in collaboration with

Faculty Development Programme
in
Gender Sensitization

Gender & Masculinity:
deconstructing & changing attitudes

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It is important to include men in the process of gendered empowerment. For this it is imperative to understand masculinity/masculinities and their effects on men, women and sexual minorities to bring about gendered societal attitude and expectations in Society and identify action agenda to move in the direction of gender equality.

Masculinity is a personality trait socially constructed by patriarchal value system internalised through gendered socialisation process in the family, kinship network, community, religion, media, education, and the state. These agents collectively create gender stereotypes and unrealistic expectations for men. As a result, dominant men are found to be aggressive, controlling, and emotionless.

Masculinity differs from one particular society to another. It varies in different geographical location and in different times.

Since all men are not alike in terms of their class, caste, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, masculinity can not be a monolithic construct, therefore it has to be referred to as 'masculinities'.

Patriarchal masculinities is a term that can be used to describe those ideas about and practices of masculinity that emphasize the superiority of masculinity over femininity and the authority of men over women so that gender inequality can be perpetuated. **Eg.** *Karyeshu mantri, karneshu dasi……….*

Hegemonic masculinity is the form embodying male domination and exercising power and authority over women (and other men as well as transgender persons), with all the consequences of dehumanisation, oppression, violence against the less powerful and privileges for the dominant men. **E.g. War crimes**

Fragile masculinity refers to anxiety felt by men who believe they are falling short of cultural standards of manhood. **Eg. Men in the lower rung of hierarchy working under women boss**

Subordinate masculinity refers to acting in or being in opposition to hegemonic masculinity, such as being effeminate or overly emotional. **Eg. Victims of ragging, survivors of homosexual rape**

Complicit masculinity refers to a man who admires or does not challenge hegemonic masculinity, even if he doesn't fit within the category. **Eg. Men deriving vicarious pleasure when someone is violated, abused**

Marginalized masculinity refers to men in precarious positions in different countries and social-economic-cultural contexts perceive and experience their masculinities. **Eg. Working class men**

Femininities and masculinities are plural.

There are many forms of femininity and many forms of masculinity. What gets defined as feminine or masculine differs by region, religion, class, national culture, and other social factors.
Femininities and masculinities are valued differently in different cultures.

An individual engages in many forms of femininity and masculinity, which she, he, she/her and his/him adopts (consciously or unconsciously) depending on context, the expectations of others, the life stage, and location. A man can engage in what are often stereotyped as "feminine" activities, such as caring for a sick parent. Women headed households are considered to be in a "masculine" activities.

Femininities and masculinities are learned. Messages about "feminine" and "masculine" behaviors are embedded in advertising, media, news, educational materials, and so forth. These messages are present in a range of environments, from the home to the workplace to public spaces.

Boys and men learn appropriate gender roles and behaviours that are in agreement with masculine expectations of society in which they live. Boys from early childhood get messages about what it means to be a 'boy'. E.g. Gendering in toys/games/dress codes. Car for boy and doll for girl, outdoor games for a boy and indoor game for a girl. No housework for boy while compulsory housework for girl. Different dress codes for boys and girls, men and women. Persecution/victimisation/discrimination against cross dressers

Gender issues are not issues related to women only. Femininity does not exist in isolation from masculinity. Societal hierarchy positions women in subordination of men.

Patriarchal culture also victimises boys and men due to stereotyping them as 'protectors', 'providers' to whole family. E.g. Unemployed men committing suicide

Men are also subjected to hierarchical power relations. e.g. Non-aggressive and gentle boys are exploited by bullies, sexually exploited by physically stronger and macho men/boys. Ragging in schools, colleges, communities

Understanding Masculinity

Masculinity can not be understood without looking at the opposite construct Femininity

Masculine	Feminine
Rational	Emotional
Strong	Weak
Smart	Beautiful
Indifferent/Rough	Caring
Aggressive	Nurturing
Brave	Coy
Violent	Compassionate
Domineering	Subdued
Independent	Dependent

Nature and nurture, hierarchy and power dynamics combined together play important role in social construction of masculinities and femininities. But it is not physiology or play of hormones. We do find men who are gentle, nurturing, respectful of fellow human being.

Why an abusive husband is timid in front of his boss?

When we translate the masculine and feminine traits in human relationships in our society, we experience that men are expected to be controlling, aggressive, intolerant and hot-tempered and women are expected to be submissive, silent, meek, patient and docile. Thus 'strong' and 'superior' men rule, and 'weak' and 'inferior' men, women, children and minorities are ruled.
If this stereotype is challenged, what happens?
If boy cries? If girl is articulate and assertive?
What happens to men, women, children of 'defeated' country in a war?

From early childhood boys are encouraged by families to hit back and retaliate, when in fight they are taught to 'give it back' and not to be 'Gandhiji'. *Majboori ka naam Gandhiji; Jo jeeta vahi Sikandar, jo pakada gaya vo bandar,*

- Inculcation of mercenary instinct- Male supremacy-commanding position
- Issues concerning Age, religion, caste, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality,
- Erosion of male supremacy, power and privileges in education and employment-
- Psychological and social problems leading to frustration and anger
- Increase in violence against women
- Drug Abuse, Alcoholism, Micro aggression
- Patriarchal shackles that constrict their wellbeing
- Women in private and public space also adopt masculine ways of working- for e.g., Mother-in-law, women boss, women leaders, women politicians who maculinize the systems of power- Emergency Rule In India (1975-77)

Questioning hierarchical power relations and systems in our society
Contesting ideals, standards and roles. E.g. Cooking by men, women in sports
Men as home makers, women at workplace. Utopia: Sultana's Dream by Rukaiya Sakhawat Hossain, Open letter by Rukhmabai Save, 1887

"I am one of those unfortunate Hindu women whose hard lot it is to suffer the unnamable miseries entailed by the custom of early marriage. This wicked practice has destroyed the happiness of my life, It comes between me and the thing which I prize above all others-study and mental cultivation. Without the least fault of mine I am doomed to seclusion; every aspiration of mine to rise above my ignorant sisters is looked down upon with suspicion and is interpreted in the most uncharitable manner."

Changing Societal scripts for masculinity and femininity,
we can move towards more just and gender sensitive society
Profile of Gandhiji- how he shed his patriarchal bias?
Dandi March
Correspondence between Gandhiji & Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

Efforts at Promoting Gender Equality

Social interactions, communication media, state policies play important role in promoting gender equality that promotes relationship of care and mutual respect, equality of opportunities, non-violent behaviour and rejects sexism, homophobia, and transphobia.

Policy and practice should adopt an intersectional framework to understand the complexities of all genders-men/boys, women/girls and transgender persons' lives, recognising that some men have more power than others as a result of different social inequalities based on caste, class, race, ethnicity, religion, ablism and gender; and to engage with them in relatable and relevant ways.

Women Empowerment Policy, 2001

Legislative Reforms in India from 1976 to 2022

"In the prevailing customs ...a woman [cannot] deny to live with [her husband] even on reasonable grounds.

He may ill-treat her, beat her, drive her away a thousand times, keep her without food, but she must submit to her lot and stay with him (if he keeps her) till she dies a natural death or is killed by him, her sole lord and master...

(We women have become) timid, languid, melancholy, sickly, devoid of cheerfulness, and therefore incapable of communicating to others ...we have naturally come to look down upon ourselves...[but] I... wished to do something, if in my power, to ameliorate our present suffering."

- From Rukhmabai's Letters in the Times of India, 1887. Rukhmabai was married as a child and refused to live with her husband or consummate her marriage, even though a court ordered her to.

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Sultana's Dream
begum rokheya sakhawat hossain

illustrated by durga bai

Kavya Phule
Savitri Jotirao Phule

SORRY
THANK YOU
TATA
BYE BYE

Thank you