

**Block**

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**GENDER, SCHOOL AND SOCIETY**

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## **BES 129 GENDER, SCHOOL AND SOCIETY**

<b>Block 1</b>	<b>Gender Issues in School and Society</b> Unit 1 Understanding Basic Gender Concepts Unit 2 Gender Roles and Patriarchy in Indian Perspective Unit 3 Patriarchies in Interaction with other Social Structures and Identities Unit 4 Gender Relations in School
<b>Block 2</b>	<b>Gender and Pedagogic Practices</b> Unit 5 Teaching as Activism Unit 6 Standpoint Theory and Knowledge Location Unit 7 Participatory Classroom Unit 8 Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in the Classroom

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

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This course emphasizes the need for gender sensitivity among student teachers. Gender inequality is deeply rooted and there is a need to address widespread discrimination and injustice at all levels in the society. It requires not only a pedagogic approach but also a linkage between theory and real-life situations to promote respect for women and reach gender equity. This course critically evaluates and challenges gender inequalities and explores the roles of school, teachers and society at large in bringing about gender parity.

The course comprises two blocks and eight units. The two blocks are

Block 1 : Gender Issues in School and Society

Block 2 : Gender and Pedagogic Practices

Block 1 of the course deals with gender issues in school and society. This block will help learners understand gender issues in school and society and generate sensitivity among student teachers. This block will also help them in understanding constitutional provisions of human rights and women's rights and demonstrate competency and skills in addressing gender concerns.

Block 2 focuses on gender and pedagogic practices. It familiarizes the students with various pedagogic practices related to gender and critically evaluate and challenge gender inequalities and explore the role of family, caste, religion, culture, law, state and media.

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# BLOCK 1 GENDER ISSUES IN SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

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## Introduction to the Block

This block helps learners understand gender issues and generate gender sensitivity and demonstrate competency and skills in addressing gender concerns. There are four units in this block, which are briefly discussed here.

In **Unit 1** : Understanding basic gender concepts, we discuss various concepts related to gender including Transgender.

In **Unit 2** : Gender roles and Patriarchy in Indian Perspective, we discuss gender roles, types, relationship matrix, concept of patriarchy and matriarchy, theories and features of Indian patriarchy, oppression, violence, patriarchy and political economy, household labour and its tyranny and value of women's contribution to National wealth.

In **Unit 3** : Patriarchies in Interaction with Other Social Structures and Identities, we discuss family, caste, class, communities, state, law and media: contemporary discourse, school as a microcosm of society, interaction between the teacher and the students in the classroom and implications of gender inequality in schooling.

In **Unit 4** : Gender relations in school, we discuss the cultural reproduction of patriarchal relations in text books and classroom processes and student teacher interactions, resolving gender conflicts in school, case studies related to reproduction of gender relations within school and society and sharing of results of research and research from media and films.



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# UNIT 1 UNDERSTANDING BASIC GENDER CONCEPTS

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## Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Gender and Sex
- 1.4 Gender Discrimination
- 1.5 Gender Dynamics
- 1.6 Gender Needs
- 1.7 Gender Analysis
  - 1.7.1 Gender Analysis Framework
- 1.8 Gender Equality and Equity
  - 1.8.1 Classification of Policy in a Gender Framework
- 1.9 Strands of Feminism
- 1.10 Stand Point Theory
- 1.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.12 Questions for Reflection
- 1.13 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 1.14 References and Suggested Readings

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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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.

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## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

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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.

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### 1.3 GENDER AND SEX

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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 femininity 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 femininity 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 femininity 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

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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.

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## 1.5 GENDER DYNAMICS

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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.

- 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**

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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.

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## 1.7 GENDER ANALYSIS

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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 labourers 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 programme 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

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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 1/3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Yojana*, *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

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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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## 1.10 STANDPOINT THEORY

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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.

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## 1.11 LET US SUM UP

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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.

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## 1.12 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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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.

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## 1.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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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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## 1.14 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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## **UNIT 2 GENDER ROLES AND PATRIARCHY IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Structure**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Understanding Gender Roles
- 2.4 Concept of Patriarchy and Matriarchy
- 2.5 Theories and Features of Indian Patriarchy
- 2.6 Oppression and Violence (Sex, Caste, Class and Disabilities)
  - 2.6.1 Double Oppression: Violence against Women with Disabilities
- 2.7 Patriarchy and Political Economy
- 2.8 Household Labour and its Tyranny
- 2.9 Value of Women's Contribution to National Wealth
- 2.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.11 Unit End Questions
- 2.12 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 2.13 References and Suggested Readings

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Gender is an evolving concept and is used to understand the differential place of women and men in the society. The purpose of looking at gender is not to divide women and men and causing conflict between them. It draws one's attention to those issues that have brought about unequal relations between women and men, and allows those issues to be addressed with appropriate measures that help reduce inequality rather than perpetuate inequality. The concept of gender and gender roles helps us to know that gender roles are created by the interaction between individuals, communities and their surroundings and suggests that masculine and feminine roles are not associated with 'male and female' biological traits, but are learnt in the process of being socialized. In this Unit, you will learn about gender roles, concepts of patriarchy and matriarchy, violence against women and women in the workforce. More so, you will learn in what way patriarchy contributes to the construction of gender and gendered roles.

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### **2.2 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain the concepts associated with gender roles
- Explain the concept of patriarchy and matriarchy in society
- Comprehend how patriarchy reaffirms itself and safeguards its interests
- Analyse the role of women in political economy and national wealth.

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## 2.3 UNDERSTANDING GENDER ROLES

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In everyday life, the term gender generally refers to gender relations (relations between men and women) in households, community, market and state institutions and analysis of the way social rules, norms and practices determine the way resources and responsibilities are divided between men and women. It is more often used as a synonym for sex, referring to males and females according to genotypic differences and distinct primary sex characteristics. Ann Oakley (1972) was one of the first social scientists to distinguish the concept of gender from the concept of sex.

The United Nations (2001) defines the term gender as culturally based expectations of roles and behaviours of males and females. UN distinguishes the term as socially constructed from the biologically determined aspects of being male and female. Unlike the biology of sex, gender roles and behaviours can change historically, sometimes relatively quickly, even if aspects of these gender roles originated in the biological differences between the sexes. The religious and cultural differences that define and justify the distinct roles and expected behaviours of males and females are strongly cherished and socially enforced.

The concept of gender in feminist writings and other sociological discourses became popular in the early 1970's. In sociological studies, the term gender is also used to describe the differences in behaviour between men and women which are described as 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Therefore, gender is an analytical category that is socially constructed to differentiate the biological difference between men and women. Feminist writings focus on this aspect and claim that these differences are not biological but are social constructions of patriarchal society. Beauvoir (1949) reached the conclusion that one is not born a woman but rather becomes a woman.

Judith Butler (2011) argues that sex is natural and comes first. Gender is perceived as a secondary construct which is imposed over the top of this natural distinction. The distinction between 'male' and 'female' is a social distinction made by the society, that is, it is a social construction. It is a way of perceiving and dividing the differences between 'male' and 'female'. Butler explains that 'sex' though seen as biological, is as much a product of society as is gender. When an infant is born, it is referred to as either male or female baby. This refers to the sex of the infant. Sex, thus refers to the biological difference between male and female. Gender, on the other hand, is a social construct, not a biological one (Sen, 2012).

According to the World Development Report (WDR 2012), gender is defined as socially constructed norms and ideologies which determine the behaviour and actions of men and women. Understanding these gender relations and the power dynamics behind them is a prerequisite for understanding individuals' access to and distribution of resources, the ability to make decisions and the way women and men, boys and girls are affected by political processes and social development.

Gender can be described as an achieved or constructed set of norms which are deemed appropriate for men and women. These norms can include constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes. Depending on the

society, these constructed roles vary and are expected to be performed within its' bounds.

Gender dynamics and relations change throughout the course of the lifecycle. Status in the household is often determined by age, marriage, number of children, disability, economic resources and educational level attained.

Girls, including adolescent girls, often have the lowest status in the household, especially in societies where families need to pay dowry and where the daughters are sent to live with the husband's family upon marriage. Recent research has identified adolescent girls as particularly vulnerable and susceptible to gender-based discrimination including sexual violence, forced and early marriage, dropping out of school and risk of death during childbirth. Early marriage and early pregnancy can have adverse effects on girls' health, and may inhibit their ability to take advantage of educational and job opportunities. In many cultures, daughters-in-law and unmarried women, widows and married women who have been abandoned by their husbands do not generally receive equal status as they do not fit into the constructed identities formed for them.

## **Gender Roles**

A **gender role** is a set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviours which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality. As we have already discussed the difference between 'gender' and 'sex', gender roles too are constructed and not a natural phenomenon.

## **How Roles Are Learned**

Gender roles are the roles that men and women are expected to occupy based on their sex. Gender roles are passed on through generations. From the age of three, children are able to start becoming aware of the differences between girls and boys based on the actions of the parents and the nature of their environment. Traditionally, many societies believed that women are more nurturing than men. Therefore, the traditional view of the feminine gender role prescribes that women should behave in ways that are nurturing. One way that a woman might engage in the traditional feminine gender role would be to nurture her family by working full-time within the home rather than taking employment outside of the home. Men, on the other hand, are presumed by traditional views of gender roles to be leaders. The traditional view of the masculine gender role, therefore, suggests that men should be the heads of their households by providing financially for the family and making important family decisions.

While these views remain dominant in many spheres of society, alternative perspectives on traditional beliefs about gender roles have gained increasing support in the twenty-first century. Different disciplines offer a range of perspectives on gender roles. An ecological perspective on gender roles suggests that gender roles are created by the interactions between individuals, communities, and their environments. That is, while individual people play a role in constructing gender roles, so too do the physical and social environments within which people operate. A biological perspective on gender roles suggests that women have a natural affinity towards the feminine gender

role and that men have a natural affinity towards the masculine gender role. The biological perspective does not, however, suggest that one role holds any inherently greater value than another role. A sociological perspective toward gender roles suggests that masculine and feminine roles are learned and that masculine and feminine gender roles are not necessarily connected to male and female biological traits. Sociologists study the different meanings and values that masculine and feminine gender roles hold in society. Related to the sociological perspective, a feminist perspective on gender roles might assert that because gender roles are learned, they can also be unlearned, and that new and distinct roles can be created. The feminist perspective points out that, gender roles are not simply ideas about appropriate behaviour for males and females but are also linked to the distinct levels of power that males and females hold in society.

As these examples demonstrate, gender roles are created based on stereotypes about gender. Gender stereotypes are oversimplified understandings of males and females and the differences between them. Individuals sometimes base their perceptions about appropriate gender roles upon gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes tend to include exaggerated or erroneous assertions about the nature of males and females. For example, a common gender stereotype about males is that they are not emotional. Females, on the other hand, are commonly stereotyped as being irrational or overly emotional.

### Types of Gender Roles

Moser (1993) highlighted that women generally have a triple role to play: (i) reproductive; (ii) productive; (iii) community managing activities, while men primarily undertake two i.e. productive and community political activities.

<i>Reproductive role</i>	Child bearing /rearing responsibilities, and domestic tasks done by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the work force (male partner and working children) and the future work force (infants and school-going children).
<i>Productive role</i>	Work done by both men and women for pay in cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange-value, and subsistence/home production with actual use-value, and also potential exchange-value. For women in agricultural production, this includes work as independent farmers, peasant wives and wage workers.
<i>Community managing role</i>	Activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. This is voluntary unpaid work, undertaken in 'free' time.

<i>Community political role</i>	Activities undertaken primarily by men at the community level, organizing at the formal political level, often within the framework of national politics. This is usually paid work, either directly or indirectly, through status or power.
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The gender-based division of labour ascribed in each socio-economic setting determines the roles that men and women perform. Since men and women play distinct roles, they often face very different cultural, institutional, physical and economic constraints, many of which are rooted in systematic biases and discrimination.

**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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2) Define the concept of gender roles from feminist perspective.

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3) Gender roles are learned. How? Write five sentences in support of your answer.

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## **2.4 CONCEPT OF PATRIARCHY AND MATRIARCHY**

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Societies wherein generations of families are linked through the father's line are said to be patriarchal in nature. Such societies are also termed as patrilineal societies. On the other hand, generations connected through the mother's line are said to be matriarchal in nature and termed as matrilineal societies.

The line of descent in a society delineates the succession of names, property, titles and other valuables in a family. They can either be passed on through a female line or through a male line in different societies. With majority of the world's societies being patrilineal, patriarchal societies dominate in the world's cultures whereas matrilineal societies tend to be primal societies.

## **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is a term very commonly used by feminist scholars and practiced by a clear majority of the population in their everyday lives. But what does patriarchy really mean? A patriarchy, from the ancient Greek word *patriarches*, is a society where power is held by and passed down through the elder males. Another rather easy to understand definition of patriarchy is given in the Oxford Dictionary, as *a system of society or government in which the father or the eldest male is the head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line*. Patriarchy is the term used to describe the society in which we live today, characterised by current and historic unequal power relations between women and men whereby women are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed. This takes place across almost every sphere of life in the form of under-representation in the work force, in decision-making positions and in government institutions. Male violence against women is also a key feature of patriarchy. Women in minority groups face multiple oppressions in this society, as race, class and sexuality intersect with sexism for example. Women's bodies have been at stake in times of war and conflict, wherein such patriarchal oppressive ideologies are practiced such as mass rapes.

The concept of patriarchy which has been developed within feminist writings is not a single or simple concept but has a whole variety of different meanings. At the most general level patriarchy has been used to refer to male domination and to the power relationships by which men dominate women (Millet, 1970).

## **Matriarchy**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (*OED*), matriarchy is a “form of social organization in which the mother or oldest female is the head of the family, and descent and relationship are reckoned through the female line; government or rule by a woman or women.” Matriarchy fundamentally means a society wherein the power is held by and passed on to the female members of the family, at an individual as well as the societal level. In a matriarchal society, women primarily hold power; predominate in the realms of employment, in the decision-making process and control over property. Within the academic discipline of cultural anthropology, according to the *OED*, matriarchy is a “culture or community in which such a system prevails” or a “family, society, organization, etc., dominated by a woman or women.”

There are many studies that show that even in societies with matrilineal descent, the power structure is either egalitarian or dominated formally by the father or some other male figure. For a social system to be considered a matriarchy, it would require following a culture that defined a woman or women in an authoritative stance, and their dominance being considered essential and legitimate.

Broadly speaking, patriarchy as a way of life has affected men as much as it has affected women, across the world. With most of the nation's being patriarchal in nature, men are forced to be the breadwinners of the family, while women are to be its caregivers. Issues of gendered roles have been researched and discussed through the times by scholars. If gender roles are

to be reversed, it would mean to interchange these traditional roles, making men the caregivers of the family and women the breadwinners. But the important question that arises here is whether this is sufficient to challenge the norms of patriarchy and sufficient to achieve gender equality? Couples whose gender roles have been reversed have to try and balance their intimacy and sense of identity in order to achieve equality. Workplace cultures are still embedded with traditional gendered stereotypes. The character and 'masculinity' of men is often questioned and they are looked down upon when they become the care givers of their family. Women's role as care givers is also questioned when they hold positions of leaderships and are divided between their roles at the workplace and that at the home. Ambitious women, at the higher levels of leadership in organizations are often said to be 'bad mothers' and their maternal instincts are questioned. In a modernizing society, the performances of stereotypical roles tend to be compromising, even if such roles remain natural and innovative because of the lack of earning and outside impact. Therefore, gender role reversal is not the solution to address patriarchy, but what is required is liberation from gendered roles and stereotypes to empower men and women to pursue the vocations they like and retain basic values and virtues.

**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.

4) Explain the terms matriarchy and patriarchy and define how both forms of social organisations differ from each other.

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5) Patriarchal system is defined as a system of male dominance. How? Explain briefly.

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6) Define how the notions of masculinity and femininity are constructed?

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## 2.5 THEORIES AND FEATURES OF INDIAN PATRIARCHY

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Patriarchy is a flexible phenomenon; whose characteristics remain the same in all societies. The way it implements and safeguards its interests in different societies depends upon numerous factors such as culture, religion and reproduces its existence with the help of tools such as movies, television, politics, and political economy and so on. Given below are the features of patriarchy:

- **Male dominance:** In a patriarchal system, men make all decisions at both the personal as well as the societal level. They hold all positions of power and authority, and are considered superior to women, mentally as well as physically. Men are concerned with identification that includes qualities of control, strength, forcefulness, rationality, strong work ethic, and competitiveness. Each of these qualities contributes to male identification in a patriarchal system. Such stereotypes tend to make men maintain a traditional and biased attitude towards women, therefore justifying violence or discrimination against them.
- **Protecting the authority of men:** Patriarchal societies, such as India's, work towards safeguarding the interests of the patriarch (the male-head of the family). Patriarchy, in a sense grants power and authority to men, in the public sphere as well as the private sphere. In the public sphere, they are more vocal and have more employment opportunities than women. They are more intelligent, sensible and non-emotional as a part of their masculinity. Such traits further promote and legitimize patriarchal issues, both in the private and public realm. Sexism, negative attitudes, domestic violence, female foeticide and infanticide are examples of such crimes against women in India.
- **Discrimination against women:** One of the most key features of a patriarchal society lies in its discrimination against women. Because of male dominance and the consequent protection of the authority of men, women are naturally subordinate to men and are hence discriminated against. Women are subject to economic, political and social constraints, within and outside the family. Preference for male child, early marriage, lack of jobs, domestic violence, economic and social freedom are some of the many examples of such discrimination. In general, the objective and perceived status of occupations and jobs open to women are inferior to those available to men. Without having access to "good" jobs, women will continue to be economically dependent on their spouses or partners. Economic dependence is one of the factors that force battered women to continue living with a violent spouse. Due to a lack of confidence and economic freedom, divorce or separation means poverty for them.
- **Traditional beliefs and stereotypes regarding women's' roles in the society:** The female child in India is often deprived of her right to education due to traditional beliefs regarding the role they are expected to play in the family, as an institution of the society. The number of girls dropping out of school far exceeds the boys because girls are expected to help at home, either with household work like washing and

cooking or with taking care of younger siblings. Since girls spend more time performing domestic duties and this increases the gap between female and male equality in rural parts of India, it perpetuates the myth that education is of no help to the girl and her primary job will be to look after the household work, get married early, have children and then raise them. Such beliefs and stereotypes are also reflected in the family post-marriage. Women's indispensable role of a wife and a mother are innate qualities of 'being a woman'.

Generally, patriarchal societies are more tolerant and lenient toward men who neglect their role as husband than they are toward women who neglect their role as wife. Moreover, the stigma of being a bachelor or divorced man is not nearly as strong as that of being an unmarried woman who lives alone with her children. Such women are perceived as failing to live up to traditional expectations of them as a wife, mother and woman (Haj-Yahia, 2005). The critical factor underlying gender stereotyping and violence has proved to be power, and not gender per se.

- **Constructing notions of masculinity and femininity:** Sen (2012) explains that the concept of gender includes the expectations held about the aptitudes, characteristics and likely behaviours of both men and women called masculinity and femininity. It is a basic organizing principle of society that shapes how people think about themselves and guides how they interact with each other. They change with time and are different in different societies and cultures. "Gender is lived reality, an experience related to every step of life" (Rege, 2003). Being a male or a female is therefore considered to be their defined sex. On the other hand, 'masculinity' or 'femininity' is the constructed gender roles. According to Oakley, gender parallels the biological division of sex into male and female, but it involves the division and social valuation of masculinity and femininity. In other words, gender is a concept that humans create socially, through their interactions with one another and their environments, yet it relies heavily upon biological differences between males and females. Because humans create the concept of gender socially, gender is referred to as a social construction. The social construction of gender is demonstrated by the fact that individuals, groups, and societies ascribe traits, statuses, or values to individuals purely because of their sex, yet these ascriptions differ across societies and cultures, and over time within the same society. Characteristics, traits, and activities that are "deemed" appropriate for men and women are referred to as 'gender stereotypes'. Such activities tend to enclose men and women in a box, defining their masculinity or femininity. The institutions of the society such as family, school, friends etc., help in developing a child's understanding of an aspect as sensitive as gender. This type of socialization tends to affect ones' ideology at a very early age. A child will grasp such aspects from books, toys, parents and teachers. Such stereotyping puts unwarranted pressure on boys who love to read, dislike fighting, or dislike sports or mechanics. Similarly, it hurts girls who struggle with body image, and who wish to excel in sports. Gender equality benefits both boys and girls. Working toward gender equality will enable both boys and girls to be themselves, instead of being bound by rigid gender roles.

**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.

7) Write a brief note on the various features of patriarchy in the Indian context.  
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8) Discuss how masculinity and femininity play a crucial role in defining gendered roles of men and women in media representation.  
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**2.6 OPPRESSION AND VIOLENCE (SEX, CASTE, CLASS AND DISABILITIES)**

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The intermingling of the power relations amongst different members of the society forms the basis of patriarchy. These power relations can be between men and women, amongst two men or two women. As discussed before, power is an underlying feature in a patriarchal setting and plays a role of utmost importance to safeguard the interests of patriarchy. The power can lie with the mother of the family and even she can oppress her children or daughter-in-law in terms of financial or physical independence or dowry. Such power relations reproduce the dominance of patriarchy which contributes towards gender-based violence. Such dominance and violence further maintains the status quo of power – vis-a-vis crude forms of oppression, like violence; and subtle ones, like law; to perpetuate inequality. Patriarchy is a structural force that influences power relations, whether they are physically or mentally abusive or not.

India has traditionally been a male-dominated society where women and their bodies have been subject to physical and mental atrocities in their routine lives. Eve-teasing in public transport, molestation, robbery, and rape has become the mundane reality of their lives. The growth of any nation is judged not only in terms of the economic and the statistical factors, but depends a great deal upon the crime rates in the social sphere as well. Rapes, brutal murders, harassment, assault, and chain-snatching, etc. have become common in the daily routine in the modern Indian society. Violence against women has grown with dowry deaths, murder, bride burning, etc. on the rise in

the country. Simultaneous increase in violence against women is hindering the social, economic, political, and cultural progress of the country.

The United Nations defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (United Nations, 1993).

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on December 18th, 1979 as a women’s Bill of Rights to take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom on a basis of equality with men. The convention entered into force in 1981 and has been ratified by over 100 countries. India ratified it in 1993. The CEDAW defines gender-based violence as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately”. This includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, the threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Together with “sexual violence” and “violence against women,” “gender-based violence” is used interchangeably. This does not mean that all acts against a woman are gender-based violence, or that all victims of gender-based violence are female. The surrounding circumstances where men are victims of sexual violence could be a man being harassed, beaten or killed because they do not conform to the view of masculinity, which are accepted by the society. In broad terms, the Declaration lists abuses that fall into the category of violence against women:

1. physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family and in the community, including battering, sexual abuse of female children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women;
2. non-spousal violence;
3. violence related to exploitation;
4. sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere;
5. trafficking in women;
6. forced prostitution; and
7. violence perpetrated or condoned by the State.

Violence against women is both physical and psychological in its manifestation. Aggression and violence are socially acceptable characteristics of masculinity, which reinforce the power in patriarchy. The continuous practice of dowry system in the society proves that the violence against women is an ideological issue and hence needs to be addressed in an equivalent manner. It is a complex phenomenon covering several dimensions of violence. As many as 22 women are killed for dowry in India every day. During the last three years, 24,771 dowry deaths have been reported from across the country

with Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh witnessing the highest instances of dowry deaths. As per National Crime Records Bureau data, the country has recorded 3.48 lakh cases of cruelty by husband or his relative and West Bengal tops the chart with 61,259 such cases in the past three years, followed by Rajasthan (44,311) and Andhra Pradesh (34,835) (The Pioneer, 2015). The crime bureau 2015 report highlights that there were 59, 277 reported cases of kidnapping and abduction of girls and women (2.01% of the total IPC crime cases); 82, 422 of molestation cases (2.79% of total IPC crime); 24, 041 of sexual harassment (0.82% of total IPC cases); 34, 771 cases of Rape (1.18% of total IPC crime cases); 1, 13, 403 of cruelty by husband and other relatives (3.85% of total IPC cases) despite enactment of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005 (PWDVA). Such kind of violence negatively affects girls' lives, their ability to access to education and performance in school.

The crime rate of a locality is one of the primary indicators reflecting the prevalent socio-economic condition and the efficiency of the justice machinery in that locality. Most women who are raped or sexually assaulted do not report the crime to police, in many cases because they have little confidence that their attacker would be brought to justice. There are several reasons for the under-reporting of crimes against women in the country:

- **Social stigma attached with crimes related to women:** In a male dominated society, women's crimes are downplayed as women are not independent enough to take their own decisions and are therefore at the mercy of their parents, in-laws or other male members of the family. This is one of the major causes for non-reporting of familial crimes. Shame, embarrassment, or desire to keep the assault a private matter also forms to be a cause.
- **Humiliation or fear of the perpetrator or other individual's perceptions:** Many of the crimes related to women go unreported also because they are threatened by the perpetrators, aiming to harm them more or their families. This, in addition to the lack of a deterrent mechanism leads to under reporting of crimes against women.
- **Lack of trust in the criminal justice system:** The snail paced judicial system such as the Indian Judicial System is also one of the main reasons that women, even educated women fail to report crimes against them.

Violence against women maintains the structures of gender oppression; whether carried out by individuals in private and/or by institutional forces in the public sphere. Social relations of caste and gender are also based on the exercise of power through the use of force (Kannabiran and Kannabiran, 1991)

Power sets the agenda for patriarchy. But, conflating it with abuse or masculinity is problematic and we need a more complex analysis of the typical power and control explanations. Feminism, which is about women claiming their rights to self-determination and equality, confronts gender conformity and aims to replace relationships of power with relationships of meaning.

**Check Your Progress V**

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.  
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

9) Write any two explanations of violence that fall into the category of violence against women according to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

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10) List the several reasons of the under-reporting of crimes against women in the country.

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**2.6.1 Double Oppression: Violence against Women with Disabilities**

Disability is both a political and a feminist issue. People with disabilities are some of the most marginalised, discriminated against segments of the population. They are more likely to be from a lower socioeconomic background, less likely to be in work, less likely to access higher education and have a shorter life span. Feminism tried to bring domestic violence out of the home and into to the public realm, arguing that it was not just a personal issue, it was a societal problem. Today people understand that gender-based violence is also a political issue, that it continues to exist in our society because of patriarchy and its manifestation of power and control onto the lives of women. In a ground-breaking study on disabled women and girls and violence, Barbara Faye Waxman Fiduccia stated: “Disabled women and girls are of all ages, all racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds and sexual orientations; they live in rural, urban and suburban communities. Disabled women and girls live at the corner of disability and womanhood – with two ‘minority’ identities, a double dose of discrimination and stereotyping and multiple barriers to achieving their life goals. While many women with disabilities derive enormous strength, resilience and creativity from their multiple identities, they also face the consequences of discrimination. Yet, the self-defined needs of women with disabilities remain on the margins of the social justice movements that should represent them – the women’s movement, the disability rights movement, and the civil rights movement – leaving disabled women and girls of all backgrounds essentially invisible.” (Double Oppression, page 2)

Violence experienced by women with disability can often be the same in many ways as that of perpetrated against non-disabled women. However,

women with disability are also vulnerable to other forms of abuse. For instance, taking away aids or adaptations; using aids to physically hurt the woman; over and under medicating her; refusing or delaying assistance; rough handling whilst assisting her; using aids to sexually assault woman; blaming the fact that she is disabled for the abuse; controlling finances/benefits; patronizing her; undermining her ability to do things for herself, among others.

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## 2.7 PATRIARCHY AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

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The term political economy is derived from Greek word “polis” meaning “city” or “state” and “oikonomos” meaning one who manages the state or household. Political economy, very simply defined is the study of the relationship between individuals and society and the market and the state. It considers both the political and the economic factors in studying how the public household is governed.

The concept of the state is a confluence of power, authority and the intention of dominant institutions in the society. In a patriarchal society, the dominance over women, in the public sphere is a more subtle and ingrained type of dominance. It is not out in the open and subtler in the laws framed, the legislature, welfare policies and the social institutions, which are in fact crude forms of patriarchy, perpetuating the goal of patriarchy. Like a vast majority of the world, India’s patriarchy has legitimized the marginal and unfair position and contribution of women in the political economy. Such a legitimization remains to be an innate quality of patriarchy. Women’s contribution in the organized and the unorganized sectors in India have been well researched and documented by feminist scholars. Women, in addition to the wage work done outside the realm of their private lives should undertake the support work for the family, which includes nurturing of the children, cooking and the innumerable other household chores. This is the work that they are obliged to do, be it in an urban setting or a rural setting.

Taking an example of the educational programmes and policies in India, Nelly Stromquist analyses “*The justification of literacy programs for women launched in 1988 by India as part of its National Literacy Mission is illustrative. It identifies the following benefits from women’s literacy: increased participation of children in primary education, reduced infant mortality, greater success in child care and immunizations, declined fertility rates, greater self-confidence and self-image among women, and greater awareness by women of their social and legal rights (cited in Ramdas, 1990). Except for the last two benefits, which address women as individuals, all the others focus on the women’s maternal roles. Content analysis of primers used in Indian literacy programs reveals a strong emphasis on improving the skills and knowledge of women in their circumscribed roles as mothers (Patel, 1989). In other words, the role of literacy for women is one of accommodation into the patriarchal culture, not one of questioning its structure.*” (Stromquist, 1991).

**Do you know?**

**Article 39 of the Indian Constitution envisages that the State shall direct its policy, among other things, towards securing that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.**

**To give effect to this constitutional provision, the Equal Remuneration Ordinance was passed on September 26, , 1975. The Ordinance provides for payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work or work of similar nature and for the prevention of discrimination on grounds of sex. The Ordinance also ensures that there will be no discrimination against recruitment of women and provides for the setting up of Advisory committees to promote employment opportunities for women. This Act is called the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.**

In a similar manner, the production industry of a patriarchal society is also a meaningful category that can be analysed (Rege, 2003) for this purpose. Raj Mohini Sethi (1989) in her article on the agricultural producers in Himachal Pradesh analyses the participation of women workers in agriculture at a very high rate. Despite such high participation by women, the overall status of women remains to be unchanged. *“Political, ideological and cultural factors cause increasing marginalized women despite their high rate of work participation on family farms. Women’s participation in decision-making in production and distribution and their representation in village development activities have not changed. Women are treated as mere beasts of burden who do seventy-five per cent of the work on family farms and take upon themselves the major, if not the sole, responsibility for cattle-care, housework and the socialization of the young. Men perform only productive agricultural work and non-agricultural work and when unemployed prefer to remain idle than share housework. In Himachal Pradesh, the ownership and control of land remain with the men. The hold of patriarchal values is so strong among the peasant communities that the provisions under the Hindu succession Act 1956 providing women equal rights over parental property (Sethi and Sibia, 1987) remain on paper only”* (Sethi, 1989). Therefore, even in the case of women dominating the production sector in some cases, they remain to be secluded from various educational and employment opportunities, furthering their marginalization in the society. Women, as discussed in the above sections have been a marginalised group, in the private as well as the public sphere, wherein patriarchal norms produce and reproduce its characteristics.

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## **2.8 HOUSEHOLD LABOUR AND ITS TYRANNY**

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*“Man may work from sun to sun,  
but woman’s work is never done.”*

*-Proverb*

Historically women have always worked, yet the work at home has always been invisible. As a result of rapid industrialization, work done outside the realm of the family was given more preference. Therefore, work done in

the home, which as we have discussed is done mostly by women, became invisible and its contribution to the family was overlooked.

Men too are victims of patriarchy. A male stereotype such as dominance, aggression and intelligence has led to more job opportunities and hence has made him the breadwinner of the family. On the other hand, however, working class women were often able to sell their domestic skills to earn money and of course when they came home they continued to perform work at home to take care of their families. During a seminar, a professor once shared his experience of coming home and asking his mother what she had done all day, to which she would always reply, “Nothing!”

Even women who are economically free to get a job and be financially independent are often required to take care of their families as well. This dual work or second job (at home and work for pay) places women at a disadvantage compared to men. Various scholars have analysed and discussed the possible explanations for this duality of work. Sexual division of labour is considered to be a direct consequence of patriarchy and capitalism. While a number of Marxist feminists would argue that capitalism determines the requirements of women’s oppression in the market, there has been significant disagreement whether household work contributes to the surplus value or not. Time availability and ideology (Shelton and John, 1996) have also been explanations for household labour in the society.

Although women and men both leave the house to earn paid wages, women continue to perform more of the unpaid domestic work at home. This is referred to as having ‘The Second Job’. While more and more men are coming up and helping their spouses with the domestic work as well, an egalitarian or an equal society is yet to be achieved.

Alice Abel Kemp in her article *Domestic Labor in the Patriarchal Family*, (1994) describes four components of domestic labour: housework, support work, status production, and child care.

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## 2.9 VALUE OF WOMEN’S CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL WEALTH

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You are already familiar with housework and child care, but you might not have known about support work and status production. Let us understand the concepts of Status Production and Support Work.

### **Do you know?**

**India has laws and procedures to address the cases of sexual harassment at the workplace. The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in Vishaka and Others vs. State of Rajasthan and Others (JT 1997 (7) SC 384) passed guidelines against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace and it is popularly known as Vishaka guidelines. These guidelines, later in 2013 were passed as ‘The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.**

## Status Production and Support Work

To understand the concepts of status production, we would look at the works of Hanna Papanek (1979) who describes the status-production as support work generated by the demands of income-earning activities by other family or household members. Support work can also include the training of children. This can include physical well-being, language, education, health, hygiene and presentation of the self. Support work can range from consoling a child to make him/her feel better when a pet has died or listening to one's spouse complains about an obnoxious co-worker. This is also one type of labor that is often overlooked when trying to determine how much "work" someone does.

This type of support work has the following characteristics: (1) there is no direct relationship between the support worker and the actual earning activity or the institution in which it takes place; (2) rewards for support work are indirect, often through participation in the perquisites of rank, such as access to housing or medical care provided by the earning member's employer; (3) direct rewards for support work take a variety of economic and noneconomic forms; (4) the conditions of support work are negotiated with the earning worker and subject to considerable variation (Papanek, 1979).

With an increase in the participation of women in the realm of work, attitudinal barriers for them have also risen. Getting a job may not be as difficult for a woman as it was in the past, but what follows is surely a difficult path to follow. Sexual harassment at the workplace is a grave concern in India, like the rest of the world. The Indian National Bar Association (INBA) conducted and presented a study, found that of the 6,047 participants (both male and female) that they surveyed, 38% said they'd faced harassment at their workplace. Of these, 69% did not register any complain about it. The very few who challenge the perpetrators in the court of law remain entangled in long judicial processes.

Traditional gender expectations and practices over the years have led to under representation of women in leadership roles in major sectors of the workforce. Women are said to be becoming, more masculine in their career choices. Characteristics such as authority, competitiveness and domination, which in men are viewed as features of a good leader, are viewed as undesirable in women. While these qualities may appeal to be assertive in men, they become harsh in a woman.

Women, still being viewed in the traditional, patriarchy induced roles of home makers and child rearing; now face the responsibility of both the household as well as their workplaces. Even women, who hold positions of leadership are often viewed as being domineering and cold, which is said to be 'unfeminine' in nature. What is needed today is attitudinal change in the gendered roles that have long been reinforced in the patriarchal realm.

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## 2.10 LET US SUM UP

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This unit has given you an overview of the broad concepts of gender, gender roles, features of patriarchy, matriarchy and how they contribute in the construction of gender roles and determine the status of women in a society.

Broadly speaking, gender refers not just to women and men, and to the interaction between them. It is important to understand the differences between women and men that are externally influenced, as well as the conditions imposed on them based on naturally given biological differences. Our sex roles and gender roles are likewise different. While our sex roles are imposed on us by nature (through the basic physiological and anatomical differences between women and men), our gender roles are usually defined by the society (e.g., there are behaviour/roles which are deemed as either masculine or feminine by the society). In other words, gender refers to socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men in each location and the social structures that support them, all of which are subject to change over time. We can say that gender roles are learned behaviours. Gender roles are conceived, enacted and learnt within a complex of relationships. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity and religion, and by the geographical, economic and political environment. Many a time, this leads to sex-role stereotyping which may have either positive or negative effects on individuals. It may lead individuals to conform to the stereotypes. It may also have significant effects on an individual's self-image which comprises one's self-esteem, self-confidence and locus of control. The biggest social agents and forces in the transmittal of sex-role stereotypes are the parents, the teachers and the schools.

The purpose of looking at gender is not to divide women and men, causing conflict between them. Rather, it draws our attention to those issues that have brought about unequal relations, and allows us to address these issues with appropriate measures that will help reduce rather than perpetuate inequality. Thus, the concept of gender helps to focus on growth in terms of the equitable distribution of benefits between women and men, equality of power relations between them and, most of all, the partnership between them in any field of development.

During the last three decades or so, significant improvements have been made in women's access to education, health care and family planning, employment opportunities, decision making and in governance etc. worldwide. Women are now entering many such professions that were mainly the domain of men in the past. But estimates of various international agencies indicate that women's status is very low in developing countries as compared to the developed ones. The basis of women's problems in the developing region is mainly gender -biased socialisation, and prevalence of systems of patriarchy which limit and confine women to subordinate roles. Patriarchal structures perpetuate the enduring gaps between the opportunities available to men and women. Though norms of patriarchy are not similar everywhere, yet there are overall structures of patriarchy which allow men, in general, more mobility, authority and control than women in general. The culture of patriarchy is so deeply entrenched in countries of this region, it even convinced women that the work they do for their family is their duty and the work they do is not as valuable as much as the work men do. Substantial proportion of women do not have a say even in decisions - whether to use contraception or not or how many children they should have. Family decisions are the principal domain of their husbands and family adults. Illiteracy seems to be the major problem that acts as a strong impediment in the development and wellbeing of women in developing countries.

To conclude, we can say that generally men make all household decisions and women are expected to follow. Persistence of strong patriarchy, traditional gender roles and religious fundamentalism also contribute to the low status of women in developing countries. A study conducted in USA in 2000 reported that violence against women is a function of the beliefs, fostered in all cultures, that men are superior and that the women they live with are their possessions which they may treat as they wish and as they consider appropriate. The feminist view is that status of women is low because of oppression and subordination, basically due to sexual division of labour which relegates women to the reproductive roles that limits their freedom. In the changing scenario world over, women are said to be becoming, more masculine in their career choices. Characteristics such as authority, competitiveness and domination, which in men are viewed as features of a good leader, are still viewed as undesirable in women. While these qualities may appeal to be assertive in men, they become harsh in a woman. Women, still being viewed in the traditional, patriarchy induced roles of home makers and child rearing; now face the responsibility of both the household as well as their workplaces. What is needed today is attitudinal change in the gendered roles that have long been reinforced in the patriarchal realm.

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## **2.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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Note: Use the space given below for your answers. Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit

- 1) Explain the term 'gender roles'. Enlist and discuss few gender roles you observe in day to day life.
- 2) Describe the meaning of the concepts of patriarchy and matriarchy.
- 3) Patriarchal norms affect both men and women in a society. How? Discuss critically.
- 4) In your opinion, is gender role reversal the answer to challenge the norms of patriarchy? If yes, how? Explain in five lines.
- 5) Get a copy of the 'The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and list out five guidelines available to women for Prevention of sexual harassment at workplace.
- 6) Explain the concepts of status production. What are its characteristics?

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## **2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Gender roles are the roles that men and women are expected to occupy based on their sex. Gender roles are passed on through generations. Traditionally, many societies believed that women are more nurturing than men. The traditional view of the masculine gender role, therefore, suggests that men should be the heads of their households by providing financially for the family and making important family decisions. While these views remain dominant in many spheres of society, alternative

perspectives on traditional beliefs about gender roles have gained increasing support in the twenty-first century. A sociological perspective on gender roles is that gender roles are learned, they can also be unlearned, and that new and distinct roles can be created. The feminist perspective points out that, gender roles are not simply ideas about appropriate behaviour for males and females but are also linked to the various levels of power that males and females hold in society.

2. **Patriarchy** is a term very commonly used by feminist scholars and practiced by a vast majority of the population in their everyday lives. A patriarchy, from the ancient Greek word *patriarches*, is a society where power is held by and passed down through the elder males. Broadly speaking, the concept of patriarchy which has been developed within feminist writings is not a single or simple concept but has a whole variety of different meanings. At the most general level patriarchy has been used to refer to male domination and to the power relationships by which men dominate women. **Matriarchy** is a form of social organization in which the mother or oldest female is the head of the family, and descent and relationship are reckoned through the female line; government or rule by a woman or women. Matriarchy fundamentally means a society wherein the power is held by and passed on to the female members of the family, at an individual as well as the societal level. In a matriarchal society, women primarily hold power; predominate in the realms of employment, in the decision-making process and control over property. There are many studies that shows even in societies with matrilineal descent, the power structure is either egalitarian or dominated formally by the father or some other male figure. For a social system to be considered a matriarchy, it would require following a culture that defined a woman or women in an authoritative stance, and their dominance being considered essential and legitimate.
3. Patriarchy as a way of life has affected men as much as it has affected women, across the world. Majority of the nations in the world being patriarchal in nature, men are forced to be the breadwinners of the family, while women are to be its caregivers. Patriarchy, in a sense grants power and authority to men, in the public sphere as well as the private sphere. In a patriarchal system, men make all decisions at both the personal as well as the societal level. They hold all positions of power and authority, and are considered superior to women, mentally as well as physically. Men are concerned with identification that includes qualities of control, strength, forcefulness, rationality, strong work ethic, and competitiveness. Each of these qualities contributes to male identification in a patriarchal system. Such stereotypes tend to make men maintain a traditional and biased attitude towards women, therefore justifying violence or discrimination against them.
4. Issues of gendered roles have been researched and discussed by feminists since the beginning of the study of gender studies. If gender roles are to be reversed, it would mean to interchange these traditional roles, making men the caregivers of the family and women the breadwinners. But the important question that arises here is whether this is sufficient to challenge the norms of patriarchy and is this is sufficient to achieve gender equality? Couples whose gender roles have

been reversed should try and balance their intimacy and sense of identity to achieve equality. Workplace cultures still embedded in traditional gendered stereotypes. The character and 'masculinity' of men is often questioned and they are looked down upon when they become the care givers of their family. Women's role as care givers is also questioned when they hold positions of leadership and are divided between their roles at the workplace as against that at the home. Ambitious women, at the higher levels of leadership in organizations are often said to be 'bad mothers' questioning their maternal instincts. In a modernizing society, the performances of stereotypical roles tend to be compromising, even if such roles remain natural and innovative because of the lack of their earning and outside impact. Therefore, gender role reversal is not the solution to address patriarchy, but what is required is liberation from gendered roles and stereotypes to empower men and women to pursue the vocations they like and retain basic values and virtues.

5. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at workplace and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. In consonance with the guarantee of fundamental rights of a woman to equality under articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India and her right to life and to live with dignity under article 21 of the Constitution and right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe environment free from sexual harassment; and universally recognised the protection against sexual harassment and the right to work with dignity by international conventions and instruments such as Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by the Government of India in 1993, this Act states: 1) No woman shall be subjected to sexual harassment at any workplace. (2) The following circumstances, among other circumstances, if it occurs, or is present in relation to or connected with any act or behaviour of sexual harassment may amount to sexual harassment:- (i) implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment; or (ii) implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in her employment; or (iii) implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status; or (iv) interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her; or (v) humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety.
6. Hanna Papanek (1979) describes the status-production as support work generated by the demands of income-earning activities by other family or household members. Support work can also include the training of children. This can include physical well-being, language, education, health, hygiene and presentation of the self. Support work can range from consoling a child feel better when a pet has died listening to one's spouse complain about an obnoxious co-worker. This is also one type of labour that is often overlooked when trying to determine how much "work" someone does. This type of support work has the many characteristics. Some of them defined by Hanna Papanek are: (1) there is no direct relationship between the support worker and the actual

earning activity or the institution in which it takes place; (2) rewards for support work are indirect, often through participation in the perquisites of rank, such as access to housing or medical care provided by the earning member's employer; (3) direct rewards for support work take a variety of economic and noneconomic forms; (4) the conditions of support work are negotiated with the earning worker and subject to considerable variation.

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## 2.13 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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## **UNIT 3 PATRIARCHIES IN INTERACTION WITH OTHER SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND IDENTITIES**

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### **Structure**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Family, Caste, Class and Communities: Contemporary Feminist Discourses
  - 3.3.1 Family and Nature of Women's Subordination
  - 3.3.2 Intersection of Class and Gender
  - 3.3.3 Caste and Gender Interface
- 3.4 School as a Microcosm of Social Realities
  - 3.4.1 Access to Education and Inherent Gender Subordinations
  - 3.4.2 Gender Biases and their Representations in Textbooks
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Unit End Questions
- 3.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.8 References and Suggested Readings

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

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This unit will discuss the interrelationship between education and other social structures to understand school education from a gender perspective. It describes forms of social structure such as family, caste, class and tribe to analyze the impact of these structures on gender relations. The unit will introduce learners to the basic definitions of family, caste and class as social institutions and their roles in controlling women's access to education, health care and employment. Education cannot be understood in isolation of social realities in which gender as a part of social structure needs to be emphasized in the context of inclusive education. School education and its intersection with other social structures is complex, thus this unit will help the learners to build up their basic understanding of social structure and gender.

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### **3.2 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Define and understand social institutions such as: caste, class, family and community from a feminist perspective;
- Comprehend the inter-relationship between social structure, patriarchy and women's marginalization; and
- Explain schooling and school education from a gender perspective.

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### 3.3 FAMILY, CASTE, CLASS AND COMMUNITIES: CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST DISCOURSES

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This section is adapted from the course MWG 009: Women and Social Structure of MA in Women's and Gender Studies programme. This section will introduce learners to the sociological definition of certain concepts like family, caste and class that forms part of the social structure. Further, this section briefly explains the functioning of such institutions in relation to women's marginalization and control. Let us now define and discuss what family means and describe its various types in India.

The discussion on family is adapted from the "Unit 1: Forms of Family and Household in India" and "Unit 2: Feminist Debate on Family" from Block 2: 'Family' of course MWG 009. Levi Strauss (1971) has described family and its structures and functions in the following manner: 'social groups that originate in marriage, they consist of husband, wife, and children born of their union (although in some family forms other relatives are included); they bind members with legal, economic, and religious bonds as well as duties and privileges; and they provide a network of sexual privileges and prohibitions, and varying degrees of love, respect, and affection' (p. 56). Mainstream family studies explain family as that unit where: '(i) at least two adult persons of opposite sex reside together, (ii) they engage in some kind of division of labour, (iii) they engage in many types of economic and social exchanges; that is they do things for one another; (iv) they share many things in common, such as food, sex, residence, and both goods and social activities, (v) the adults have parental relations with their children, as their children have filial relations with them; the parents have some authority over their children and both share with one another, while also assuming some obligation for protection, cooperation, and nurturance. (vi) there are sibling relations among the children themselves, with, once more, a range of obligations to share, protect and help one another. When all these conditions exist, few people would deny that the unit is a family.' (Goode, 1982, p. 9 cited by Ray 2014). Family is also defined as 'a group of individuals related to one another by blood ties, marriage or adoption, who form an economic unit, the adult members of which are responsible for the upbringing of children' (Giddens, 2010, p. 331). Rose (1968) defined family as 'a group of interacting persons who recognize a relationship with each other based on common parentage, marriage and/ or adoption' (p. 9, cited by Ray 2014). The biological relationships have been the defining principles of family membership yet family as a basic kinship group emphasizes the dual significance of familial relationships through 'blood' and 'marriage'.

Feminists also pointed out that in all these mainstream studies of joint family and glorification of its unity, the role of women for maintaining family unity; and women's varying and difficult experiences within it was neglected (Patel, 2003; Uberoi, 1993, 2006, refer Ray 2014). They argued that the notion of bargaining power and negotiability is important in the context of kinship and family. However, most women living within the patrilineal, patri-virilocal kinship, have limited rights over resources and virtually no inheritance rights and decision-making power within the family and household (refer Ray

2014). Women are marginalized, seen as dependents and their autonomy over body is controlled by the men. Women within these patrilineal families therefore hardly had choices and bargaining power (Dube, 2001, p.7, refer Ray 2014). These facts were not given importance by mainstream studies of the kinship and family structures, which feminists tried to bring to light in their studies.

**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) Define family in Indian context.

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**3.3.1 Family and Nature of Women’s Subordination**

Feminist works further pointed to the patterns in which family and kinship have subordinated women in the name of upholding family sanctity and honour within the community. The most obvious forms of women’s marginalization is by imposing restrictions on their mobility, perpetuating violence against them in the name of honour, perpetuating gender socialization, strict norms for gender division of labour, controlling the body in the sphere of reproduction and ultimately keeping women on margins within the family. “Scholars focussed on the violence perpetrated on women in the name of family honour and showed how the rationality of the family honour subordinates women and grants men the power to exercise control on women’ s self and body” (Das, 1996). In this context feminist studies discussed the intersection of caste ideology with that of familial ideology and how they operate together to exercise control over women. Family honour and purity of caste is believed to be dependent upon control over and purity of female sexuality. Caste system emphasizes boundary maintenance (endogamous marriage) for keeping up the purity of the caste structure. The onus of this boundary maintenance falls on women because of their role in biological reproduction” (refer Ray 2014: 104). Family as a form of social institution plays a significant role in sustaining the idea of purity and honour through socializing its members especially women to control their sexuality. According to Ray (2014), girls are expected to be feminine and family exercises control upon them to remain pure.

Other forms of social mechanisms include: restrictions on mobility, maintaining seclusion, stress on the idea of a chaste woman, culture of son preference and importance of early marriage of girls through which the family actively contributes in maintaining caste boundaries and protects its purity and honour. The responsibility for protection of family and caste honour is given to the male members of the community thereby men exercise power over the females. “As a result, men control every facet of women’s behavior and life. Any women seem to be behaving outside of these norms are portrayed as deviant and they often face violence as part of punishment mechanism”

(Ray 2014: 104). Now let us understand class as a form of social institution and its impact upon women.

### **3.3.2 Intersection of Class and Gender**

The discussion on class and gender is adapted from the “Unit 1: Formative Feminist Discourses” of the course MWG 009: Women and Social Structure, MA Women’s and Gender Studies Programme. Feminist engagement with the analysis of class began in the 1960s and 70s across countries. The intersection between women and class is discussed from different feminist positions. For instance, radical feminists in the United States saw patriarchy as “the determinant social relationship under all modes of production” (Custers, 2014: 20). They argued that the social system is characterized by male domination over the female and power rests with the male only.

According to radical feminist position, women’s relation to the means of production is different to that of men since they control the labour power of women. Hence, certain issues such as: women’s invisible labour and housework have been dealt by feminists thereafter. During the first part of 1970s, the debate on women and class was centred on the conceptualization of housework. Some interesting contributions were made by the American author Margaret Benston and Italian feminist Maria Rosa Dalla Costa. When the second feminist wave was on the rise, Margaret Benston (1969) wrote an essay, ‘The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation’ in which she argued that the root cause of women’s secondary status is economic in nature and women as a group share a definitive relation with the means of production (cited in Custers, 2014, p. 81).

Therefore, reproduction and class are complexly related. The universal acceptance of women’s role in the reproductive sphere became the basis for creating the class structure between women and men. Consequently, women’s work is either invisible or unrecognized in the labour market and family. For instance, women in the nineteenth century were withdrawn from work after the birth of their first child. Since ages, women have been shaping their work in and around their reproductive responsibilities and simultaneously made economic contributions. You must have observed that women with children gained access to employment such as part-time work, home-based work and seasonal work. Studies show that where women were allowed to work with their children, their work participation rate increased; for example, Italian mothers in the New York canneries, immigrant mothers in New England textile mills and English cotton factories (cited in Brenner & Remas, P. 27). There are studies shown that since women are never considered as primary wage earners in the society, they are mostly represented in specific occupations such as nurses, teachers and agricultural workers. This relationship between class and gender has implications for women’s access to schooling and education as well.

#### **Activity 1**

Collect news items from different newspapers to see how poverty impacts women’s education in our country?

### 3.3.3 Caste and Gender: An Interface

Caste, class and gender are inextricably linked and they shape each other as social institutions. These institutions as part of the larger social structure are continuously engaging with other sectors such as education, health, politics and market. Now let us understand how caste operates in the society to be able to maintain its dominance over women. This section is adapted from the Unit 1: 'Gendering and Caste' from the course MWG 009; and 'Women and Social Structure' of MA in Women's and Gender Studies. The basis of caste system is to sustain the structure of marriage, sexuality and reproduction across generations. It is the fundamental basis of retaining inequalities in relation to gender and other social caste groups within the society. "Louis Dumont (1972) defines caste system as a system of consensual values; a set of values accepted by both dominant and dominated. Historian Uma Chakravarti argues that this definition is popular because it is convenient for the upper castes as it helps them to maintain their own position within the hierarchical structure" (Chakravarti, 2003, cited by Bindhulakshmi 2014:192). Ambedkar defines caste system as a system of 'graded inequality' in which the power hierarchies are always vested in the dominant ideology of caste system. Thus, women and dalit communities often face multiple marginalizations with regard to access to education, health and economic empowerment.

One of the ways to understand the intersection between gender and caste is through the concept of endogamy. "Endogamy is the practice of marrying within the same caste, one of the significant ways in which caste hierarchies are maintained and practiced. Enforcing cultural codes through the strict practice of endogamy led to much gendered violence in India" (Bindhulakshmi 2014:193). You must have come across in the newspapers about the widespread phenomenon of gendered violence in India in the name of the ideology of honour or *Izzat*. Men and women associate with the notion of honour in different ways and the mechanism of social sanction for those infringing caste/community norms also vary for both women and men. For instance, growing incidences of honour killings in different states of India help us to understand the close link between caste endogamy and violence. *Khap* panchayats are perpetuating violence against young couples who transgress the strict boundaries of caste system, community norms and the norm of *gotra*. Uma Chakravarti (1993) argues that women are considered as the gateway of caste system within the structure of marriage and reproduction. Women are seen as a repository of caste honour hence, they are subjected to patriarchal protection, moral policing, control and violence. Violence against women is justified by this very nature of community honour and maintaining caste purity.

As Bindu K. C. writes (2014), "another most important theoretical concept that dalit feminism uses to understand Indian society is the concept of brahminical patriarchy. Dalit feminists following Ambedkar, analyse Indian society as structured around brahminical patriarchy within which power is seen to have a caste-gender basis in South Asia. The power inequality persists through marriages between similar caste families. Endogamy, in that sense, functions as the most important corner stone of the caste system itself, with its purity and pollution rituals most strong among upper caste women" (p. 204).

## 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) What is brahminical patriarchy? Present a case study to explain it.

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- 3) What is endogamy?

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This section has briefly discussed some of the important concepts in relation to patriarchy and social structure. Understanding of these concepts like caste, class and family will help the learners to analyze how education and schooling are part of these structures. Therefore, school as a social system needs to be understood in relation to society. For example, issues like low enrollment of girls; absence of girl child from certain subjects/disciplines; and lack of access to primary and secondary schooling. These can only be discussed in the context of society, caste, class, religion, region, ethnicity, family, and community and gender relations. Let us in brief learn about how school is a microcosm of social reality.

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### 3.4 SCHOOL AS A MICROCOSM OF SOCIAL REALITIES

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School system is the suitable site for experiencing the conflict between ideology, social norms, liberal values and progressive thoughts. Therefore, schools are the perfect platforms which reflect the contradictions between women's right to education vis-à-vis women's prescribed roles in the society. In this sense, schools are also gendered in nature and they also reflect gender stereotypes in their practice and culture of teaching. As you may have read in the previous section of this unit, Indian society has layers of social structure which in reality strengthen the patriarchal values in every sphere of life. For instance, women's education is no longer banned in India but certainly controlled and women's seclusion is hardly practiced but their access to work, health care, law and education is always controlled (Ray 1988).

#### 3.4.1 Access to Education and Inherent Gender Subordinations

Indian society is comprised of such contradictions in which women are portrayed as powerful yet they are oppressed and domesticated in the family.

School as a part of the entire social system is also not free from such gender conflicts and contradictions. Historically, schools were created to educate the boys since girls were idealized in society in roles of mothers, wives and daughters-in-law. Raka Ray in her article “Class and gender in schooling in India” has narrated gender biases that existed in the schools of 19<sup>th</sup> century Calcutta. She presented the case of girl’s schools started in 1800’s and the main purpose was defined as “The existence of intelligently educated mothers..., is essential to the training of a race of intelligent and high-spirited sons and brothers and husbands. (As quoted in Borthwick, 1984:65). These schools started getting the support by mid 1800s since western educated young boys began to feel that the condition of their women didn’t fit the new liberal ideas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the educated men supported their women to be educated so that they could function in a rational manner. However, this effort was not so much towards women’s empowerment but rather creating a class of educated women who could balance both the private and the public domains. Schools began to stress that “women’s education did not mean greater freedom of behaviour, nor did it override a woman’s primary duty to her husband” (Borthwick, 1984: 39)” (cited in Ray 1988: 389). This example shows how school as a form of institution was created on the basis of the gendered understanding of society. Boys are educated to become wage earners and the intellectual class and girls have the right to education but they are trained to become good daughters and diligent wives. In this sense, school is like any other social institution which believes in reasserting the patriarchal values or gender stereotypes. Let us study in further detail the interrelationship between gender, class and schooling during post-independence era in India.

Raka Ray in her article discusses a case study of two schools which were offering education for both boys and girls in Calcutta after Independence. Though after Independence the notion of formal equality was emphasized by the Constitution of India, boys and girls were trained in the school for taking up different roles in life. The underlying principle of school education was based on the gender differential roles and relationships. She claimed that schools established during the colonial era and had the highest prestige were adhering to hierarchical and patriarchal values in their approach towards girls’ education. She studied two schools one was St. Mary Convent School (SMC) that has British style Public school approach and another is a government aided school, i.e., Tripti Girls High School (TGHS) in Calcutta to find out the inter-linkage between gender and class in the schooling system. SMC was catering to the children of westernized Indian elite families who had financial security to pay the high fees. TGHS was a government aided school catering to the children of clerical workers, low-grade management and factory workers. Girls were primarily from lower-middle class families of Calcutta. Teachers at SMC aimed to train the girls how to become ladies who can carry forward the ideas or values of western liberal elite classes of India. Therefore, the school was aimed to produce elite women but not skilled women workers. This can be done in two steps:

SMC must produce women who will be the wives of elite men and must therefore have the appropriate domestic and ladylike capabilities. Secondly, as wives of elite men and as elite women themselves, they must have leadership capacities, for they will be the ‘leaders’ of society (p. 391).

On the other hand, TGHS aimed to produce women who will have necessary domestic skills to manage both the household responsibilities and the market. The primary aim was to train girls in such a way who can contribute to the economy as low paid white-collar workers. You can see a sharp class boundary between the girls of SMC and TGHS schools with clear principle of gender stereotyping with regard to why girls need education, what kind of education girls need and what will be the use of this teaching for their lives. For instance, girls at SMC were encouraged to complete the final board examination because it can make the highest status difference to their lives. However, for girls at TGDS, girls were encouraged to learn the domestic and market related skills which they can use during their marriage negotiations. For example, woman can negotiate marriage with fewer dowries since she has skills that increase her earning capacity in the family. The above narrative clearly shows schools emphasized different skill sets for boys and girls who held from different class background. In this sense schools represent social realities thus function as microcosm of the larger society. The curriculum, pedagogy, textbooks and evaluation methodology are integral part of this microcosm in which they impart the knowledge of the society. In this sense, school and society are not separate institutions and both reinforce gender inequalities in its culture and practices. Social norms and cultural practices also affect the gender gaps in school education in India. Discriminatory social practices and attitude such as: early marriage, practice of social seclusion for girls, favouring of boys in family education investment and gender division of labour have adversely affected girl child's access to school and primary education in India and others in different parts of the world (OECD 2012, c.f. Global Monitoring Report 2015). The report cited, for example, in many countries, women and girls take up a huge amount of household labour including collecting fuel wood and water, and caring for younger siblings which can limit girls' ability to attend school. Access to school becomes challenging for many women due to social norms and their invisible reproductive work within the household. Effective policies with multipronged strategies have been adopted by many countries to reduce the gender gaps in education. For instance, in India, multi-strategies of the government have helped to improve accessibility and quality of girl's schooling. Multi-strategies include textbooks for girls, back to school camps and bridging courses, appointment of female teachers and national programmes to increase demand for schooling for rural and disadvantaged girls (Govinda, 2008, refer Global Monitoring Report 2015). We have discussed about gender stereotyping and gender segregated roles and its relationship with the increasing gender gap in school education. Certain programmes and courses have underlying gender stereotyping, for instance, certain courses such as arts and education, and home science are designed keeping in mind the domestic role of women rather than emphasizing their productive roles. Because of gender profiling and stereotyping women tend to participate more in programmes and courses that relate to their reproductive responsibilities so much so that the discipline of science and technology, and vocational training are primarily perceived as male dominated spheres (Nair 2010). Families are also less likely to educate the girl child due to various social and normative considerations and further, other social factors like class; region and ethnic identities also play a key role in limiting women's access to education.

**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.
- 4) What is gender based discrimination within the family? Write a story or a case study to explain this.

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The inter-sectionality approach will clarify the relationship between gender, education and other social structure. The position paper of NCERT has brought out a wide range of case studies to be able to analyze the education system from a gender perspective. Let us know read a small case study which focuses on how difficult it becomes for a dalit girl to get access to education. Factors such as: material poverty, cultural norms, gendered behavior, value assigned to female labour in the labour market, and dominant culture of femininity constantly set limits for girl’s education in particular girls from dalit community and underprivileged sections of the society.

***Being Dalit and female***

*This is a story about Mangal who belongs to a dalit community and lives in Baroda. Her father works as a daily wage worker and mother works as a domestic help. Mangal has studied till third standard in a government school after which she was pulled out of the school to look after her younger siblings. Later on she worked as a helper in an English pre-school near to her home. She loved to do this job and also learnt English language while working. Months later it was found out that now she was married and leaving with her husband and family members in a small village. She is pregnant yet continues to work in family agriculture. She looks tired but also thinks of returning back to the school. She believes that girls need to be educated so that no girls should suffer the way she has struggled.*

(Source: Position Paper, NCERT, 2006: p. 6)

The above case study depicts certain micro-realities of girls in India where women’s labour is valued in the expanded sphere of domesticity. In addition, when other social factors such as caste, class, ethnicity and rural/urban divide intersect with gender it increases vulnerabilities for girl’s education. In the context of Muslim community in northern India, studies have reported that poverty of Muslim households provides significant explanation for the poor levels of Muslim women’s education (Zoya Hasan & Ritu Menon cited in Position paper, NCERT, 2006). The position paper also discusses other forms of discrimination that a girl faces in the context of access to education. For instance, the boys can be studied in an English medium school and girls can be educated in vernacular medium. Such practices are a manifestation of newer forms of discrimination in India. Let us look at a conversation:

Narration about why boys need to study in English Medium?

[Why don't you go to an English school?]

Girls can do housework, that's why. Boys will have to work.

(Seema, 9)

My brother will be a doctor.

[To be a doctor, do you have to go to an English school?]

Yes.

[And what about you...?]

No, I'll be a teacher. (Ritu, 10)

(Source: Manjrekar, 1999, cited in NCERT 2006: 12)

You will come across many such case narratives and examples in your daily interaction to be able to analyze to what extent the gender of a person determines her/his access to education. Economically poorer sections and middle-income group of India less likely to invest in the education of the boy child compared to education of the girls. For instance, among the agricultural poor households, the girl child is considered as a valuable resource for the household work and in the field; therefore, families feel educating the girl child may not bring any visible economic gains. Similarly, among the upper middle-class families, women are often seen as secondary wage earners hence, educating women will not have much impact on the economic situation of the family. These are some of the socio-cultural factors that deter women's access to primary education and schooling. Sonalde Desai, in her book on Gender Inequalities and Demographic Behaviour, argues that 'another disincentive for sending daughters to school is a concern for the protection of their virginity' and honour (cited in Nair 2010, p. 104). Fear of violence also contributes towards less participation of a girl child in education when the schools are at a distance.

A report by the International Programs Centre for the U.S. Department of Commerce (Velkoff, 1998) lists some of the significant barriers to women's education in India includes: inadequate sanitary facilities, absence of female teachers and gender bias in curriculum. This data also supported by a BBC news report by Kaushik Basu (2004) that emphasized the lack of infrastructure in school and its relationship with the low participation of a girl child in school education. He said, a study of 188 government-run primary schools in India found that 59% of the schools had no drinking water and 89% had no toilets. Another report in the Times of India (2005) cites a 2003/2004 data by National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration that reported only 3.5% of primary schools in Bihar and Chhattisgarh had toilets for girls. In Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, the rates were 12-16%. These studies show that the lack of toilets can be detrimental to girl's school

education and attendance (cited by Nair 2010). So far, we have discussed how culture and social norms significantly affect a girl child's access to school in various parts of India. Similarly, absence of basic infrastructural facilities in schools, poverty and attitude of the people negatively impact women's participation in primary and secondary education. Let us now move on to discuss some of the issues like gender biases in text-books and curriculum to analyze how structure and the content within our education system is gendered in nature. Let us look at some case studies to analyze the gendered nature of textbooks and content in schools.

This section briefly analyzed how education is socially constructed in the sense it operates in relation to its society and the social structure. Caste hierarchies, economic inequalities, cultural diversity and gender relations deeply affect the access to and participation of children in education in India. These social and other disparities (rural/urban) are greatly reflected in school's enrolment and completion pattern. For instance, girls belonging to SC & ST communities and other ethnic groups are educationally more vulnerable. The school system is inherently stratified and gendered in nature and as a result provides different educational experiences to children from under privileged and marginalized categories (National Curriculum Framework 2005). The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has emphasized the aspects of inequalities arising from gender, caste, class, religion, region, and so on to be able to offer dignity and value to each child under Universal Elementary Education. The document emphasizes, "Unequal gender relations not only perpetuate domination but also create anxieties and stunt the freedom of both boys and girls to develop their human capacities to their fullest. It is in the interest of *all* to liberate human beings from the existing inequalities of gender" (National Curriculum Framework, 2005, Chap I: p. 9).

Education is a means for re-socialization therefore many girls and boys feel a sense of freedom after they are being educated. Society imposes certain norms to control women and as a result the girl child is denied basic education. In this sense, education is perceived as a threat to the socialization and social control. This discussion is well emphasized in academic work through numerous examples. For instance, girls are sent to school and they also feel some form of freedom and agency. When they are about to reach the age of puberty, more restrictions and code of conduct are imposed upon them. As a result, more number of girls drop out from school between the age 11 plus and 14 plus. The education system and the school need to develop a gender sensitive perspective to be able to discuss indicators like access to education, enrollment pattern, dropout rates, curriculum and texts (Position Paper, NCERT, 2006). There are gender biases that exist in different forms in the curriculum, textbooks, and schools and in the entire education system. Let us look at some these biases expressed through poems, stories and research articles.

### **A Poem about gender constructs in text books**

*In my textbooks, I learned that only men  
are kings and soldiers.*

*Till I read a book in which famous,  
queens ruled and fought against enemies.*

*In my textbooks, I learned that only men  
are doctors.*

*When I went to a doctor I saw that  
she was a woman.*

*In my textbook, I learned that only men  
do farming in my country,*

*until, on a train journey I saw women  
working in the fields.*

*I have learned that I have a lot to learn by seeing.*

Pooja, Ramya, Anuj, Utkarsh (students of class VII, Baroda,  
Adapted from Position Paper National Focus Group, NCERT).

This small poem subtly explains the existing gender constructions which are represented in different text books of India. When you carry out a small study on gender audit of textbooks you may come across many such representations expressed through language, pictures and statements. The National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education, NCERT has deliberated upon these issues in details to make the schools in India more gender inclusive in nature. As a result, gender is adopted as a significant variable/component in the current curriculum of NCERT.

#### **Activity V**

Take one chapter from any text book to carry out a gender audit exercise. Identify pictures, language usages and representations in the text to be able to analyze the content from a gender perspective.

### **3.4.2 Gender Biases and Its Representations in Textbooks**

Gender biases in textbooks is a universal phenomenon and its pattern is also consistent across countries. Blumberg (2008) describes the pattern and degree of gender biases present in learning materials of both developed and developing countries. The author cites academic literature pertaining to gender biases in textbooks in countries like Syria and India. Alrabaa (1985) analyzed 28 textbooks from Syria from a gender perspective. These books were taught to students of 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> standards. The study shows that these books have centered around males in its content and language. For example, male-centric language such as ‘mankind’, ‘he’ is used for both male

and female. These books have represented a traditional pattern of gender division of roles for instance, male as the master of the home and women are often described in relation to housework. Functions within the family: household budgeting and controlling the children are seen to be managed by the men-folk of the family. Women in the textbooks are projected as victims, passive, silent actors who lack decision-making power even within the family. Blumberg also cited works of Ellis and Ahmed who have considered the issue of gender biases in textbooks in India. An article by Ellis (2002) concerning school textbooks in the state of West Bengal with reference to history and geography texts for years three and four of middle school (Parts 1 and 2, published in 1992 and 1996, respectively). This study found out that gender stereotypes are expressed through pictures and expression of content. Out of 52 pictures, 50 (96%) are of males in one of the textbooks. Women are shown in pictures in relation to the traditional gender roles. To cite, “no women are shown in the chapter about “Main Ways of Earning a Living”, nor in an illustration of people receiving land titles from a male government officer.” (Ellis, cited in Blumberg 2008, pp.348-349).

The work of Ahmed (2006) provides a national perspective on reducing gender discrimination in education with special emphasis on the policy formulation and implementation. Since 1982–83, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) “has been laying stress on removing gender disparities-specifically emphasizing the elimination of sex stereotypes and sex biases from textbooks” (cited in Blumberg 2008). He concludes that women are still shown and described in stereotyped roles and “lessons...are male-centric” in nature. A survey conducted by the Friends of Education shown that in six primary textbooks on mathematics, not a single woman is depicted in roles such as: a shopkeeper, a merchant, a seller, an executive or an engineer (Blumberg, pp. 348-349).

Let us take some more examples particularly in the context of women in science in which a lot of research has been done on the representation of women scientists in books. McArthur (1998) conducted a study of science books for junior readers which are generally read by the children aged between 7 to 13. The books were selected from the general science section, books containing biographical information and sketches and some books were on discrete biographies. It was observed that in those books containing scientific experiments the images were primarily portraying human arms and equipments which do not communicate the gender of any person and many books had the portrayal of children including both girls and boys. However, there were a few books such as *Explorabook: A Kids' Science Museum Book* by John Cassidy (1991) which showed the images of boys only and women were represented for using housekeeping appliances (p. 249). *How Science Works: 100 Ways Parents and Kids Can Share the Secrets of Science* (Haan 1991) is a classic example of a book in which girls and boys from different racial and ethnic backgrounds were portrayed in an inclusive manner, involved in scientific activities. Books on popular histories of science like *The Usborne Book of Scientists- from Archimedes to Einstein* which is a forty-seven-page book and in that the section on Women in Science only contains two pages from 44 to 45 pages. Women scientists like Marie Curie and Rosalind Franklin were briefly mentioned in page

numbers 37 and 39. These are a few examples which show that how our books often do not portray gender inclusive images in the discussion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

You may be aware of such forms of gender constructions in various textbooks in India as well. In certain books, gender constructions are represented in a paradoxical manner. For instance, an education activist from Pune observed that in one text book women are represented as equal yet in another chapter the same representation gets changed. Therefore, it is important to construct alternative knowledge framework to be able to make our schools and educational system gender inclusive in nature. For instance, the very curriculum needs to be redesigned within a Gendered Framework of Knowledge Construction. The position paper 3.2, NCERT shows how one can develop a gender sensitive curriculum by attaching gender inclusive meaning to the existing concepts. The paper writes, “The curriculum’s presentation of gender relations is frequently based upon popular assumptions or upon ideas perpetuated by dominant groups. And it normally posits the male as the normative epistemic subject” (NCERT, 2006: p. 30). It is therefore important to expand the concepts from a gender perspective. Certain assumptions like “men are physically stronger than women”, here the notion of ‘physical strength’ needs to include the stamina or physical strength of women as well. Other ideas like “men do not cry”, need to change and communicate that men or boys are equally vulnerable and emotional (NCERT, 2006: p. 30). Other concepts like visible and invisible work, paid and unpaid labour, gender division of labour in the household, sexual harassment, gender based violence need to be introduced and explained through curriculum and textbooks.

#### **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.
- 5) Discuss nature of gender biases in syllabus and textbooks.  
Use examples to answer this question.

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### **3.5 LET US SUM UP**

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This unit discusses in detail how gender biases get manifested in text books, curriculum and schools in general. School as a microcosm of society is analyzed in the context of social structure including caste, class, family and gender. The unit introduces basic concepts of caste, class, and family to analyze the inter-linkages between social structure and women’s subordination. It uses case studies, illustration and examples to show how gender relations have become an inherent part of the school and others socio-cultural systems. In brief, this unit tries to show gendered hierarchies that are present in the structure of the school and curriculum and text books.

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### 3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Family is defined as ‘a group of individuals related to one another by blood ties, marriage or adoption, which form an economic unit, the adult members of which are responsible for the upbringing of children’. In India, you can find complete elementary family, incomplete elementary family, joint-family and extended family. Elementary family is described as “ a group composed of a man, his wife and children’ (Shah, 1998: 15). Many scholars in India assume that members of an elementary family always live together in the same household either by themselves or they live as a part of the wider household groups such as: joint-family and extended family.
2. Caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy are the organizing principles to maintain the brahmanical social order in India. These two principles are closely interconnected to maintain caste purity in Hindu society and are instruments to subordinate or control upper caste women in India. This is an institution unique to Hindu society within which caste purity and purity of blood are maintained by exerting sexual control over women to patrilineal succession. Purity of women is central to brahmanical patriarchy since purity of caste is dependent upon it. Many anthropological studies have shown that one can find evidence of brahmanical patriarchy in different practices and rituals of upper-caste communities of India. Nur Yalman’s (1962) work shows that the honour and respectability of men is protected and preserved through their women. Therefore, women are always guarded and controlled by the men folk of the society. In many communities, the onset of puberty is celebrated with rituals which indicate the important relationship between female purity and purity of caste (Chakravarti 1993). You can find many such examples in both historical and contemporary India.
3. The practice of marrying inside a specific group such as: clan, caste or tribe as determined by customary practices, norms, religion, class or ethnicity. A classic example of endogamy within the Indian sub-continent is caste endogamy. The function of endogamy is to regulate marriage to be able to preserve cultural identity, of a group and maintain the caste boundaries in the society. Endogamy with its concepts of purity and pollution supports the notion of caste or community rigid boundaries. Infringement of these rules leads to caste violence, honour killings and violence against women.
4. Gender discrimination is practiced in homes with the socialization process. For instance, culture of son preference in many families, gender division of work within the home, construction of femininity and masculinities are manifestation of gender discriminated practices. Girls are encouraged to focus on housework and boys are encouraged to concentrate on studies.

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### 3.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. Explain women’s subordination within the institution of family. Use case studies to answer this question.
2. How does caste and gender interrelate with each other? Discuss.

3. Do you agree that school is gender neutral in nature? Justify your answer with examples.
4. What is class and how does it relate with gender relations? Explain.

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## **UNIT 4 GENDER RELATIONS IN SCHOOL**

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- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Objectives
- 4.3 Cultural Reproduction of Patriarchal Relations in Text Books and Class Room Processes and Student Teacher Interactions
- 4.4 Resolving Gender Conflicts in School
- 4.5 Case Studies Related to Reproduction of Gender Relations within School and Society
- 4.6 Sharing Results of Research Studies, Resources from Media and Films
- 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.8 Unit End Questions
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 4.10 References and Suggested Readings

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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 identity themselves based on their socio- cultural background in the typical classroom pattern. Male students might identity 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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