

Gender Stereotyping and Discrimination

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Abstract—We live in a world which is organized around the idea that sex role stereotypes are the rigid fixed ideas of what is appropriate to masculine and feminine behavior. They imply a belief that “masculine” and “feminine” are two distinct and mutually exclusive categories and that an individual’s behavior must be one or the other. These ideas pervade nearly in every culture. In a society, the notion of the two sexes (male and female) have been stereotyped and revolves round the pre-occupied notion that men and women have different bodies, different capabilities, different needs and desires which is depicted in terms of different tasks, privileges and role patterns that are traditionally assigned to them. Despite the fact that every society gives affirmation to only two types of gender and their prescribed roles. But what about those who confirm the worldwide acceptance under the terminology used as transgender. It is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy rigid, binary gender constructions and who express or present a breaking and blurring culturally prevalent stereotypically gender roles. Children are put under strong social pressure to conform to these sex-role stereotypes, regardless of their natural dispositions. During the process of socialization, boys and girls are reared differently. Boys are encouraged and reinforced to develop masculine characteristics that is in terms of aggression, dominance, independence, sense of adventure, high risk taking behavior, freedom of space, and achievement oriented outlook whereas, girls are encouraged to acquire feminine characteristics as such in terms of submissiveness, nurturance, dependence, and low achievement orientation. The purpose of this research paper is to throw light on how and why the social world is arranged around gender distinctions. The paper also highlights the various problems faced by transgender community in Kashmir especially Male to Female (MTF) transgender. The paper attempts to examine to what extent gender is imposed on individuals as a result of the material conditions and social structures in which they live. The present paper relies entirely on the secondary sources of data. Certain suggestions will be recommended in this paper on promoting equality as a fundamental human right and basic principle of social justice.

Keywords: Sex-role stereotype, masculine, feminine, transgender, socialization, secondary sources.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Chris got up and went to the bathroom. Leaving pyjamas on the floor and turning on the shower, Chris stepped into the water. It was not a hair-washing day, so after a quick rub with the soap it was time to get out and dry off. After toweling and applying hair putty to the new short haircut, Chris dabbed on some moisturizing lotion and went to get dressed. Nothing special was happening today so jeans and a T-shirt would be fine. The only choice really to be made was between basketball boots or sandals.”

The above paragraph when you read it imagines that you supposed either that Chris was a man, or a woman. Yet Chris is a shortened name which could be of both either Christopher or Christina use and there is no mention of any pronouns to specify sex. There is nothing in this portrayal that specifically identifies masculinity or femininity. You may protest that men do not use moisturizer, or that women are less likely to have short hair. But nevertheless, most people know of men who are into face creams and other such products and women who have short hair. We do not know how to think about people as neutral; we always think about them as men or women and interact with them accordingly. If you decided Chris was a woman, go back and read the paragraph again and imagine Chris is a man. Does that change how you read it or what you think about Chris? Do you think it ‘typical’ of a man just to leave his pyjamas on the floor; do you feel a little titillated by imagining a naked man in the shower? Try to continue describing Chris’s day without giving away whether Chris is a man or a woman.

Gender draws attention to the socially constructed facets of differences between women and men. But the term gender has extended to refer not only to individual identity and personality but also, at the symbolic level, to cultural ideals and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and, at the structural level, to the sexual division of labor in institutions and organizations. The gender order is a patterned system of ideological and material practices, performed by individuals in a society, through which power relations between women and men are made, and remade, as meaningful. It is through the gender order of a society that forms or codes of masculinities and femininities are created and recreated, and relations between them are systematized.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of the gender order was first developed by Jill Matthews (1984), in her study of the historical construction of femininity. According to Matthews, the idea of the gender order gives recognition to the reality that each well-known society makes a distinction between women and men, while permitting for

disparity in the nature of the divisions drawn. The approach of Matthews also recognizes the active part played by individuals in the creation and recreation of gender relations, thereby allows for the possibility of social change. As Matthews writes:

“The specific nature or content of any gender order is constantly in process, being formed and changed. It is fashioned by actions of individuals who are themselves formed in that interaction. It is created in the struggles and power strategies and contradictions and unintended consequences of a multitude of social groups and individuals and interests... The femininity and masculinity that are forged of these countervailing forces are never constant but always changing and, more often than not, internally inconsistent if not contradictory” (1984: 14 – 15)

There are many examples of studies that represent the gendered nature of the culture, institutions and organizations of modern Western societies. For Connell (1987; 1995), the relationship between the body and gender is a central issue for gender theory. He argues that gender is the outcome of recurrent interpretations of, and definitions placed upon, the productive and sexual capacities of the human body. Femininities and masculinities are the multiple effects of these ongoing interpretations and definitions, impacting upon bodies, influencing personalities and shaping culture and institutions. Butler’s conception of gender emphasizes that all identity categories ‘are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin’ (*Butler 1990:ix*). She argues further that ‘the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders’.

Gender stereotypes lie at the heart of many of our insights and the people that function within it. The group of peculiarities and characteristics that are thought to exclusively explain men and women are called descriptive stereotypes. These stereotypes are applied to individuals that one encounters, and become the basis for inferring their internal, stable features (Stangor, 1988). In contrast to descriptive stereotypes, prescriptive stereotypes refer to the set of qualities and traits that depict how men and women “should” be (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly, 1987; Heilman, 2001; Terborg, 1977). Views of people are therefore directed simultaneously by cognitive representations of their category-based traits and attributes and their normative beliefs about what is appropriate and inappropriate for them to do, given their gender categories.

There is a seemingly irreconcilable difference between perceptions of what it takes to succeed in many work settings and the attributes that women are presumed to have. This discrepancy has been incorporated into a lack of fit model of gender discrimination (Heilman, 1983; 1995). On one side of the model lie perceptions of

work. Sociologists refer to the dividing up of work into jobs thought of as ‘men’s jobs’ and those thought of as ‘women’s jobs’ as the sexual division of labor or (the more recent term) the gendered division of labor. Jobs become gender-typed by virtue of both the number of men and women who occupy them and the attributes deemed necessary for successful performance. Numerically speaking, one sex is more highly represented than the other in many organizational roles and occupational categories (Bielby & Baron, 1986). For example, there are more women than men who are nurses and more men than women who are engineers (Lips, 2003). Paid work is a gendered institution, in those women and men take on different types of paid work for example women tend to work part-time, men tend to work full-time, and in different categories of paid work for example women in teaching and men in construction work, and also cover different average earning from paid work (Crompton 1997).

On the other side of the lack of fit model lie the descriptive stereotypes of women. Sex is a chronically salient category in our society; the attributes associated with male and female shape the way we view employees’ skills and attributes. Men, more than women, are thought to harbor agentic traits, such as being decisive and task-oriented. Women, more so than men, are thought to harbor communal attributes, such as, nurturance and relationship-orientation (Heilman, Martell & Simon, 1988). At the same time, successful performance in the jobs is viewed as requiring gendered traits, skills, and attributes. A successful manager, for example, is described as having stereotypically masculine, or agentic, traits (Heilman, Block, Martell & Simon, 1989), while a successful nurse may be expected to exhibit more feminine, or communal, traits (e.g., Glick, Wilk & Perreault, 1995). It follows that male gender-typed jobs are those that are typically male-dominated and are perceived as requiring traditionally masculine characteristics, while female gender-typed ones are primarily staffed by women and thought to require feminine attributes (Cejka & Eagly, 1999).

Even then, there are problems for women that are driven by gender stereotypes. In this case, it is prescriptive stereotypes of women that are the driving force. Not only are there stereotypes about what women are like, but also about how they should behave (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2001). The difficulties for women of trying to combine paid work with family responsibilities have been extensively documented (Hochschild, 2003). Women continue to do most of the work at home. Ann Oakley’s (1974) research argued that both men and women still saw housework as women’s work. More recent studies (Crompton, 2005; Sullivan, 2000) suggest that women still do around twice as much as housework as men. These prescriptive stereotypes function as norms for acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Their content overlaps with that of descriptive gender

stereotypes: that is, people not only believe that women are more communal than men (i.e., the descriptive stereotype), but that they should behave in nurturing, sympathetic ways, and show high concern for others. There are also prescriptions for what women should not do—namely, to act in an agentic, or stereotypically male, manner. Prescriptive stereotypes therefore prohibit women from being tough, aggressive and dominant. The violation of these prescriptions leads to disapproval, often taking the form of social penalties. The violation of any social norm, women's transgression of prescriptive norms by succeeding at male gender-typed work inspires negative reactions, largely in the form of social disapproval. A recent study by Heilman and colleagues demonstrated that successful men and women who did not violate prescriptive stereotypes were rated as significantly more interpersonally pleasant (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs & Tamkins, 2004). In simple terms, something is 'gendered' when its personality is either masculine or feminine, or when it displays patterns of dissimilarity by gender.

"It is used to be thought that a woman is a woman because of her ovaries alone. There are many individuals with ovaries who are not women in the strict sense of the word and many with testes who are really feminine in many other respects". (Bell cited in Oudshoorn, 1994:37)

When a newborn is delivered, people like to feel certain about it whether a newborn child is a boy or a girl. Until that bit of information it is tricky to think about a baby as a person at all and how to treat 'it'. How people think about a new human being straight away depends on the gender of the baby. Having either a penis or a vagina is usually seen as the fundamental difference. There are bodies that cannot be definitely classified as either 'male' or 'female' and these intersex people throw light on the social aspects of sexual classifications (Fausto-Sterling, 2002a; 2002b; Hird, 2004; Kessler and McKenna, 1978). Any perceived differences in ways of using minds and bodies are heavily shaped by the way people live. Transgender is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy rigid, binary gender constructions and who express or present a breaking and blurring culturally prevalent stereotypically gender roles (UNDP, 2010). They do not confirm to conventional notions of male or female gender but combine or move between the two (Khan et al. 2009). A transgender woman is a male to female transgender. Anyone with this identity faces immense problems such as barriers to health care access, insufficient social support, gender discrimination and are highly vulnerable to a wide array of mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation as well as HIV/AIDS and substance abuse (Joanne. et al; 2004).

Transgender people are called '*laanch*' in Kashmir which in itself is stigmatization and a ground of discrimination. The non-conformity, to their prescribed gender roles makes them vulnerable and often leads to verbal and corporeal abuse at the hands of their parents, siblings and other family members with the lack of acceptance by the mainstream society. The intimidating environment even prevails at schools and other educational institutions which almost certainly force them to leave studies and ultimately diminishes the opportunities for white collar jobs (Bund 2013). They encounter profuse physical and sexual harassment at home and schools extending to all spheres of life. The sexual abuses render them vulnerable to transmission of HIV. They often feel confused about their gender alignment. Many of them play a dual role. They wear female clothes while visiting peers. However, they wear male clothes and adopt male style or gestures while living with their family or visiting relatives. Their feminine side is often denied, ignored and largely ridiculed. They are always forced to behave and act like a man. They are profusely beaten, subjected to various forms of cruelty to discipline them, their mobility is restricted and behavior highly regulated. In such situations they cannot avoid the predicament of their identity crisis. When they accept themselves the way they are then the society doesn't accept them at all. They experience and receive discrimination and double-standards compared to their 'normal' siblings in terms of food, clothing, affection, education, recreation, festivities, occasions, and other opportunities. Deprivations, alienations, and hostilities encountered by transgender since early childhood is so intense and extreme that at some point finding no other social space they exclude themselves (Bund, 2016). Most MTF were rejected by their families of origin and created families of choice (Gagne & Tewksbury 1998). Many of them are involved in *manzimyaras* (match making), and *natchun te gaewun* (performing in marriage ceremonies) which are their traditional occupations in Kashmir that are even diminishing as *laanch nagmeh* (performance by TG's on marriage) is being replaced by DJ'S (Disco Jockey) and now-a-days who asks for match makers as love marriage is becoming a trend. They are unable to exercise power or to establish citizenship rights as well. Access to social, cultural, educational and legal services is extremely restricted from anyone with this identity in Kashmir.

Old age is most probably the worst phase in the life of a transgender. This is most problematic for them as they are either disowned or snatched ties with their families. It is not possible for an old person from the community to work which leads to dependency. They cannot return to their families instead choose to struggle against illness, poverty, poor health, loneliness and other associated problems. The death even doesn't bring respite in the cycle Death in most of the cases brings another problem as the dead body of a transgender is not being buried

normally. The critical multiple societal and religious beliefs act as a barrier in conducting normal funeral of a transgender person. Death starts another grave-episode of disgrace for the dead bodies. The dead are often refused to bury in the graveyards as transgender don't have the ownership of graveyards, a precarious issue in Kashmir (Bund, 2016).

“I am the one who is living the absolute torment of occupying a body that never coordinated with who I am inside. It is never easy to accept what I am? Am I a man? A woman or what? But I am sure that I am a human being, I see, feel and react. I have emotions. (If God created only men and women then who created us? If we are mistakes then undoubtedly we are God's mistakes. For my existence who is to blame, potter or the pot creator or the creation?). We acknowledge that we are different and don't fit in the 'hetero-normative' roles but that surely doesn't make us less than a human. We are literally forced to beg. In the context of absolute misery many of us are being forced to sell sex. We never maltreat anyone then why are we treated this way?”

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study of “Gender Stereotyping and Discrimination” has been undertaken with the following:-

- To throw light on how and why the social world is arranged around gender distinctions.
- To highlight the various problems faced by transgender community in Kashmir especially Male to Female (MTF) transgender.
- To examine to what extent gender is imposed on individuals.
- To recommend certain suggestions on promoting equality as a fundamental human right and basic principle of social justice.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present study is exploratory in nature as such the study relies on the secondary data related to the origin, dimensions, features, and other explorative factors related to gender stereotyping and discrimination. This work mainly focused on review and analysis of the different aspects associated with Gender Stereotyping issues. An attempt has been made to highlight various research studies conducted on the topic and in related fields as well. Some of the secondary sources of data including books, journals, magazines, were used for conducting literature review.

5. DISCUSSION, RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Baby boys and girls are turned into adult men and women by the processes of socialization in child-rearing, education, youth culture, employment practices, and family ideology. There are diverse prospects about what is 'normal' for girls and what is 'normal' for boys. In explaining this, the messages about how to be a boy or how to be a girl are communicated through social institutions. Parents, especially mothers, condition their children's behavior by taking care of girls and boys in accordance with social expectations. A lot of stress is put on the parents' responsibility in transmitting gender to their offspring. The assumption is that mothers are accountable for teaching children social expectations about gendered behavior, which children are supposed to passively internalize. It may be that parents have most influence, but they are far from the only source from which children will get ideas about gender appropriate behavior. So if Grandpa is telling a child that girls do not play rugby, but her older cousin is in women's rugby team and often throws rugby balls with her, that girl will have to interpret these different ideas about gender and choose a path through and around them. Gender segregation also occurs when both women and men are located separately from one another, while otherwise participating in a broadly same set of activities. There are educational provision for boys and girls, rather than being educated together in the same institutional location, they are instead intentionally segregated on the grounds of gender and are educated separately, in 'single-sex' schools, colleges or universities. Gender segregation in education can also be said to occur in the way that boys and girls learn the differences of the socially constructed expectations. At the structural level, the unequal division of labor in the household between women and men, who both have full-time jobs outside, and of discrimination in employment, where gender rather than individual skills and qualifications plays a large part in determining types of jobs and chances of promotion. The process of the ideology of gender that makes appeal to the essential differences and builds up a knowledge of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, which has already been communicated through the process of education and gender socialization within the family, does this most effectively. Their representation is, furthermore, replayed by various means in the public domain through dress codes and style patterns.

“Sexual politics obtains consent through the ‘socialization’ of sexes to basic patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female. The first item, temperament, involves the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category (‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’), based on the needs and values of the dominant group

and dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates: aggression, intelligence, force, and efficacy in the male: passivity, ignorance, docility, 'virtue' and ineffectuality in the female. This is complemented by a second factor, sex role, which decrees a consonant and highly elaborate code of conduct, gesture and attitude for each sex". (Millett 1977: 26)

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are the necessary recommendations on promoting equality as a fundamental human right and basic principle of social justice with respect to the issue of gender stereotyping and discrimination:

- Allocation of adequate resources for programmes targeting the elimination of gender stereotypes, for example through advocacy and awareness – raising campaigns, educational curriculum development and scientific outlook.
- The progress and development of society are associated with rise in consciousness and rationality, throughout the process of socialization and at workplace dealings perpetuation of gender roles must be stopped in order to attain equality and end discrimination. Also sensitize the people with regard to the identity of transgender.
- Promotion of shared domestic responsibilities between women and men, for example on parenting, care giving etc.
- Formulation of Transgender inclusive and transgender specific schemes to address the basic needs of this community, development of social and legal initiatives (e.g., public education and legal protection) in reducing the stigma and discrimination against them, formal and non-formal educational programmes, vocational and training programmes for livelihood opportunities and livelihood avenues for them, HIV intervention Programmes should take into its ambit the mental health counseling, crisis in relation to suicidal ideation, harassment, support following physical and sexual violence, drug abuse etc, easy access to basic civil rights such as access to health and public services, right to vote, right to contest elections, access to quality education (free from discrimination and harassment), inheritance rights and marriage and adoption should be provisioned for them. Govt. should introduce reservations in educational institutions and govt. jobs for such people.
- State should immediately conduct survey to determine the exact number of transgender community in Kashmir. There should be Transgender Welfare Board in J & K.

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