

CHAPTER - 8

TOWARDS A GENDER-NEUTRAL SOCIETY

1. Differentiate between sex and gender with examples.

Answer:

- **Sex** refers to biological characteristics like chromosomes, physical structures, and hormones that define males and females.
- It is inherited at birth and is considered an **ascribed status**.
- **Gender** refers to social, cultural, and psychological characteristics associated with being male or female.
- An example is the social notion that pink is for women and blue is for men, which has no biological base.

2. Why is gender described as a 'social construct'?

Answer:

- Gender is neither biological nor constant; it is acquired and strengthened through social intervention.
- It is a concept beyond biological sex where society builds expectations for "men" and "women".
- Individuals acquire gender expectations through the process of socialization.
- These expectations vary across different cultures and change over time.

3. Explain the process of socialization and its impact on gender.

Answer:

- Socialization is a lifelong process from birth where individuals learn the values and practices of society.
- Babies do not know social behavior at birth and must learn how to integrate into society.
- Through this learning, individuals acquire specific gender behaviors expected by their culture.
- It reinforces gender roles and stereotypes established by the social group.

4. Define 'Transgender'.

Answer:

- A transgender is a person whose gender identity does not correspond with the gender assigned at birth.
- It includes individuals identified as Transman and Transwoman.
- Their gender identity differs from the one socially expected based on their biological sex.
- The Supreme Court recognized gender as a base of social status in the Nalsa Vs Union of India case.

5. Distinguish between Ascribed Status and Achieved Status.

Answer:

- **Ascribed status** is the social position an individual receives by birth that cannot be chosen, such as age or sex.
- **Achieved status** is earned through an individual's own ability, choices, and learning.
- Examples of achieved status include educational qualifications, income, and occupational skills.
- **Gender** is an achieved status because it is acquired and reinforced through social interactions.

6. What is 'Social Stratification' and how does it relate to status?

Answer:

- Social stratification is the hierarchical placement of individuals into layers or strata without equality.
- **Status** refers to an individual's position within the social system.
- Individuals in higher strata enjoy greater status and privileges.
- Those in lower strata have lower status, leading to social inequality.

7. Discuss 'Gender Roles' and provide examples.

Answer:

- A **role** is the expected behavior associated with a specific social status.

- Gender roles represent attitudes and actions a society associates with masculinity and femininity.
- An example is the idea that men should be breadwinners while women manage domestic duties.
- These roles often limit individual choices and human potential.

8. Define 'Social Norms' and provide examples.

Answer:

- Social norms are unwritten laws regarding beliefs and behaviors considered acceptable in a group.
- They have existed in societies since time immemorial.
- Examples include greeting others, thanking individuals, and respecting elderly citizens.
- While unwritten, they play a crucial role in maintaining social order.

9. Explain the legal measures taken to abolish 'Sati' in India.

Answer:

- Sati was a cruel practice where a widow was forced to immolate herself on her husband's pyre.
- It was outlawed through legislation as part of a broader social reform movement.
- The Indian Parliament passed the **Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987**.
- The law prohibits the practice voluntarily or by compulsion, and any statement in its support.

10. Explain the legal abolition of 'Untouchability' in India.

Answer:

- Untouchability was a social evil that categorized members of society into hierarchical castes.
- It insisted on maintaining a distance between higher and lower castes during interaction.
- It was abolished in India through **Article 17** of the Constitution.
- The **Untouchability (Offences) Act of 1955** was enacted to provide legal penalties.

1. Define 'Stereotype' and explain its formation.

Answer:

- A stereotype is a social classification based on oversimplified and generalized assumptions.
- They can be formed based on class, caste, religion, occupation, or gender.
- Gender stereotypes are created by presenting incorrect or partially correct notions as inherent qualities.
- An example is the stereotype that "men are not meant to cry" or "women are emotional".

2. How does media reinforce gender stereotypes?

Answer:

- Advertisements often show specific genders endorsing products based on traditional roles.
- Women are predominantly shown endorsing curry powder, kitchen utensils, and cosmetics.
- Men are more frequently represented in ads for bikes, cars, financial institutions, and cement.
- Repeated exposure to these portrayals reinforces societal notions of "male" and "female" duties.

3. Explain the impact of language on gender stereotypes.

Answer:

- Many languages classify nouns based on gender, which can reinforce differences.
- Terms like "doctor" were historically addressed to men, leading to the use of "lady doctor" for women.
- Usage of words like "man" to represent both males and females reinforces male dominance in language.
- **Gender-inclusive terms** like "Teacher," "Engineer," and "Nurse" are effective ways to challenge these stereotypes.

14. List the Articles of the Indian Constitution related to gender equality.

Answer:

- **Article 14:** Ensures equality of all genders before the law.
- **Article 15:** Prohibits gender-based discrimination against any individual.
- **Article 16:** Guarantees equality of opportunity for all genders.
- **Article 21:** Grants the right to dignity, individual liberty, and privacy.

- **Article 15A(e):** Makes it a fundamental duty to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

OXFORD