Re-Thinking Gender, Equality and Development

Perspectives from Academia

Edited by **Dr. Anuradha R Tiwary** GD Goenka University

and

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Series in Women's Studies



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Preface

Since birth, we have been ensnared in the gendered world. Gender is so deeply ingrained in various aspects such as social, political, legal, and economic institutions and the related actions, ideas, and aspirations that it appears natural. We are surrounded by gendered experiences and the discrimination associated with the gendered roles, so much so that we passively accept the resultant gender hierarchies. Although gender equality has been declared as a human right, ironically, gender discrimination continues to mark inequalities with regard to access to opportunities and decision-making authority. From government offices to street activities, gender and gendered inequality are embedded in every aspect of society; evident at the home, the neighborhood, the church, the school, the media, walking down the street, eating at a restaurant, and even while using the restrooms. And these contexts structure the performative of gendered experiences of everyday life and its gendered divison of labour. Gendered division of labour defines power and status of men and women. Historically, this divide has kept women isolated and out of the workforce. Thus, gender issues are concerned with the relationality between men and women in society, rather than with women alone.

Our social universe revolves around gender and no country has truly achieved gender equality on a national scale anywhere in the world. In present times, while a majority of women have moved to public spaces of employment, most of the opportunities remain an extension of their domestic roles as teachers, nurses, secretaries, and flight attendants and other caregiving occupations. Women and girls all throughout the world largely engage with unpaid household labour. In doing so, gender embellishes biological differences and transmits them into domains where they are entirely irrelevant.

Despite the fact that women make up more than half of the world's population, they only hold 1% of the world's wealth (Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment, 2022). Women are underrepresented as decision-makers at all levels, both at home and in the public sector. Women outnumber males in legislatures around the world, yet their political engagement is critical for achieving gender equality and genuine democracy. Women have fewer possibilities of economic future than men, have less access to basic and higher education, face greater health and safety concerns, and have less political representation globally. Therefore, in addition to being a basic human right, gender equality is critical for the development of peaceful

societies with long-term growth. It is critical for men and women to have an equal distribution of available money, resources, and opportunities.

Women's economic and political empowerment is a key component of achieving gender equality. According to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, gender equality and empowerment of women and girls continues to remain one of the most pressing human rights concern. Thus, equality does not mean that men and women will become equal, but it does mean that rights, duties, and opportunities will not be determined on the basis of their sex.

As a scholar and researcher, it is critical to reconsider these essential concerns of gender, equality, and development from a fresh viewpoint. To do so, we must put aside what we are accustomed to and challenge some of our most fundamental assumptions and understandings. The idea is to unveil and challenge the process that constructs or reasserts the naturalness of gendered reality as inevitable - to study gender not as a given, but as a feat; not simply as cause, but as effect; and not just as individual, but as societal.

The book will be a comprehensive resource that will offer a new viewpoint on gender as a crucial structuring component in society. With a focus on gendered development, it will explore the social production of knowledge, categories of difference, power and inequality structures. Our own gender thinking has evolved and altered over many years of thinking about these issues, and it will likely continue to evolve as we continue to investigate and live gender concerns. The book will be quite useful in terms of answering concerns about how gendered clothes, speech, and behaviour patterns emerge in different social classes, cultures, and historical times. In additional it also reveals how gendered power and authority systems function in academia. Readers will arrive at this book with their own set of assumptions about the origins, meaning, and equality of gender. They may believe in a certain set of religious gender ideas. The book will include narratives, empirical evidence, and opinion articles, as well as comprehensive literature evaluations relating to the book theme. It is our attempt to make sense of the information we felt needed to be shared.

Organisation of the Book

The book is divided into two parts. Part I of the book apprises the reader of the primary understanding of Gender. Chapter one discusses gender construction as basic factors & differences which influence the process. The chapter entails topics on the process of identity creation, socialization, and sociological aspect of the gender discourse in society. Chapter two outlines various theories on gender development, and gender inequality and concludes that gender gaps emanate from social-cultural structures created by the society can be restructured to make the world just for everyone. Further chapter three examines the bidirectionality of violence as an expression of domination and authority that the literary criticism contest to female violence. Chapter four is an interesting addition to gender and identity through teaching Jane Eyre in a classroom. The author emphasizes that the construction of Jane Eyre must be seen within the context of all the other non-English women in the text who together define the outer edges of Jane's identity as an Englishwoman. Chapter five debates the extent of intersectionality in Indian feminism focusing on the specific intersectional category of Dalit women because caste is the defining element of Indian society. The chapter concludes that feminism's clarion call for gender equality will not be fair unless the addresses caste-based inequalities. Further in chapter *six* the relevance of gender mainstreaming is highlighted as an effective approach to Gender equality ensuring better policy-making and better use of resources. The chapter discusses the Gender mainstream as a transformative approach with great potential for social change when adequately built and implemented. Further in chapter seven, the author discusses the change in status of women in India from ancient to contemporary times. The author presents the historical and sociological perspective to understand the inequality and discrimination undergone by women in various stages in India.

Part II of the book explores the contextual settings and environment related to gendered role, equality and development. Chapter *eight* present the issues of gender-based equality in the higher education sector in Kazakhstan Universities. Part II of the book emphasizes on the truth of inequality that lies between genders, exists in various facets of our social life and no region or country is untouched by this phenomenon. Chapter *nine* discusses the gender disparity in higher education sector in the countries recovering from conflict through a case study of American University of Afghanistan. The volume further does a deep dive into gender stereotyping at the workplace and emphasizes the transformation it has taken place through gender representation in academic positions. Chapter *ten* examines gender imbalances

in education through the existence of glass ceiling in higher educational institutions in India. The *eleventh* chapter intends to present a discussion on how women can be empowered to be decision-makers at both individual and household levels. The study enlightens various stakeholders to critically view the complicated process of household decision-making among Indian women to formulate more programmes and initiatives towards this population. Chapter twelve examines the marginalization of gendered perspectives in Indian legislation and state policies and how women and minority educational institutions intersect with each other. Further chapter thirteen investigate the impact of social rituals and religious practices on the socialisation of women and their emergence as gendered subjects. This chapter further delineate the effects of women's socialization on their attitude towards marriage rituals. Finally, the *fourteenth* chapter outlines the needs to rejigger the public policy to address the issue of gender mainstreaming. The study recommends more research at sub-national level, and targeted policy interventions.

Part I. Introduction Theoretical Exploration

Chapter 1

Gender: How the Difference is Made

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Abstract: The identification of certain values, desires, possibilities and abilities with the respective gender has its roots in the biological reduction and in the biological basis of the sex, where it determined the corresponding course that one would follow based on gender. This way of thinking and acting used to convey different abilities and skills based on gender. The gender Discourse may have surfaced and challenged some gender stereotypes and prejudices, expanding what each gender may or may not do, but it still exists. The distinction between sex in biological (sex) and social (gender) highlights key issues concerning the formation of identity. Gender behavior, character, and inclinations are redefined in a social context in which biology does not interpret everything. How is the difference made? What factors influence this process? The categorization into male and female, in addition to the fact that it is problematic, cultivates discrimination from an early age, where growing up as a boy or girl one learns to take for granted all these cultural elements that organize the discourse around gender.

Keywords: gender, sex, discourse, society

How the Difference Is Made?

Before they even start their school life, children have learned to understand basic differences such as gender. Gender has been and continues to influence the way these children perceive how they will dress, how they will move, how they will talk, etc. "Gender, a predominantly social, economic and cultural structure, is recognized as the basis of social organization, the principle of 'relating' as mentioned by Papataxiarchis and stands equally on the side of the class..." (Vitsilaki, 2011, p.13). Gender, like social class, are factors that shape individuals' lives. More specifically, according to several studies of Gender Studies and Sociology of Education, the actions of individuals, aspirations, desires, professional and economic future, the degree of political

participation, etc. seem to change in relation to gender and social class. "The basic attitude of the state for the secondary female education until the beginning of the 20th century was the complete abstention, leaving the education of girls exclusively to individuals" (Kalfa, 2018, p.203). Apart from politics, women were excluded for years from education and consequently from professional and financial independence, since as wives their main responsibilities were the organization of housework and housework, as well as the upbringing of children. Thus, "the education system reflects the social, economic and cultural inequalities of society" (Kalfa, 2016, p.323). Access to or abstinence from knowledge delayed women's entry into the world of work and the economy, which had several consequences for their political rights. These rights were acquired over time, but even today the phenomenon of the 'glass roof' seems to play an important role in the professional and economic development of women.

The identification of certain values, desires, possibilities and abilities with the respective sex has its roots in biological reduction and in the biological basis of sex, which determines the corresponding course that one would follow based on gender. "In Western societies, the notion that gender is a given of nature still prevails, that is, a social theory of biological sex dominates" (Papataxiarchis, 2006, p.13). This way of thinking and acting used to convey different abilities and skills based on gender. The Gender Discourse may have surfaced and challenged some gender stereotypes and prejudices, expanding what each gender may or may not do, but it still exists. "The deconstruction of the Western belief in gender as a given of nature has been a complex undertaking and has been closely linked to the social and political struggles that focus on the issue of identity" (Papataxiarchis, 2006, p.14). The distinction between sex in biological (sex) and social (gender) highlights key issues concerning the formation of identity. According to Rubin, "the identity of the two sexes is formed, socially determined according to a 'system of social construction" (Tentokali, 2009, p. 62). Gender behavior, character, and inclinations are redefined in a social context in which biology does not interpret everything. More specifically, "the term gender was intended to challenge the reduction to nature, to the biology of gender relations and consequently to show that the subjugation and inferiority of women are social, cultural, historical and ultimately political constructions" (Laqueur, 2003, p.15). According to Vitsilaki "the adoption of 'gender' as an analytical tool allowed new modern approaches, opened roads to impasses" (2011, p.13). Another important parameter that comes to the surface through the distinction of biological (sex)and social gender is the Discourses that are inscribed in the body. In this context, the body ceases to be a static and passive concept, but as a society changes, so does this change through the

Discourses that define it or interact with culture. "The biological sex (sex) is therefore released from the body and its anatomy and becomes like the social sex (gender) 'a product of discourses that each time is perceived as naturalized, almost metaphysical, truth regimes" (Makris, 2015, p.61).

How is the difference made? What factors influence this process? "The term biological sex refers to the biological differences between males and females: the visible difference of the genitals and the consequent difference in their reproductive functions; while gender refers to culture and social categorization into 'male' and 'female'" (Laqueur, 2003, p.10). The categorization into male and female, in addition to the fact that it is problematic, cultivates discrimination from an early age, where growing up as a boy or girl one learns to take for granted all these cultural elements that organize the world around gender. The dipoles constructed by culture seem to work suffocatingly and magnify when imbued with hate speech and identification with the inhuman. "According to Guillaumin, it is culture that constructs 'natural' differences" (Laqueur, 2003, p.16). Laquer also states that "Butler, based on Foucault's theory of Discourse, argues that gender is the result of discourse and biological sex is the result of gender" (2003, p.18).

But when did the term gender begin to be used in scientific discourse? What did such a change imply? "The term gender was first used in 1950 by sexologist John Money to distinguish the biological from the executive sex, but only in 1970 was it adopted by sex theorists and then prevailed in everyday language" (Kolyri, 2017, p.13). Since words are important and often convey meaning or construct the truth, it is important to dwell on who is speaking this truth. The person, who speaks, influenced by his own point of view and his own worldview, forms a completely different point of view, which may conflict with reality. Similarly, when we learn history in our compulsory education we learn the history of the winners, we do not learn about the victims, about those who contributed to the victory, what was sacrificed in the name of victory and what interests the respective 'victory' served.

What Factors Influence This Process?

How is gender created? What is the position of the body in relation to gender? The myth of femininity seems to function as a Western model of female behavior. Gender, as well as femininity, are built, they do not pre-exist. An important concept for understanding this thinking is the role that socialization plays. During socialization we acquire basic skills such as speaking, walking, etc. so with socialization we acquire the appropriate behavior according to gender. This process continues in the secondary socialization bodies, most importantly the school. If a girl is aggressive, she is a 'boy', if a boy is aggressive he is acting 'in his nature'. This is how action frameworks and appropriate gender behaviors

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