

Gender Sensitivity Key Terms

Gender Equality	Social Construction
Gender Equity	Gender Mainstreaming
Gender Discrimination	Femininity
Socialization	Patriarchy
Gender Inequality	Gender Neutral
Gender Gap	Gender Blindness
Gender Relations	Gender Awareness
Gender Roles	Gender Sensitiveness
Gender Stereotype	Gender Empowerment
Gender Identity	Gender Expression
Transgender	Gender Identity

Gender Equality

Equal treatment of every gender in laws and policies, and equal access to resources and services within families, communities and the society at large.

Gender Equity

Fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between all the genders. This concept recognizes that different genders have different needs and power, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes.

Gender Discrimination

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms, which prevents a person from enjoying full human rights. In our society, discrimination is a common feature in the lives of women and transgender. From cradle to grave, they are discriminated against in various ways.

Socialization

The term is used to stand for the means or process by which all genders are trained to fit in what a given society (village, community, school, peer group, family) values as being male, female and transgender. These include proverbs, storytelling, myths, books (novels) and rewarding systems. For instance, a girl, who is given a mirror as a gift to congratulate her upon her academic excellence, is indirectly reminded of beauty as something to look at. When a boy is given mathematical set, he is indirectly guided to think of using this etc. Thus, while the girl's attention is distracted to look at beauty, the boy's attention is more focused on books.

Gender inequality

Unfair and imbalanced outcomes for different genders arise in our schools, families, religions, villages because of unfair and imbalanced amounts of power, resources and opportunities placed before different genders. Gender gap, gender discrimination and gender oppression are components of gender inequality in a school, village and community at large.

Gender Gap

This refers to quantifiable signs of gender inequality in a society, school or family. This can be done by means of counting/computing to determine which gender is disadvantaged against the other in a system of oppression.

Gender Relations

Relationships between different genders acquired through the process of socialization in terms of power sharing, decision-making, and division of labour within the household and in society at large.

Gender Roles

They are activities and duties seen suitable for every gender in a given society: family, culture and religion. Different genders learn their assumed roles and duties through their day-to-day interaction with their parents, educators, peers and other people around them. Women's duties and involvement in household chores are not considered worth any payment. In some companies also women employees are paid less in comparison to their male counterparts. This has made women and girls seem less important to society, whereas their work supports almost all human life. Transgender are ostracized by society and live in poverty on the fringes of society. These are the signs of gender inequality that are sought to be changed through raising gender awareness.

Gender stereotype

As children grow up, they constantly absorb messages that the society throws at them through families, schools, media, friends etc. and try to mould themselves in those roles. This process of socialization begins at a very early age. As children, boys get toys like trucks, guns and super heroes, while the girls are given dolls and cooking sets. This conditioning manipulates young minds into believing that they must act within their “given place” in the society. The constant portrayal, such as in the media, conversation, jokes or books, of women and men occupying social roles according to a traditional gender role or division of labour for example: women cannot make good engineers. In a number of children’s textbooks, for example, women are seen as cleaners, caregivers and nurses, and men are seen as drivers, doctors and leaders while transgender are seen as incapable of assuming reputable professional positions. Such images reinforce gender roles, which are socially constructed and in a way make girls and transgender feel that they cannot aspire for the top professional positions. Girls and transgender who do not conform to stereotypical expectations can experience criticism, ostracism and even violence. This also puts unwarranted pressure on boys who love to read, dislike fighting, sports or mechanics. Similarly, it hurts girls and transgender who struggle with body image, and who wish to excel in sports. Gender equality benefits both boys and girls. Working towards gender equality will enable them to be themselves, instead of being bound by rigid gender roles.

Social Construction

A process, through which a given community assigns, institutionalizes and legitimizes gender roles. Different social institutions (including schools) perpetrate stereotypical gender divisions. In the classroom, boys are asked to move ‘heavy’ tables and chairs, while girls are asked to do the cleaning. Boys are encouraged to participate in different sports, while not many schools have such activities for girls. Through sports, boys not only develop their muscle power, but also learn skills like negotiation, decision making and team work, which girls are deprived of. The truth is, nobody is born with skills, they are learnt and acquired over a period of time.

Gender Mainstreaming

This means consistent integration of gender concerns into the development and implementation of policies, plans, programmes and projects at all levels, including national, community, school and classroom. When given equal opportunities, every gender has shown their potential and joined professions/fields earlier considered suitable only for boys and contributed to the overall development of the society and nation. It is important that both should be given equal opportunities to learn and develop their potential and have options to choose their future path, based on their interests and skill sets, and not only their gender. Denial of equal opportunities to girls is not only gender discrimination, but also violation of their human rights.

Femininity

Supposed distinctive ways of acting and feeling of women. It comprises of characteristics claimed by society to constitute “femaleness” as opposed to “maleness”. By acting to fit many of these characteristics, women and girls often limit their potential, especially in areas such as education.

Patriarchy

An ideology and social system, that propagates male supremacy or male power and superiority over women, as natural and God given. The operating argument is that, men are biologically, intellectually and emotionally superior to women. On the other hand, women are considered to be weak and dependent on men for protection, guidance, upkeep and general survival. This ideology is institutionalized through active formal and informal systems, backed by ideas, beliefs, practices, culture and sometimes force. A patriarchal ideology is the key factor in the structural gender inequality in most of our societies.

The word “patriarch” literally means the rule of the father or the patriarch and was originally used to describe a specific type of male dominated family. It is used to define male domination in our society, to the power relationships by which men dominate women and to characterize the system where women are kept in a subordinate position in various ways.

Gender neutral

The claim some people make when they want to represent themselves as not practicing gender-based discrimination. What it often masks, is the failure to take gender issues into consideration, and this can translate into discrimination against girls and transgender, as it fails to pay attention to the distinct and special needs of girls and boys.

Gender Blindness

The failure to recognize the differences between males, females and transgender and therefore leading to failure to provide for the differences.

Gender Awareness

Implies the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not apparent on the surface. Gender Awareness opens up the widest possible range of life options for every gender and builds their capacities to be more wholesome and humane.

Gender Sensitiveness

The ability to recognize gender issues. It is the way forward to gender awareness and a move towards gender responsiveness, resulting in designing of appropriate mechanisms for addressing or correcting inequalities between different genders, in schools, company or college. For example, a school can decide to give extra lessons in Physics and Mathematics so as to improve girls' performance. Schools can initiate programmes to sensitize students about transgender community.

(Video link St John's Social Justice initiative for the transgender community)

Gender Sensitivity is not about comparing different genders. On the contrary, any education that is gender sensitive benefits members of every gender. It helps them determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalizations.

Gender Empowerment

Empowerment comes from the word 'power'. It is used in most developmental initiatives to stand for the need for those who are oppressed and powerless to challenge oppressive structures. In gender terms, it specifically means girls' and women's and transgender's ability to have access and control in all societal aspects—they can be social, economic and political.

Gender Identity

It is defined as personal conception of oneself as male, female or transgender. For example, if a person considers himself as a male and is mostly comfortable referring to his personal gender in masculine terms, then his identity is male. People from transgender community feel that the sex they were assigned at birth does not match their gender identity or the gender that they are inside. This causes gender dysphoria causing them to experience unhappiness and anxiety.

Gender Expression

It is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour, outward appearance, body language and voice. Many transgender hide their gender expression in public for the fear of negative reactions, violence or discrimination.

Transgender

"A transgender person" means a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having such socio-cultural identities as *kinner*, *hijra*, *aravani* and *jogta*

Gender and other Key Terms – (Take away)

What is Gender? Is it same as Sex?

Gender and Sex are **NOT** the same thing. According to World Health Organization (WHO):

- Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men women and transgender.
- Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for different genders.

Thus, while sex is biological and universal, gender is a social construct and varies from one society to another. To put it in another way, male and female are sex categories, while '*masculine*' and '*feminine*' are gender categories.

Some examples of sex characteristics:

- Women follow growth according to their secondary sexual characteristics.
- Men develop a hoarser voice, hair on their face and a muscular frame.
- Women can give birth to babies, while men cannot.

Some examples of gender characteristics:

- Women are expected to take care of family or domestic duties and remain close to home.
- All men are expected to work and earn money for the family.
- Boys are better in mathematics than girls.
- Boys never cry. Girls are very emotional.
- Women usually do more housework than men.
- Transgender are expected to act or behave in a specific manner (ask for *badhai*).
- Transgender cannot aspire to take top professional positions.

Defining Gender

- Gender describes social roles and relations between different genders in society
- Gender changes over time and cultures
- Gender refers to all aspects of life (economic, political, social)
- Gender assigns behaviors and actions that are expected from men and women (cultural representations)
- Gender assigns women and men position within the family, the community, the nation
- Gender refers to how power is used and shared
- Gender is a cross disciplinary category: interaction with other factors (age, disability, ethnicity, religion, social background...)

Decoding Basic Gender Specific Terminology

In order to understand the concept of gender, it is required to first understand the basic terms associated with it. Some of these terms are discussed as follows:

1. Gender Equality

Equal treatment of all the genders in laws and policies, and equal access to resources and services within families, communities and the society at large.

2. Gender Equity

Fairness and justice, in distribution of benefits and responsibilities among different genders. This concept recognizes that all genders have different needs and powers, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes.

3. Gender Discrimination

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms, which prevents a person from enjoying full human rights.

In our society, discrimination is a common feature in the lives of girls/women and transgender. From cradle to grave, they are discriminated against in various ways. Some of them are:

- Abortion of female foetus through sex determination
- Denial of sufficient and /or nutritious food
- Denial of education/proper opportunity for education
- Denial /delay in accessing healthcare when necessary
- Early marriage
- Eve teasing, sexual assault and harassment
- Dowry
- Divorce and destitution for trivial reasons

4. Socialization

The term is used to stand for the means or process by which all the genders are trained to fit in what a given society (village, community, school, peer group, family) values as being male, female or transgender. These include proverbs, storytelling, myths, books (novels) and rewarding systems. For instance, a girl, who is given a mirror as a gift to congratulate her upon her academic excellence, is indirectly reminded of beauty as something to look at. When a boy is given mathematical set, he is indirectly guided to think of using this etc. Thus, while the girl's attention is distracted to look at beauty, the boy's attention is more focused on books.

5. Gender inequality

Unfair and imbalanced outcomes arise in our schools, families, religions, villages, towns because of unfair and imbalanced amounts of power, resources and opportunities have been placed before different genders. Gender gap, gender discrimination and gender oppression are components of gender inequality in a school and community at large.

6. Gender Gap

This refers to quantifiable signs of gender inequality in a society, school or family. This can be done by means of counting/computing to determine which gender is disadvantaged against the other in a system of operation.

7. Gender Relations

Relationships between different genders acquired through the process of socialization in terms of power sharing, decision-making, and division of labour within the household and in the society at large.

8. Gender Roles

They are activities and duties seen suitable for different genders in given society: family, culture and religion. Different genders learn their assumed roles and duties through their day-to-day interaction with their parents, educators, peers and other people around them. Women's duties and involvement in household chores are not considered worth any payment. In some companies also women employees are paid less in comparison to their male counterparts and transgender are not even employed. This has made women and girls and transgender seem less important to society, whereas their work supports almost all human life. This is one of the signs of gender inequality that is sought to be changed through raising gender awareness.

9. Gender stereotype

As children grow up, they constantly absorb messages that the society throws at them through schools, media, friends and family etc. and try to mould themselves in those roles. This process of socialization begins at a very early age. As children, boys get toys like trucks, guns and super heroes, while the girls are given dolls and cooking sets. This conditioning manipulates young minds into believing that they must act within their "given place" in the society. The constant portrayal, such as in the media, conversation, jokes or books, of women and men occupying social roles according to a traditional gender role or division of labour for example: women cannot make good drivers. In a number of children's textbooks, for example, women are seen as cleaners, caregivers and nurses, and men are seen as drivers, doctors and leaders and transgender are seen as incapable of assuming reputable professional positions. Such images reinforce gender roles, which are socially constructed and in a way make girls and transgender feel that they cannot aspire for the top professional positions. Gender that does not conform to stereotypical expectations can experience criticism, ostracism and even violence. This also puts unwarranted pressure on boys who love to read, dislike fighting, sports or mechanics. Similarly, it hurts girls and transgender who struggle with body image, and who wish to excel in sports. Gender equality benefits all the genders. Working towards gender equality will help all genders to be themselves, and celebrate the differences rather than being bound by rigid roles assigned by the society.

10. Social Construction

A process, through which a given community assigns, institutionalises and legitimizes gender roles. Different social institutions (including schools) perpetrate stereotypical gender division. In the classroom, boys are asked to move 'heavy' tables and chairs, while girls are asked to do the cleaning. Boys are encouraged to participate in different sports, while not many schools have such activities for girls. Through sports, boys not only develop their muscle power, but also learn skills like negotiation, decision making and team work, which girls are deprived of. The truth is, nobody is born with skills, and they are learnt and acquired over a period of time.

11. Gender Mainstreaming

This means consistent integration of gender concerns into the development and implementation of policies, plans, programmes and projects at all levels, including school and classroom. When given equal opportunities, girls and transgender have shown their potential and joined professions/fields earlier considered suitable only for boys. It is important that all the genders should be given equal opportunities to learn and develop their potential and have options to choose their future path, based on their interests and skill sets, and not only their gender. Denial of equal opportunities to any gender is not only discrimination, but also violation of their human rights. Have you seen girls and transgender being given equal opportunities for development and growth? Reflect on the areas in which you feel that bias exists in society.

12. Femininity

Femininity is a set of attributes, behaviours, and roles generally associated with women and girls. It comprises of characteristics claimed by society to constitute “femaleness” as opposed to “maleness”. By acting to fit many of these characteristics, women and girls often limit their potential, especially in areas such as education.

13. Patriarchy

The word “*patriarch*” literally means the rule of the father or the patriarch and was originally used to describe a specific type of male dominated family. It is used to define male domination in our society, to the power relationships by which men dominate women and to characterize the system where women are kept in a subordinate position in various ways. A patriarchal ideology is the key factor in the structural gender inequality in most of our societies.

The operating argument is that, men are biologically, intellectually and emotionally superior to women and transgender. On the other hand, women and transgender are considered to be weak and dependent on men for protection, guidance, upkeep and general survival. This ideology is institutionalized through active formal and informal systems, backed by ideas, beliefs, practices, culture and sometimes force.

14. Gender neutral

The claim some people make when they want to represent themselves as not practicing gender –based discrimination. What it often masks, is the failure to take gender issues into consideration, and this can translate into discrimination against girls and transgender, as it fails to pay attention to the distinct and special needs of different gender.

15. Gender Blindness

The failure to recognize the differences between genders and failure to provide for the differences is gender blindness.

16. Gender Awareness

It implies the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not apparent on the surface. Gender Awareness opens up the widest possible range of life options for all their genders, and builds their capacities to be more wholesome and humane.

17. Gender Sensitiveness

It is the ability to recognize gender issues. It is the way forward to gender awareness and a move towards gender responsiveness, resulting in designing of appropriate mechanisms for addressing or correcting inequalities among different genders, in schools, company or college. For example, a school can decide to give extra lessons in Physics and Mathematics so as to improve girls' performance. Schools can initiate programmes to sensitize students about transgender community.

Gender Sensitivity is not about comparing students from different genders with each other. On the contrary, any education that is gender sensitive benefits members of all the genders/sexes. It helps to determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalizations.

18. Gender Empowerment

Empowerment comes from the word 'power'. It is used in most developmental initiatives to stand for the need for those who are oppressed and powerless to challenge oppressive structures. In gender terms, it specifically means an ability of women and transgender ability to have access and control in all societal aspects – they can be social, economic and political.

19. Gender Identity

It is defined as personal conception of oneself of oneself as male, female or transgender. For example, if a person considers himself a male and is most comfortable referring to his gender in masculine terms, then his identity is male. People from transgender community feel that the sex they were assigned at birth does not match their gender identity, or the gender they feel they are inside. This causes gender dysphoria causing them to experience unhappiness and anxiety.

20. Gender Expression

It is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour, outward appearance, body language and voice. Many transgender hide their gender expression in public for fear of negative reactions, violence or discrimination.

21. Unconscious biases

Social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness

22. Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

23. Transgender

"A transgender person" means a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having such socio-cultural identities as *kinner*, *hijra*, *aravani* and *jogta*