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## UNIT 4 GENDER RELATIONS IN SCHOOL

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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“That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes the subordination of one sex to the other is wrong itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other...” – John Stuart Mill, “Subjection of women”.

Socialization played a significant role in reinforcing existing gender relations. Women and men played different roles in society due to socialization. This role differentiation made the needs of the men and women to be different. Biological differences between the sexes also led the society to consider women as inferior. Feminists started challenging these notions and contributed in the form of research to deconstruct the existing notions about men and women in society. Education too played a key role in this regard. In this unit, we shall discuss the construction and deconstruction of existing notions of male and female in society and the role of schools, teachers and the transaction of texts. Media and cinema were important structures in society to deconstruct or reinforce the notion of men and women. We shall also discuss the media and cinema by taking a few examples in the last section.

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### 4.2 OBJECTIVES

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After studying the Unit, you would be able to

- Define gender relations;
- Discuss the production and reproduction of gender relations in society, and particularly in classrooms; and
- Analyze the role of media in stereotyping as well as challenging the existing gender relations in the various structures of society.

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### **4.3 CULTURAL REPRODUCTION OF PATRIARCHAL RELATIONS IN TEXT BOOKS AND CLASS ROOM PROCESSES AND STUDENT TEACHER INTERACTIONS**

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In the beginning of the Unit we will start by discussing what gender relations mean and how they are reproduced over a period? Schools were considered as an important place in shaping gender relations. Then we will look at theories and discourses related to the production and reproduction of gender relations in the society.

Education is a means of reinforcing gender relations from the initial stages of life. In any society, women and men are expected to perform certain roles due to the socialization process. Social relations were established between men and women in society because of the performance of different roles and the established norms of the society. The roles of men and women were considered as static till nineteenth century in the western society. The role differences and role enforcement between sexes created unequal power relations, making one group advantaged and the other group disadvantaged. The inequality between men and women further manifested and it led to the regulation of all relations and social formations in society. The biological differences between male and female determined socio-cultural differences. This was not challenged in the beginning. Before we explore the education sector, it is important to understand how gender relations were shaped and reinforced over a period of time in the society.

Patriarchy played a significant role in reinforcing social roles for men and women. Social roles in western societies as well as other societies were shaped and influenced by the patriarchal attitudes. Roles perceived for men and women have been influenced by history, culture and society. From this point of view, women have occupied different (and usually subordinate) positions historically because, western and other societies were patriarchal, that men had power over women and therefore, the biological differences had been stereotyped and women kept in the subordinate position (De Beauvoir, 1953). The emphasis of this perspective was to understand gender and sex differences as a cultural phenomenon, arising out of the dominant ideas of a era or culture. Education was here regarded as an instrument for creating awareness of why particular sex differences were important at particular times and for encouraging greater equality between the sexes, as well as for challenging dualistic and stereotyped assumptions.

The differences between men and women and the subordinate position of women were seen as natural in the beginning in many cultures and societies. This led to the construction of women as inferior. According to Vicinus, women were expected to perform roles in private spheres and men were expected to perform roles in public spheres in nineteenth century Britain. There were scientific studies published in those periods which also undermined the capabilities of women. For example, Delamont & Duffin quoted in their paper in 1978 it was believed that if women entered universities, their reproductive capabilities would be harmed. This perspective started changing in the early twentieth century. Still, biological differences between girls and

boys dominated in the early twentieth century discourses. Accordingly, men were considered strong physically, less resilient, having greater scientific abilities and tending to look at the world more objectively. Unlike men, qualities of women were considered being as nurturers, and care givers. They would be matured physically and psychologically at the early stages of their life. Authors like Hutt stated that men and women were fundamentally different and therefore, their characters were not susceptible to change (Hutt, 1972). By looking at the conservative perspective on men and women till the early twentieth century in the society, the same perspective had been reflected in education too. They have considered education as a means to reinforce the socialization process. So, they reinforced roles of men and women from the early stage of childhood through texts and transactions in the classroom. In that text, it was depicted that the boys were breadwinners and girls were home makers.

In this situation, the second wave of feminist movement contributed a lot in terms of research to bring equality between men and women. They showed scientific evidence that men and women were equal even though biological differences between the two existed. They have also contributed in defining sex and gender. Sex is a biological difference between men and women. Gender is the socio-cultural difference between the sexes and could be reversed through deconstructing existing notions.

We have traced the imposition of gender differences and gender relations historically. With this background, we need to understand how transactions of texts in the classroom would reduce gender disparities and thereby gender equality and equity would be established. If the transactions of the textbooks tried to bring gender equality, we need to discuss how girls and boys perceived the same. Girls and boys have come from different socio-economic background to the schools. Due to this, they might have experienced gender differently in the private sphere. Secondly, if text books would reinforce gender inequality, did boys and girls accept as it was or did they argue and try to bring gender equality?

Students come from diverse socio – cultural, linguistic, economic, ethnic and geographic backgrounds to the schools. How learners from different backgrounds would perceive gender differences if discussed in the classroom? For example, India has matrilineal society in some parts of the country. Girls who come from a matrilineal society might have experienced gender relations in a positive way unlike others. Women in their families might have possessed land and other resources. Women in the matrilineal society were actively involved in taking decisions on behalf of the family. This was not true in others cases.

Now, let us discuss a literature class. We would see literature as an example to discuss class room processes related to gender issues. Classrooms played a critical role in understanding gender relations and gaining knowledge of the social structure of the society, roles of the individuals in the community, socialization process and production and reproduction of power structures in the society. The knowledge gained and discussed by the teacher and students in the class room might reflect in the family and society (Bakhtin, 1981; Bauer&McKinstry, 1991; Miller&Legge, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). Discussions related to society and social structures are learned mostly in

the language and literature class and history class. Classrooms are also a significant place for the contribution of constructing gender roles, relations, race and class (K. Weiler, 1988). Studies carried out by the feminist scholars asserted that the social construction contributed to women's oppression. At the same time, feminists and post structuralist strongly believe that though schools were the place for the reproduction of cultural and social norms, at the same time students never accepted passively the oppressive social forces. Students actively resisted and contested oppressive forces. The work of the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci (1971) and critical post structuralists (Apple, 1990; Giroux, 1981; MacLeod, 1995; Willis, 1977) brought out the same. The work of Apple (1990) established that schools would follow certain norms, culture and rituals and they would ensure the reproduction of the same and it was always preserved and maintained. The prescription of certain literature and language texts in the schools did bring about certain discussion among students. For example, Bharathiar's writings were prescribed to the Tamil learners. He vociferously talked about women empowerment and liberty of the individuals from all sorts of oppression. When it was discussed in the classroom, how did teachers transact the Bharathiar poem and texts. Did they bring their own beliefs and norms in to the discussion? How did students (both boys and girls) perceive women empowerment when it was discussed in the class? Did they see historical texts and literary texts in an objective way?

Here, the teacher's role was significant in transacting texts. Teachers needed to transact texts objectively without bringing in their own values, biases and experiences. They could use the findings of biomedical research to explain the biological differences of sexes. Literature texts could be contextualized based on the location and time while explaining the fiction. Students usually would identify themselves based on their socio- cultural background in the typical classroom pattern. Male students might identify themselves in a masculine way. It might reflect in their learning, doing and knowing things in the classroom (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). Domestication and colonization of women were deeply rooted in the minds of the both male and female students. Male and female students had little opportunity to challenge the existing social relations in the private sphere. Here, the teachers play a significant role. When teachers transact literature texts in the classroom and engage the students in discussion, it is an opportunity for students to engage themselves and challenge the oppression. The study by Gina Deblase in 2003 highlighted that the girls did find spaces within which they resisted cultural codes represented in the classroom texts and discourse. Cazden (1988) distinguished classroom discourse from the conversation by referring to the former as "criteria for appropriate ways of talking in school, and even appropriate topics for that talk as well," (p. 16). This was the case because individuals were not simply acted upon but they also negotiate, struggle, and create meaning in the literacy classroom (J. L. Collins, 1995; K. Weiler, 1988) and in the world (Willis, 1977). In fact, where readers or writers position themselves in relation to the texts they read and the meanings they brought to these texts were influenced, to a great extent, by their subjective lived experiences. So far we understood the significance of transacting texts in the classroom in an objective way. Classrooms play an important role in constructing gender identity and challenging existing norms in the society. The following case study gives you

different picture. The late Kalpana Chawla wanted to be an Astronaut/space scientist after completing her engineering in India. Due to her insistence, her parents allowed her to go to the United States (US) to become an Astronaut. Like her, Ms. Pavithra wanted to be a pilot after completing her 12<sup>th</sup> Standard. She came from a low socio-economic background. Her father worked in the State Transport Corporation. She had to fight at two levels. She needed to find necessary financial resources to pursue her passion as a pilot. Secondly, she had to convince her parents that she could also operate flight like men. She did not want to enter a female centric profession. The above real life case studies show how gender is constructed and how women can reverse their productive roles. Both the women struggled at multiple levels to convince family and other social structures to pursue their passion. They proved that productive roles are gender neutral. Both men and women can do all kinds of work. Let us see the efforts at international and national level to bring more girls into education.

There have been many efforts at the national and international level to bring gender equality in education. We should look at those efforts before discussing cultural reproduction of gender relations. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Dakar Goals stressed the importance of expanding lower secondary and upper secondary education. Countries tried to expand education at school level, be it - primary, secondary or vocational. Goal 5 of the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Goals (2000) calls for "Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality." Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) is to "Promote gender equality and empower women," and its Target 4 is: "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and all levels of education no later than 2015." The EFA conference held in Thailand in 1990 drew the road map to achieve universal primary education and closing the gender gap. In the meantime, various studies emerged about the positive benefits of girl's education and the gains out of girl's education for the self, family, society, country and the world. Studies have also emerged regarding the positive correlation between girl's education and lowering of fertility rates (Hess 1988). Apart from this, girl's education is considered as a powerful tool to lower the infant mortality, child mortality, maternal mortality rates and ensuring proper nutrition for themselves and the children in the society. Education for girls also would ensure their active participation in the labour market which would contribute to an increase in labour force participation. Education among girls would encourage them to participate in the decision making. Studies proved that educated girls would participate in community activities and they would involve in decision making of the community. More positive studies emerged after the adaptation of EFA and MDG goals in 2000. For e.g.: The study conducted by Dollar and Gatti in 1999 in 100 countries have brought out that a 1 percent increase in the share of females in secondary education would raise annual per capita income growth by 0.3 percent. Gender parity gaps in Sub Saharan Africa, South Asia, Middle East and North Africa were wide and large. If the gender parity gaps had fallen like as in East Asia in those above said regions in 1960s and 1990s, their per capita Gross National Product (GNP) would have grown by 0.5-0.9 more per cent (Klasen 1999). We have seen the

benefits received by the family, community and nation due to girl's education. We need to ensure a gender sensitive school environment to ensure girl's attendance and to reduce drop out rate at the primary, secondary and upper primary levels.

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#### 4.4 RESOLVING GENDER CONFLICTS IN SCHOOL

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The following case study is one of the best practices to resolve gender conflicts in school. It was called Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM). We need to run classrooms in a culturally responsive way even though classroom is multicultural. CRCM was not about running the class room based on certain rules and practices. It was a pedagogic approach. Pedagogic approaches guide teachers to take decisions in a scientific and managerial way. Once the teacher decides to run the classroom in a CRCM way, the teacher needs to know the students' backgrounds, their experiences, their prior knowledge and learning capability in her/his daily teaching. Along with considering the above said knowledge about the students, teachers themselves reflect on their own background and prior knowledge, when they teach. They might reflect their own biases and values and how these biases and values reflect and influence their teaching and interactions with students has been noted. Teachers would come to a conclusion that it is not controlling and feeding the students rather it is to provide necessary information and knowledge and free flow of discussion and provide equal and equitable opportunities. Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke and Curran (2004) developed a five-part concept of CRCM derived from the literature. According to them "The five point concepts were : culturally responsible pedagogy, multicultural counseling and caring: recognition of one's own cultural lens and biases, knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds, awareness of the broader social, economic and political context, ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies, and commitment to building caring classroom communities. In turn, the goal of classroom management was to create an environment in which students would behave appropriately from a sense of personal responsibility, not from a fear of punishment or desire for a reward. As such the environment must acknowledge and be responsive to who were the students (cognitively, socially and emotionally), and create a safety net that equitably responds to what teachers knew about their students". Creating potential of positive behaviour and providing support to establish the same was the CRCM strategy. Teachers and schools need to concentrate on the following if they want to establish culturally responsive and gender sensitive classrooms : Curriculum ; School reading material; Subject preference and choice; Motivational and Psychological issues; School Environment; Teacher attitudes; Assessment; Curriculum transaction strategy; Gender sensitive training to the teachers; Popularizing biomedical research on the biology of human beings among students; Recognizing the contribution of women scientists among the students; Creating an environment to break gender stereotypes among girls and boys in the school premises.

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## 4.5 CASE STUDIES RELATED TO REPRODUCTION OF GENDER RELATIONS WITHIN SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

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Gender discrimination and disparities continue to exist in our society which have been reflected in the media. The socialization process and further the reproduction of gender discrimination in the family and society might reinforce the schooling processes. The experience of teachers and their socialization process regarding gender discrimination might unconsciously be transmitted to the students in the classroom. The learning of gender bias and gender discrimination at the early stage of schooling might create indelible mark on their minds. School textbooks and other related materials as well as a curriculum and the processes of its transaction, imbued with the principles of gender harmony and inclusiveness in all spheres are thus pertinent needs.

Now, we will look at reproduction of gender relations within the society by taking the example of the Pacific Islands. Families or households are considered as private institutions, as social micro units. In the Pacific Islands, most households in the villages were extended families compared to those families in the urban areas. During the process of urbanization and globalization, the families in the rural areas started moving and settled in the urban areas as small household units. Family was considered as the principal institution for the socialization of an individual. Family would reinforce gender roles and gender relations. The family ensures that women perform in the areas of production, reproduction and community based activities. This was the first institution where women would learn gender roles and understand gender relations. Gender relations within the family give a woman lesser participation in decision making. However, education and gaining of knowledge challenged the patriarchal family institutions and they tried to bring equity and equality in accessing family resources and actively participated in the decision making. Education and economic independence provided confidence to the women to gain status. Men in the family started realizing the same and they started respecting women and they stopped resisting women involvement in the family decisions. Social and cultural institutions could be considered as social order governing institutions which try to control the behaviour of individuals within a given community. Cultures change over time and are not static. Some cultural practices and beliefs remain unchanged and are essential to maintain national, ethnic or group identity (Vasena Griffen, 2006).

In most of the Pacific Islands, men might have more decision-making power within the household and community than the women; however, women in this case were members of committees and other groups where they make decisions relating to the village. Women were also resource owners through mataqali (clan) owned land. In some communities, women who were married into the family in some cases have lesser decision-making power than those from the village, thus this group of women are more vulnerable. In analysing gender relations in Pacific cultures, it is vital to understand how culture could positively involve women to be a part of decision making. In most patriarchal societies, women often encounter limitations to raise their interests and needs or even influence decision making, while in the matrilineal societies, they could influence decision making.

The following case study was the best example of reversing gender stereotype by entering male dominated work. Saloni Malhotra is the founder of company called “DesiCrew”. It was a socially motivated business process outsourcing (BPO) company. It provided Information Technology enabled services (ITes) to the rural areas. The service delivery centres of the company were established in villages. Her company first trained the youth in rural areas in computer operations. After that, trained youth would be appointed in the company. She perceived that the rural youth migrate to cities for jobs. She wanted to address rural urban migration. Saloni is from Delhi. Her parents are doctors. Unlike her parents, she studied engineering. Her parents encouraged her to start a business to provide jobs in rural areas. They never pressurized her to get married. They never asked her to start a family life. Instead, they encouraged her to first establish a career. After stabilizing professional life, they asked her to consider family life. She put her energy into starting her dream project “DesiCrew”. Saloni says “My desire to work in rural India was reconfirmed at the engineering college when one of my colleagues at the college, Pallavi from rural Maharashtra, one day proudly told me; she was going to study Computer Sciences. Later, I learnt that the poor girl had very little access to a computer. She just believed that studying Computer Sciences would help her get a well-paid job and the benefits which follow. Pallavi made me realize that she and I had one thing in common; we lack exposure in each other’s worlds. When we think of jobs for rural areas, we think of agriculture or handicrafts and ignore opportunities in high-tech areas. Young graduates from arts, engineering and commerce flock to cities to find jobs. Could we move the jobs to these people.....”? Most employees in DesiCrow are females. Female employment opportunities in rural areas increase the self esteem of girls. This encourages more parents to invest in girl’s education in rural areas.

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#### **4.6 SHARING RESULTS OF RESEARCH STUDIES, RESOURCES FROM MEDIA AND FILMS**

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We studied how to address gender concerns in education in the previous section. Academics too have reflected on the significance of making curriculum gender inclusive in all disciplines. This gained momentum in late 1970s and continues till now. In India, UNESCO has contributed in sensitizing the academics to make curriculum gender sensitive. It has organized meeting of experts on women studies to bring- visibility to gender issues in all disciplines. The findings of the workshop highlighted that women’s perspective was missing in the domain of Social Sciences, particularly in subjects like Sociology, History and Political Science. In subjects like Economics, Psychology and Education, too, the gender perspective was yet to be integrated. National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 and the programme of Action in 1992 have emphasised the removal of all types of disparities and discriminations. Further, it focused on attending to the specific needs of those who had been denied equality. The NPE states that Education will be used as a medium of basic change in the status of women. To neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favor of women. The National Education System will play



a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, training and orientation of teachers, decision makers, administrators and active involvement of educational institutions” (excerpts from National Policy on Education -1986, pg.6).

A study conducted by Jon Ellis and published in 2002 analysed the text books in the State of West Bengal in India. According to him, gender bias appeared in a strong manner in the main history and geography text books. In Part 1, there have been 71 pictures of males (76 percent). Only 22 females (24 percent) have been depicted. At the same time, women have been depicted as performing subservient roles in the discussion about early humans. Part 2 shows far more extreme gender bias than Part 1. It has 50 pictures of males (96 percent) vs. 2 of females (4 percent). Role of women showed in the text were patriarchal and reinforced the traditional roles of women. Not a single woman is depicted in the chapter about “Main Ways of Earning a Living.” Nor, in another illustration, were any women shown as receiving land titles from a male government officer. Ellis claims that this “is a false view of reality since in West Bengal, numerous households have women as their heads, who hold titles in their own name.” The author concludes that the “gender bias against women found in the text and pictures of these books make them unacceptable for use.”

Text book bias is not unique to West Bengal. The study by Firoz Bakht Ahmed (2006) highlights the persisting text bias in many States. He notes that the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) “has been laying stress on removing gender disparities – specifically by emphasizing the elimination of sex stereotypes and sex biases from the textbooks” since 1982-83. He also concluded that “be it a book on science, social studies, mathematics, English or Hindi, women can be seen fetching water, working in kitchens or cleaning the room... [and that, consistently,] lessons...are male-centric.”

He cites a survey by Friends of Education that noted that the average primary school textbook had 115-130 pages and carried 80-100 illustrations. Their study found that “over half of the illustrations depicted solely men and boys...and only six percent show women and girls.” Analysis of the six mathematics books used in the primary classes showed that men dominate activities representing commercial, occupational and marketing situations, whereas not a single woman was shown as a shopkeeper, a merchant, an executive, an engineer or a seller.

Ahmed’s overall conclusion was that: “Despite the NCERT having developed a set of guidelines for the elimination of gender stereotyping in textual material and disseminated to the authors and publishers, not much has changed.”

Kalia (1986) has conducted quantitative and qualitative studies to analyze text books used in Indian schools and the exercise was called “you can do something about it”. She has analyzed the content of 21 English and 20 Hindi texts used by students throughout five of the most populous State in Northern India namely Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi in 1979 (Kalia 1979). The exercise was carried out among students and teachers. Education is under concurrent list in India as per the

Constitution. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) prepares text books for the Central Board of Secondary Education in India. State text book society prepares text books for the state board of education.

The content analysis of the NCERT text books discussed in her 1986 book showed that the figures of men occupied 75 percent of the lessons. 87 percent of the biographies (47/54) were also about men. Language of the text books was predominately male centric. Women were completely excluded from 344 occupations (74 percent of 465 occupations in the texts). She argued that this “hidden curriculum” in textbooks moulds children’s gender-related values, especially if reinforced by the teacher. Along with depicting male centric pictures, lack of gender neutral language and stereotyping the roles of women is a great concern.

Now, we will see how media and films reinforce and shape gender relations by discussing few movies and short films and media reports. Films and media might challenge existing social relations or they might reinforce gender relations. They have the capacity to influence public opinion. Commercial media targets children while advertising products. It considers ways to make adults buy products through children. At the same time commercial movies and short films and media reports challenge patriarchy and are also educative. Recently Microsoft produced and released a short film to educate children about the contribution of women scientists. The film started with a child sitting in a library asking questions about who invented what and the names of the scientists. Children were able to quickly mention the names of the male scientists and were unable to identify women scientists. The short film ended with a note of the contribution of women scientists.

Films in India are produced in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and many other Indian languages. They have a great mass appeal and they influence masses in the decision making about stereotyping. Some films in India deviated from regular stereotypes and tried to reverse the gender norms, roles and relations. An important film to challenge the gender stereotype was “Pink”. It acknowledged the women’s capacity to make decisions. It challenged the existing stereotyping about women in many respects. The movie “Ki Ka” brought the possibilities of changing gender roles. The following case study has been taken from the report “Good Practices in gender mainstreaming- case Studies” by UNDP, 2008. The Bollywood film “Chak De India” was another successful commercial movie to challenge gender relations. The films talked about the biases Indian girls have faced in sports. Due to patriarchy and reinforcement of gender roles and norms, society expects women to perform certain roles and confine them to private spaces. The leading bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan acted as a hockey coach in this film. Shah Rukh Khan trains the female Indian hockey team and decides to restore the lost reputation of the women hockey team in the country. The members of the Indian Hockey Association have very patriarchal attitudes and think that women should stay at home to take care of the house and family. They feel that the women’s hockey team has no chance of success.

“Chak De! India” challenges prevailing attitude towards gender, by subtly throwing in key facts about the prevalent gender discrimination in the country.

The film relies on its characters to break established notions about girls in India. Komal Chautala is a young girl from Haryana, who manages to break out of the traditional role given by the society, designated for Indian girls and makes it to the national-level hockey team, despite her father's protests. Her rivalry with the other striker in the team, Preeti Sabarwal, shows to the audience the internal rivalries that exist within a team. Preeti, from Chandigarh has come from a very different background and had many secret ambitions. She is not particularly loud or expressive like her team-mates, but is nonetheless working furtively because she seeks retaliation against her cricketer boyfriend, who always discounted her career, her goals and her commitment to the game. She wanted to take home the title of number one striker, so that she could show her arrogant and chauvinistic boyfriend that she was a successful player, one that the country could be proud of. Through the film, Komal and Preeti were shown to be equal in the number of goals the two have scored. Before the final match, however, Komal learnt the real reason why Preeti was desperate to score the highest number of goals and she gave up her chance to score a goal and gave Preeti the opportunity that would make her the highest striker. Preeti returned Komal's gesture by offering Komal the chance of the critical penalty shootout, thus demonstrating the solidarity that exists among girls and among the 'sisterhood'. Preeti's response to her boyfriend's marriage proposal reflected the current struggle for gender equality in India. She declined his elaborate and public proposal on the national television. This reflects the arrival of a new voice of an Indian girl, who was determined to find and establish her identity, irrespective of obligations placed on her by a patriarchal society. Patriarchy too is discussed in the movie. It divides women. This was discussed using the character of Bindiya Naik in the movie. Vidya Sharma's character is very encouraging and spirited. She is an experienced hockey player, who is married and has come to the national hockey camp against the wishes of her in-laws. She is portrayed to give an unconditional importance to the career she has chosen; despite repeated discouragement from all sides, she is shown determined to participate in the World Cup, even at the cost of risking her marriage. She embodies the self-confidence that women need to continue the fight. It re-established that women all over India are looked at through the same lens, one that saw them as being incapable of dealing with the world outside the home. While the sports theme symbolized the celebration of togetherness and achievement, it could be translated into real life by showing that women could be used the strength of the collective, thus enabling them to explore within for new possibilities. The film has initiated Indian entertainment industry's first step in bringing about a change in gender perceptions in India.

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#### **4.7 LET US SUM UP**

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We have seen the reproduction of gender relations at different levels in society using theory as well as case studies. We have also analysed this historically. Gender relations were produced in different social structures in the society. The imposition of roles of the men and women start at the early stage of the life of the children. Socio-cultural reproduction of gender could happen in schools. Thus, bringing gender sensitive text books and sensitising teachers to address the gender issues in the class room are needed in the current situation. The same ideas have been discussed elaborately.

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## 4.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. Define gender relations and discuss production and reproduction of gender roles for men and women elaborately.
2. “Text books should be gender neutral”- Comment on this statement
3. What is the role of cinema in addressing the gender discrimination in the society? Explain with the help of suitable examples.

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## 4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Social relations were established between men and women in the society because of the performance of distinct roles and the established norms of the society. The roles of men and women were considered as static till nineteenth century in the western society. The roles differences and roles enforcement between sexes created unequal power relations, making one group advantaged and the other group disadvantaged. The inequality between men and women further manifested and it led to regulating all relations and social formations in the society. The biological differences between male and female determined socio-cultural differences. This is called socialization process.
2. Teachers needed to transact texts without bringing their own values, biases and experiences in an objective way. They could use the findings of biomedical research to explain the biological differences of sexes. Literature texts could be contextualized based on the location and time while explaining the fictions. Students usually would identify themselves based on their socio- cultural background in the typical classroom pattern. Male students might identify themselves in a masculine way. It might reflect in their learning, doing and knowing things in the classroom.
3. The following case study was the best example of reversing gender stereotype by entering male dominated work. Saloni Malhotra is the founder of the company called “DesiCrew”. It was a socially motivated business process outsourcing (BPO) company. It provided Information Technology enabled services (ITes) to the rural areas. The service delivery centres of the company were established in villages. Her company first trained the youth in rural areas in computer operations. After that, trained youth would be appointed in the company. She perceived that the rural youth migrate to cities for jobs. She wanted to address the rural urban migration. Saloni is from Delhi. Her parents are doctors. Unlike her parents, she studied engineering. Her parents encouraged her to start a business to provide jobs in rural areas. They never pressurized her to get married. They never asked her to start a family life. Instead, they encouraged her to first establish a career. After stabilizing her professional life, they asked her to consider family life. She put her energy into starting her dream project “DesiCrew”. Saloni says “My desire to work in rural India was reconfirmed at the engineering college when one of my colleagues at the college, Pallavi from rural Maharashtra, one day proudly told me; she was going to study Computer Sciences. Later, I learnt that the poor girl had very

little access to a computer. She just believed that studying Computer Sciences would help her get a well-paid job and the benefits which follow. Pallavai made me realize that she and I had one thing in common; we lack exposure to each other's worlds. When we think of jobs for rural areas, we think of agriculture or handicrafts and ignore opportunities in high-tech areas. Young graduates from arts, engineering and commerce flock to cities to find jobs. Could we move the jobs to these people....."? Most employees in DesiCrow are females. Female employment opportunities in rural areas increase self esteem of girls. This encourages more parents to invest in girl's education in rural areas.

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#### 4.10 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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