: '*Beti bachao beti padhao',* Central government programe and '*Ladli scheme'* of Delhi government to make education accessible to girl children. Implementation of gender-sensitive policies helps women and girls to improve their material conditions.

- *Position:* This describes how values are attached to women and men differently in the society. For example, women's work is secondary, invisible, inferior, soft compared to the men's work.

1.7.1 Gender Analysis Framework

There are different gender-analysis frameworks developed by various gender experts to carry out gender related research. Let us briefly read about some of these frameworks:

Harvard Analytical Framework and People-Oriented Planning: This framework is also known as the Gender Roles Framework and was published in the year 1985. This was developed by the researchers of Harvard Institute of International Development, USA in collaboration with the WID office of USAID. The aim of this framework is to help the policy planners to design efficient projects based on the productive resources held by women and men, and the types of work carried out by women and men in the household and community. This framework has four components such as: the activity profile, access and control profile, influencing factors and checklists for analysis.

People-Oriented Planning Framework: This framework is developed for analyzing the refugee situation. It was developed by Mary B. Anderson and M. Howarth for United Nations High Commission on Refugee Women. The framework aims at promoting equitable distribution of resources and services among the communities. This framework has emphasized key factors such as: change, participation and importance of analysis.

Moser Framework: This framework was developed by Caroline Moser as a tool of gender analysis at the Development Planning Unit, University of London. The aim was to initiate gender planning at various levels (National, State or Regional) as a separate activity. The goal of gender planning was to achieve equality, equity and empowerment for women in every sphere of life (March *et.al*, 1999).

Check Your Progress III

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3) What is Gender Analysis? How can it help in carrying out gender related research?

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1.8 GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY

Equality is defined as the state or condition that treats women and men the same with regard to social status, political and legal rights. Historically, men have enjoyed higher social status than women in all societies. In Britain, feminists towards the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century started the campaign of equal rights for women regarding education, employment, property and right to vote. By the late twentieth century, much legislation such as: Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act were made with an intention to promote gender equality in Britain. The equality debate

argues that all women need to be treated as being the same as all men despite having differences on the basis of caste, class, religion, ethnic and other identities. In India, we have certain policies for achieving gender equality in sectors of governance, health, education, employment, property and law. This includes 33 per cent reservation for women in local government, Maternity Benefit Act, Succession Act 2005, Reproductive and Child Health Policy, Domestic Violence Act, Sexual Harassment Act 2013 etc. These policy initiatives and Acts are essential for bridging the gender gap in India. Gender equity helps in understanding the planning process from a gender perspective. For example, assessing the actual needs of women in their local situation will help to bring gender equity in a country or state. Tools such as gender analysis, gender planning, gender responsive budgeting and gender audit are helpful in bringing gender equity in the planning process itself by assessing the gender needs of both women and men. Let us take one case study on Gender equity and local governance.

Decentralized Planning Process in Kerala: A Case for Gender Equity

- The People's plan campaign was initiated in Kerala, 1996 under which various steps were taken to ensure gender equity. The steps were as follows:

- A participatory study on the status of women in all local areas;

- A working group on women was formed to initiate projects for women;

- Efforts were made to have women's representation from all the sectors of society;

- Attempts were made to improve women's participation in gram sabhas;

- 50 percent representation of women was ensured in all the sub-committees of gram sabha;

- Each project report has a specific chapter on women;

- 10 per cent of funds were allocated for women under the Women's Component Plan (WCP);

- Subject committees and Technical Advisory Committees were formed to see the allocation and utilization of 10 percent fund under WCP;

- Efforts were made to ensure 1/3rd representation of women in beneficiary committee;

- Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Area Development Societies and Community Development Society were formed to achieve the mission of gender equity;

- Gender awareness classes were organized for elective representatives and other officials; and

- Handbooks on gender and development and on women's empowerment were published for information and awareness generation (Sakhi Women's Resource Centre, 2006, p. 10 & 11).

This is a case study of integrating gender equity in local governance which tells us how gender planning is important in ensuring gender equity at micro-

level. Gender equality is more to do with policy initiative at micro-level. Let us briefly understand how policies are classified from a gender perspective.

1.8.1 Classification of Policy in a Gender Framework

Naila Kabeer (1992) has given a classification of policy or projects to determine to what extent a project or a policy is able to bring social transformation towards gender equality and women's empowerment. The categorization of policy is as follows:

Gender-blind policy: This policy doesn't make any difference between the genders. They tend to exclude women and other genders from its framework. For example, Integrated Rural Development Programme, National Population Policy and Climate Policy.

Gender-aware policy: This type of policy recognizes that women are active or passive actors in the development process. Therefore, women's role in the development process is determined by the existing gender relations. In this process, there is a chance that development may lead to reinforcing the gender bias and gender unequal relations. For example, Jawaharlal Urban Renewable Mission (JNNURM)

Gender-neutral policy: This type of policy acknowledges status of women and gender differences in each society to overcome the bias in a development project. It aims at providing the development benefits to both women and men. For example, National Rural Health Mission, *Sarbasiksha Abhiyan*, Right to Education Act

Gender-specific policies: This policy recognizes the gender differences in a context and aims at responding to the practical gender needs of both women and men. *Janani Suraksha Youjana*, *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*, Women's Component Plan, Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013.

Gender- redistributive Policy: This policy framework emphasizes transformation of the power imbalances between women and men by addressing the strategic gender needs of both women and men. It is challenging the gender power relations in the society. For example, Reproductive Rights debate, Implementing Verma Committee Report, Domestic Violence Act, Right to vote, Right to work, Right to health.

Check Your Progress IV

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4) What is gender equality? How does it different from gender equity?

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1.9 STRANDS OF FEMINISM

Feminism is central to all the women's movements across the world. In simple terms, feminism can be defined as an idea, ideology or principle, practice, organization and movement. The moment one introduces herself/himself as a feminist, many questions such as: what is feminism? What does feminism mean to you? Are you a feminist? Does feminism reflect men's issues? Immediately surface at the forefront. Therefore, reading and understanding feminism is linked more with everyday life situation of individuals, and it allows everyone to introspect and interrogate one's own position from a feminist's standpoint, which you will be reading in the next section. There is no fixed definition of feminism due to its cross-cultural origin and significance. Feminism has open frontiers and so many disciplines come up with their feminist theoretical positions. Therefore, how one defines feminism is very crucial in the course on women's and gender studies because all concepts which you have already read in this unit have evolved from feminist consciousness or thought. In the work of Catherine Redfern and Kristin Aune (2010), feminism is discussed in the following manner:

"Feminism to me is about improving the lives of women, bringing about equality for all groups of people (such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). It's about celebrating differences and showing that one size does not fit all."

"Having a problem with the treatment you receive because you 'are a woman. Understanding that there are issues against fellow women, that there probably needs to be something done to remedy them."

"A social and political movement which aims for the equality of the sexes." (p. 8)

Feminism is a historical movement which has brought about many changes in every sphere of women's lives such as: right to vote, right to life, right to work, right to education and equal pay in the labour market. First phase of feminism had its origin in 19th Century Europe which gave voice to women and other marginalized groups in the society for which feminist collective actions remain alive across time and society. To understand the transition that has taken place within the feminist struggle, the movement can be categorized into three feminist waves.

First wave feminism refers to the idea of identifying women's movement as an organized collective action. First wave feminism aimed for equal rights for women in the early years of twentieth century. This movement can be equated with the suffrage movement and movement for women gaining occupational rights. The full-scale women's rights convention first held at Seneca Falls, New York in the year 1848 can be attributed as the beginning of the first wave feminist movements in America.

The title "second wave" was coined by Marsha Lear and was marked as the rise of feminist consciousness in the 1960s. It had its root in the prevailing culture after the Second World War when there was an amendment to the idea that women's place is there in the home. Second wave of feminism included two major positions. One aimed to achieve equal opportunities for women and men and the other strand emphasized the differences between

women and men in relation to several types of knowledge and skills. The equal opportunity strand involves some positive discrimination towards women and emphasized that women and men are similar and equal. The second wave metaphor represented the manifestation of power that could exist in institutions such as: caste, class, race, ethnicity, economy, education, politics and so on. It has been critiqued on grounds such as: idea was derived by and for white women; its concepts cannot be applied to women of developing countries and the strong criticism came from post-modernism and post-structuralism which stated that the second wave feminism has provided an essentialist and universal account of patriarchy or women's oppression.

Third wave feminism appeared in the mid-80s through the writings about intersections of feminism and racism (Kinser, 2004). The third wave tried to understand feminism beyond the power and imagination of the upper-class white women of the western world. Feminists of the third wave argue for creating space for the women of colour. Third-wave feminists can be identified as a different generation to second-wave feminists and they focused on the individual position and their personal empowerment. They place more emphasis on individual agency and choice. They place importance on theorization of individual positions and reclaiming the rights and recognition for all genders (Coleman, 2011: p. 8-10).

Feminism has also been understood from different theoretical positions including: radical feminism, cultural feminism, socialist feminism, eco feminism, global feminism and new feminism.

1.10   STANDPOINT THEORY

Standpoint theory begins as a feminist framework to understand and explore the difference between women and men. For instance, the difference between material conditions of life and the subjective experiences of an individual can be explored and analyzed with the help of standpoint theory. In a simple sense, standpoint means understanding or speaking about the subjective position of a individual or group: I being a woman experience certain forms of gender-based discrimination including violence, sexual abuse, low pay, gender-differential treatment, female feticide/infanticide, honour killing, low wage, lack of access to education and so on in society. The moment we realize our subjective experiences of these gender based discriminations, we can speak from our standpoint position. This individual account of speaking about one's oppression or position will become a valid source of data for conducting research in any discipline like education, science-technology, medicine, feminism, sociology and so on. Hartsock, one of the key writers of standpoint theory explains that standpoint theory analyses the relations between humans and human beings' relationships with the material world. For example, the world can be analyzed or understood by women's subjective experiences and by raising the collective consciousness of a group of women. According to McLaughlin (2016), Hartsock explains standpoint theory "as a method for understanding social relations that is capable of generating knowledge that can produce political change" (p. 55). It is a methodology to understand the world and bring about social change by questioning structures like patriarchy, capitalism, caste, class and ethnic identities which you will read in the next unit of this block.

The origin of feminist standpoint theory can be traced back from different theoretical positions. Some argue that the second wave feminist's engagement with Marxism has given rise to the framework of feminist standpoint theory. Women's movements also served as a political ground for the rise of feminist standpoint position. Thirdly, the critique of science and knowledge also set the methodological grounding for developing feminist standpoint theory as a framework for education and research in women's and gender studies. Standpoint theory drawing from the women's movement has developed standpoint framework in two central themes:

- Distinct groups in society will maintain different knowledge about the world;

- Some forms of knowledge are better than others.

1.11 LET US SUM UP

This unit introduces some of the basic concepts in women's and gender studies. The entire unit is based on defining the concepts with examples and case studies. The learners will be able to understand the meaning of gender and other related constructions which will enable them to apply these understandings in the field of education. The unit introduces the understanding of feminism and the standpoint theory for the learners to apply these basic concepts in carrying out some field based work from a gender perspective. The unit also introduces certain gender-analysis methods to assess or study some of the projects and policy initiatives from a gender perspective.

1.12 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. What is the basic difference between sex and gender?

2. What is gender analysis and discuss its different frameworks in brief?

3. How is gender equality different from the concept of gender equity?

4. Write an essay on the basic concepts of gender.

5. What do you mean by gender needs? Give an example.

1.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Gender is a learned behavior therefore it can be named as gender socialization. Gender socialization is a process in which individuals learn certain gender norms and behavior and identity. For ex. Look at some of the toys and see how distinct colours and language are used in the cover page to describe gender constructions and its relationship with toys. Observe a few advertisements in the television to see how gender relations are changing regarding use of home appliances.

2. Gender dynamics explains the power difference that exists between women and men. Let us take the example of a family in which father/ husband/brother are the head of the household. For instance, difference in wage based on gender explains how the labour market is gender bias.

3. Gender analysis is the tool or framework to reduce gender inequalities both at the levels of policy and social action. These frameworks are

designed to integrate gender analysis in social research and policy planning. It is a tool to undertake gender related research in development studies and other areas also.

4. Equality is defined as the state or condition that treats women and men the same regarding social status, political and legal rights. Gender equity helps in understanding the planning process from a gender perspective.

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