



T.Y.B.A.(SOCIOLOGY)
SEMESTER - V

PAPER - VI
SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER

SUBJECT CODE : 97086

Prof. Suhas Pednekar

Vice Chancellor

University of Mumbai, Mumbai.

Prof. Ravindra D. Kulkarni

Pro Vice-Chancellor,

University of Mumbai.

Prof. Prakash Mahanwar

Director

IDOL, University of Mumbai.

Programe Co-ordinator : Mr. Anil Bankar

Associate Professor,
IDOL, University of Mumbai.

Course Co-ordinator : Ms. Pankti Surve

Assistant Professor,
IDOL, University of Mumbai.

Editor : Dr. Gazala Bhoje

Associate Professor & Head, Dept of Sociology,
G.M Momin Women's College

Course Writers : Dr. Mariyah Gaur Ghori

Associate Professor & Head,
Rizvi College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Mumbai.

: Dr. Rajula Nanji Shah

Associate Professor,
Sophia College for Women, Mumbai.

: Dr. Lakshmi Periyaswamy

Associate Professor,
Ket's Vaze College & Developer - UNESCPO

: Ms. Pankti Surve

Assistant Professor,
IDOL, University of Mumbai.

: Mr. Amit Vijat Jadhav

Associate Professor,
University of Mumbai.

August 2022, Print I

Published by

Director

Institute of Distance and Open Learning, University of Mumbai, Vidyanagari, Mumbai - 400 098.

DTP COMPOSED AND PRINTED BY

Mumbai University Press,
Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E), Mumbai - 400098.

CONTENTS

Unit No.	Title	Page No
Module I		
1.	Basic Concepts: Sex and Gender, Masculinity and Femininity, Patriarchy	1
2.	Gender Beyond The Binary	15
3.	Many Women, Many Feminisms and Intersectionality	25
Module II		
4.	Classical: Liberal – Mary Wollstonecraft, Radical - Kate Millet, Socialist - Juliet Mitchell	35
5.	Contemporary - Black Feminism - Bell Hooks, Postmodern Feminism: Julia Kristeva	44
Module III		
6.	Kumud Pawade's Thoughtful Outburst and Dalit Feminism	53
7.	Queer Perspectives: Judith Butler	67
8.	Masculinity Studies	75
Module IV		
9.	Child Marriage, Widowhood, Sati, Education, Political Rights	85
10.	Emergence of the Autonomous Women's Movement: Campaigns against Dowry, Rape and Women's Right to Health	95
11.	Current Debates: Sexual Violence and Rights in Marriage and Divorce	104

SYLLABUS
TYBA Paper VI
Semester V
No of Credits - 4
Sociology of Gender

Objectives:

- Σ To trace the evolution of Gender as a category of social analysis.
- Σ To trace the emergence of women's movement in India and the history of their Struggles.

Unit I : Basic Concepts

- Σ Sex, gender and the heteronormative regime
- Σ Gender beyond the binary
- Σ Many women, many feminisms and intersectionality

Unit II : Feminist perspectives: Selected Readings

- Σ **Classical**
 - o Liberal – Mary Wollstonecraft
 - o Radical - Kate Millet
 - o Socialist - Juliet Mitchell
- Σ **Contemporary**
 - o Black feminism – Bell Hooks
 - o Postmodern feminism: Julia Kristeva

Unit III : New Challenges

- o Dalit feminism: Kumud Pawade
- o Queer perspectives: Judith Butler
- o Masculinity Studies

Unit IV : History of Women's Struggles

- Σ **Colonial - nationalist era : Key debates**
 - o Child marriage, widowhood, sati, education, political rights
- Σ **Contemporary era**
 - o Emergence of the autonomous women's movement: Campaigns against Dowry, Rape and Women's Right to Health
 - o Current debates: Sexual violence and Rights in Marriage and Divorce

Readings:

- Geeta, V. 2002. Gender (Theorizing Feminism). Gazelle Distribution Trade
- Bhasin, Kamala. 1993. What is patriarchy? Kali for women: New Delhi
- Butler, Judith. 1990. Gender Trouble. Routledge: New York, London.
- Chakravarti, Uma. 2003. Gendering Caste: Through A Feminist Lens. Stree
- Basu Aparna, Bharati. 1990. Women's Struggle- A history of All India Women's conference 1927- 1990. New Delhi: Manohar Publications
- Bandyopadhyaya, Shekhar. 2004. Caste, culture and hegemony: Social dominance in colonial Bengal. Sage publications: New Delhi
- Kumar Radha. The History of doing: An illustrated account of movements for women's rights and feminism in India. 1800-1990. New Delhi: Kali for women
- Hooks, Bell. Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics. Pluto Press, 2000.
- Pilcher, Jane and Whelahan, Imelda. 2005. Fifty key concepts in gender studies. Sage publications: New Delhi
- Rao, P V. 2010. Educate women and loose nationality. New Delhi: Critical Quest
- Tong, R. (1998). Feminist Thought. A Comprehensive Introduction. Routledge.

MODULE I

1

BASIC CONCEPTS: SEX AND GENDER, MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY, PATRIARCHY

Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Sex and Gender
 - 1.2.1 Sex
 - 1.2.2 Gender
 - 1.2.3 Deconstructing Sex and Gender
- 1.3 Heteronormative Regime
- 1.4 Masculinity and Femininity
- 1.5 Patriarchy
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Questions
- 1.8 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the concepts of sex and gender as used in feminist works.
- To understand the concepts of masculinity and femininity as analytical categories.
- To study the concept of patriarchy and male dominance in society.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Concepts are terms used by social scientist as analytical categories to study society and social behaviour. Through the use of concepts social scientists develop categories that act as aids in the scientific investigation of behaviour in the society. In gender studies there are several such concepts that provide the framework in the study of behaviour. For example, the concept of gender was first developed by Iill Matthews in 1984 in her study of the construction of femininity. According to Mathews, the concept of gender gives recognition to the fact that every known society distinguishes between women and men. Therefore, the term / concept of gender is a systematic way of understanding men and women socially and the patterning of relationships between them.

- The concept of patriarchy helps in the study of the male dominance in the society.
- The concept of gender helps to study the differences in behaviour between men and women and to analyse the basis of these differences as basically biological or as social constructions by the society.
- The concepts masculinity and femininity define certain traits as typically male as so masculine in nature or as typically female and so feminine in nature.

In this unit some basic concepts will be studied. These concepts are sex and gender, patriarchy and masculinity and femininity.

In feminist writings and in discourses on Gender Studies, these concepts are basic to our understanding of social differences between men and women in the society. A study of these concepts are useful as analytical categories.

1.2 SEX AND GENDER

The term 'sex' and 'gender' are concepts used by academicians, researchers and feminist writers to make a distinction between the biologically different 'male' and 'female' and between the socially different 'man' and 'woman'. Feminist sociologists suggest that there is a need to understand and distinguish between the two terms 'sex' and 'gender' in academic discourses and writings.

1.2.1 Sex:

In a very broad way, 'sex' refers to the biological and physiological differences between male and female sex. The term sex is a physical differentiation between the biological male and the biological female. Thus, when an infant is born, the infant comes to be labeled "boy" or "girl" depending on their sex. The genital differences between male and female is the basis of such characterization. There is a biological difference between the sexes and most people are born (except for a few ambiguous cases) as one sex or another. However, it has been argued that having been born into one sex or another, individuals are then socialized according to specific gender expectations and roles. Biological males learn to take on masculine roles. They are socialized to think and act in masculine ways. Biological females learn to take on feminine roles. They are socialized to think and behave in feminine ways. As the feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir puts it 'one is not born a man but becomes one', 'one is not born a woman but becomes one'.

At birth, besides the basic biological differences in the genitals and reproductive organs, there is not much difference between the male child and the female child. Society makes the differences between boy and girl through gender constructions. The biological differences between the sexes does to some extent explain certain psychological and socially

constructed differences. This view is criticized by some feminist writers like Judith Butler.

Judith Butler 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. Viewed thus, Butler argues 'sex' itself becomes a social category. This means that the distinction between 'male' and 'female' is a social distinction made by the society, that is, it is a social construction. It is a particular way of perceiving and dividing the differences between 'male', 'female'. Butler explains that 'sex' though seen as biological, is as much a product of society as is gender. So, the term sex is also socially constructed.

The scientific, biological meaning and definition of sex is an important source of explanation to point out the basic differences in sex. Butler's concern is that 'biology' itself, as a scientific discipline, is a social system of representation and more important there are a number of differences between human beings, but only some become a basis for dividing human beings into distinct types. In other words, even if we accept that there are basic differences between the 'sexes' there is no logical or rational reason for use. This is the basis for dividing human beings into two groups or sexes.

Judith Butler further explains 'sex' is not just an analytical category. It is a normative category as well. It stipulates what men and women are. It also stipulates what men and women ought to be. It formulates rules to regulate the behaviour of men and women. Butler concludes that sex is also a social category. There are some feminist writers who do not agree with Butler and regard 'sex' as basically biological in nature.

Much research in sociology assumes that each person has one sex, one sexuality and one gender. Sometimes sex and gender are used interchangeably. Sometimes sex means sexuality, it may refer to biology or physiology. A woman is assumed to be feminine female, a man a masculine male. Research variables polarize sex as males and females; sexuality is polarized as homosexual and heterosexuals; gender is homosexual as and women these reflect conventionalise bodies that do not take into account transvestites, transsexuals, bisexuals and so on. In gender studies or women studies the focus of concern is on the biological sex – man, woman, male female and the way in which biological differences have been socially gendered in different ways by the patriarchal society. When infants are categorized as a particular sex, they are subject to a range of gendered behaviour through gendered socialization. This brings us to the question what is gender?

Check Your Progress:

1. Explain the concept of Sex.

1.2.2 Gender:

The concept of gender in feminist writings and other sociological discourses became popular in the early 1970. In simple terms, gender explain the differences between men and women in social terms as men, and as what a man can do; as 'woman', and as what a woman can or cannot do. Therefore, gender is an analytical category that is socially constructed to differentiate the biological difference between men and women. The term gender is also used to describe the differences in behaviour between men and women which are described as 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Feminist writings focus on this aspect and claim that these differences are not biological but are social constructions of patriarchal society.

Some theorists suggest that the biological differences between men and women also result in their mental and physical differences. They argue that biologically, men are physically and mentally superior to women. Other theorists suggest that the biological difference between men and women are exaggerated. The differences are socially constructed by the patriarchal system of society by which men are described as superior to women. Therefore, women become subordinate to men in the society.

Ann Oakley in her book, *Sex, Gender and Society* written in 1972 explores the term gender. Oakley says that in the Western culture women play the roles of the 'housewife' and 'mother'. This is because women are made to play these roles because of their biology. The western culture also believes that any effort to change the traditional roles of men and women in the society can cause damage to the social fabric of the society. Oakley concludes that this view regarding the roles of men and women helps to support and maintain the patriarchal society.

Simone de Beauvoir in her book '*The Second Sex*' says that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman". She explains that gender differences in the society make the man superior through his role as the bread winner. It gives him a position of power in the society and family. Gender differences are set in hierarchal opposition such that men are superior and women are subordinate. Women's position is that of the 'other' and women are the continual outsiders. Civilization was masculine to its very depth.

Shulamith Firestone in her book, '*The Dialectics of Sex* (1970) suggests that patriarchy exploits women's biological capacity to reproduce as their essential weakness. She explains that the only way for women to break away from this oppression is to use technological advances of free themselves from the burden of childbirth. She advocated breaking down the biological bond between mothers and children by establishing communes where monogamy and nuclear family do not exist.

Few feminists accept firestones views mainly because both technology and its uses are still firmly in the hands of men. While cultural feminists question whether all the key differences between men and women are solely cultural and whether also biological. These feminists prefer to value

and celebrate the mothering role as evidence of women's natural disposition towards nurturance and would not like to relinquish even if they could.

Ann Oakley says that there is a constant slippage between sex and gender; for example, people are generally asked to declare their 'gender' instead of sex on an application form. In feminist writings there are references to the close association of gender with the biological or natural as inevitable. Recent writings on sex and gender suggest that feminism has relied too much on the polarization of sex and gender distinctions, showing that the meanings attached to sex differences are themselves socially constructed and changeable. It is dependent on the way we understand them and attach different consequences to these biological 'facts' within our own cultural historical context. At the same time there is an argument that biology does contribute to some behavioural characteristics.

Movia Gatens, states that evidence points "that the male body and the female body have quite different social value and significance and cannot but help have a marked effect on male and female consciousness". Certain bodily events have huge significance especially if they occur only in one sex. She cites the example of menstruation. She points that masculinity is not valued, unless it is performed by biological male; hence the male body itself is imbued in our culture with the mythology of supremacy of being the human 'norm'.

Judith Butler's theorization about gender introduces the notion of performativity, an idea that gender is involuntarily 'performed' within the dominant discourses of hetero-reality. Butler's conception of is perhaps most radical as she asserts that all identity concept 'are in fact that effects of institutions' practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin'. She further states that "sex / gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed gender". This approach questions the way we make constructing of gender identity. Individual do tend to challenge the way discourses establish and reinforce certain meanings and institutions such as that of compulsory heterosexuality.

It is difficult to accept a rigid distinction between sex and gender as either wholly biological or singularly cultural. There is a constant shift between conceptualizations of human beings as controlled by either predominantly biological or social forces. The debates on sex and gender will continue as same will argue in favour of biological differences while other feminist writers will favour the differences as socially constructed, supported by social institutions like religion, caste, family marriage and so on. The substantial shift in women's lives and expectations since the 1960s clearly explains that the category of feminine has been rather elastic. Women's roles and performances have changed drastically over the past few decades which has added new dimensions to the debates by feminists and other on sex / gender distinctions.

Check Your Progress:

2. Explain the concept of Gender.

1.2.3 Deconstructing Sex and Gender:

In rethinking gender categories, it is necessary to look at sex and gender as conceptually distinct. Each is socially constructed in different ways. Gender is an overarching category – a major social status that organizes almost all areas of social life. Therefore, bodies are gendered and are built into major social institutions of the society such as economy, ideology, polity, family and so on.

For an individual, the components of gender are the sex category assigned at birth on the basis of the appearance of the genitalia. Each category provides a gender identity, gendered sexual orientation, marital and procreative status, a gendered personality structure, gender beliefs and attitudes, gender at work and family roles. All these social components of are supposed to be consistent and congruent with one's biology. The actual combination may or may not be congruent with each other and with the components of gender and sex, moreover, the components may not line up neatly on one side of the binary divide.

The need for official categorization in societies of infants into neat legal label "boy" or "girl" soon after birth are at the sometime subject to rather arbitrary sex assignment. Sex change surgery is not uncommon for infants with anomalous genitalia Sociologists are aware of the varieties of biological and physiological sexes. The rational given for categorization of the ambiguous as either female or male throws light on the practices that maintain the illusion of clear at sex differences. Without such critical exploration, sex differences can easily be considered as natural of what actually is socially constructed.

Check Your Progress:

3. How do you differentiate Gender from Sex?

1.3 HETERONORMATIVE REGIME

Sociologists and other social scientists use the term heteronormativity to describe how sex and gender are used to classify individuals in our society. The idea that heterosexuality, or a sexual and romantic attraction to the opposite sex, is the only acceptable sexual orientation, is known as heteronormativity. Binary gender identity is considered to be the norm. Other sexual orientations are viewed as abnormal and occasionally even illegal. In addition to upholding rigid sexual norms, heteronormativity also upholds rigid gender roles in society. For instance, the notion that men and

women in our society have distinct roles to play supports the paradigm that women should look after children while men are at work. This is also connected to the gender binary, which divides people into two categories: male or female.

The most difficult task for today's generation is fighting the heteronormative culture because it prevents us from realising that there are different types of individuals in it since everything, we see from the moment we are born is filtered through heteronormative lenses. We fail to recognise the possibility of gender non-conformity, the existence of genders other than male and female, or the existence of sexual orientations other than heterosexuality. For example, Property owners frequently stipulate that only married couples would be permitted to stay in India. They effectively deny the reality of married queer couples by making this claim in favour of focusing only on the patriarchal variant of the Indian family system. If they encounter two women or two men expressing their desire to live together, the same property owners will not press the matter any further. This is due to the assumption that a relationship must either be heterosexual or have no sexual component at all!

Sexual orientation refers to whom one is attracted to, it can range from being gay, lesbian, etc. In our society, we frequently identify people as either male or female based on factors like colour and attire. Heteronormativity is the tendency to classify everything as boys and girls when we merely glance at it. However, not everyone expresses themselves or identifies as one or the other. Folks may prefer to use the pronouns "she/her" even if they "look" like a guy (also a sign of heteronormativity), so there is a need to respect this by not misgendering people. Some people can identify as genderfluid, which implies that their gender identity can shift from one end of the gender spectrum to the other. Others are genderless, meaning they don't identify with either of the socially prescribed genders. The most crucial thing to keep in mind is that every person's gender might be different, and it's important to respect everyone's gender identity, gender expression, and gender orientation.

Check Your Progress:

4. Explain the concept of Heteronormative Regime.

1.4 MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

The sex / gender differences raise the issues of male – female; masculine and feminine, male associated with masculinity and female with femininity. With each constructions the biological differences between men and women get translated into social terms and descriptions. Feminist writers argue that biological differences get heightened through social descriptions of masculinity and femininity.

Patters of differences by gender is seen when the character is either masculine or feminine. For example, pink and blue are gendered colours, former regarded as ‘feminine’ and the latter as masculine. Further to be ‘strong’ and ‘tough’ is masculine. Being ‘weak’ and ‘soft’ are associated with feminine character. There are several other traits that are categorized as masculine and feminine. Masculinity and femininity are concepts which signify the social outcomes of being male or female the traits and characteristics which describe men and women give men advantage over women.

Moir Gatens, points masculinity is not valued unless performed by biological male. Hence the male body is imbued in our culture with certain traits that characterize maleness or masculinity. Hence the human norm of male supremacy. Similarly, femininity is performed by the biological female. The female body in our culture is imbued with certain traits that characterize female or femininity. According to Judith Butler any theorization about gender introduces the notion or idea of performance of gender in terms of masculinity and femininity. Thus, performance of gender becomes involuntary as gender gets internalized through the socialization process within the dominant discourses of patriarchy gender is performed at different levels within the family and in the society. We socially enter into our gendered categories of masculine and feminine right from birth.

The concepts of masculinity and femininity as need in feminist discourses and writing to explain the differences between men and women. Some argue that these differences are based in their biology while others reject this argument and emphasize that the differences are socially constructed. Therefore, the construction of men and masculinity will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males. The construction of women and femininity will accrue exclusively to the bodies of females.

In contemporary writings there is a recognition that these social categorization of masculinity and femininity are blurring. There is a constant shift in the conceptualization of human beings as controlled by wholly biological or social forces. Women’s expectations have changed, women lives and roles have broadened. This explain just how malleable the category of femininity is.

Check Your Progress:

5. Explain the concept of Masculinity and Feminity.

1.5 PATRIARCHY

Patriarchy is an often-used term in everyday conversation. The question here is “what is patriarchy?” In casual conversation, whether in English or any other language the term implies “male domination”, “male prejudice (against women)”, or more simply “male power”. Put simply, the term

means “the absolute rule of the father or the eldest male member over his family”. Patriarchy is thus the rule of the father over all women in the family and also over younger socially and economically subordinate males. Literally, patriarchy means rule by the male head of a social unit (like family, tribe). The patriarch is typically a societal elder who has legitimate power over others in the social unit.

However, since the early twentieth century, feminist writers have used the term patriarchy as a concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. Patriarchy has been a fundamentally important concept in gender studies. Feminist writers have developed a number of theories that aim to understand the bases of women’s subordination to men.

The term patriarchy is not only a descriptive term that explains how different societies construct male authority and power, but also become an analytical category. This change of the use of the term patriarchy from a descriptive to an analytical category took place in the 1970s, in a specific global historical context of feminist political and intellectual culture. In the course of time this later led to the development of the discipline of women’s studies or gender studies, when women agitated for their rights. At the Universities women demanded that their experiences and points of view be taken seriously that patriarchy emerged as a way of both describing and explaining the world. Since this time, patriarchy has been used critically to explain the main components of authority and power in any social system. Patriarchy automatically privileges men over women such that women have little or no claims to material, sexual and intellectual resources of the society. That is, in a patriarchal society women have to struggle to be educated, to have property or to make choices regarding marriage and other aspects of life. For men, these resources are a matter of right and can make choices that affect their lives.

Let us take some examples to clarify the way in which patriarchy is evident in our daily life.

When a man raises his voice in the course of an argument and insists on his point of view, without letting others especially women get to utter a single word, his actions are likely to be described as “aggressively patriarchal”.

If a woman complains of sexual harassment at her work place, and all the men in her office deny that this could ever happen. The reasoning of men can be described as being “typically patriarchal”.

In public speeches that disclaim the subordination of women, this denial is described by the term ‘patriarchy’.

In a very general way “patriarchy” is a ‘catch’ word that describes the different ways in which society discriminates against women. These examples explain the many different and subtle ways through which patriarchy is expressed in the society.

Anglo – European anthropologists, writing in the nineteenth century, used the term widely. In their writings, ‘patriarchy’, usually referred to a social system where men were family heads, descent was through the father. Men alone were priests, and all laws and norms were dictated by the male elders in the community. When used in this sense, the term ‘patriarchy’ is often contrasted with the term ‘matriarchy’, which referred to social system where women exercised political authority over men, or possessed decisive power and exercised a measure of control over social relationships and everyday life. In the evolution of society, matriarchy was usually considered an earlier and more primitive stage of society, and patriarchy on later and more advanced stage of society.

In contemporary discourses on gender, patriarchy is a central concept that feminist writers have been grappling with to explain differential positions of men and women in the society. These writings view patriarchy as the subordination of women. The patriarchal system provides self – definitions and norms for women. These social norms restrict the social roles of women as mothers and wives. The patriarchal system also amply rewards all those women who learn to passively their defined roles.

Both wifehood and motherhood become glorified in the patriarchal system. These roles are granted social sanctions and at the same time are also eulogized in local folk lore, in literature, and religion so that women do actively engage themselves in playing their social roles and thus themselves contributes and perpetuate the patriarchal social order.

Patriarchy has both productive and punitive aspects. Thus, women who wish to remain single and refuse marriage and treated with disdain by the society. Similarly, women who are not fertile or those who cannot bear children especially male are ridiculed and held in contempt and their position in the family is a non-existent one. The position of widow, especially upper caste widows under the patriarchal system was even pitiable. Widow remarriage was prohibited. The widow was excluded from also social and religious functions of the family, confined to the house and household chores. Those women who did not fall into this pattern of society, that is those women who refused to be invisible, and did not conform to their civic identity on their fertility and domestic status were ridiculed, and criticized for being stubborn and even as unnatural to their basic biology.

In some countries women who did not marry, or were not fertile, or who became widows at a young age were look down upon in some ways. For example, in India, upper caste widows were required to shave their heads, wear no ornaments, or colour garments as they were viewed with suspicion. They were women who had deviated from the conventional norms of reproduction and had to be relegated to a lowly status and position. Women who appeared as a threat to the larger society because they did not conform to the norms that governed feminine behaviour were accused of practicing magic and sorcery. They were identified as witches. Witch-hunting by men was expressed through violence against these women who were severely punished, publicly humiliated and even killed.

Patriarchy has been viewed as more than just the subordination of women. It has been pointed out that not all men are powerful in a patriarchal system. For example, younger men in the family have less authority and power than older men. They have to defer to older men till their turn to exercise power comes. The lower class and underprivileged men, and in the Indian context the 'dalit men' have lesser or no authority as compared to the upper class, more privileged and upper caste men. Such men who are oppressed and exploited by powerful men are denied access to resources of the society as well as their own masculine identity. In spite of this, that certain classes and category of men are the targets of patriarchal authority, the fact remains that all men can claim resources and power more easily than women in their families or communities. In the lower caste lower class family's male children get to eat better food and are more likely to be sent to school and receive health care than the female children. Another example is that of the hijras (eunuchs) in India. They actively renounce and refuse their masculinity. They are often the object of ridicule and derision. Moreover, many of them are from lower castes and lower classes.

The above discussion clearly brings out the way in which patriarchy differentiates between men and women. And through such differential treatment women are denied access to resources of the society and to positions of power and authority both in the family and in the community.

What do men control in the Patriarchal System?

Different areas of women's lives are said to be under patriarchal control.

1. Women's productive or labour power:

Men control women's productivity both within the household and outside, in paid work. Within the household women provide all kinds of services to their husbands, children and other members of the family throughout their lives. Feminist writer Sylvia Walby calls this as the "patriarchal mode of production" where women's labour is expropriated by their husbands and others who live there. She calls housewives as the 'producing class' and husbands are the 'expropriating class'. The work done by housewives is not considered as work at all and housewives become dependent on their husbands.

Men also control women's labour outside the home. They make women to sell their labour or they may prevent their women from working. They may appropriate what women earn often women are excluded from better paid work. They are usually working in jobs with low wages; or work within the home in what is called home-based production, which is itself an exploitative system.

This control over and exploitation of women's labour mean that men benefit materially from patriarchy. They benefit economically from the subordination of women. This is the material or economic basis of patriarchy.

2. Women's Reproduction:

Men also control women's reproductive power. In many societies women have no control over their reproduction capacities. They cannot decide how many children they want, whether to use contraceptives, or a decision to terminate pregnancy. In addition, men control social institutions like religion and politics which are male dominated. Control is institutionalized by laying down rules regarding women's reproduction capacity. For example, in the Catholic Church, the male religious hierarchy decides whether men and women can use birth control contraceptives. In modern times, the patriarchal state tries to control women's reproduction through its family planning programmes. The state decides the optimum size of the country's population. In India for example the birth control programme limits the family size and discourages women from having more than two children. On the other hand, in Europe, where birth rates are low, women are lured through various incentives have more children. Women are given long paid maternity leave, child care facilities and opportunities for part-time jobs.

Patriarchy idealises motherhood and thereby forces women to be mothers. It also determines the conditions of their motherhood. This ideology of motherhood is considered one of the bases of women's oppression. It also creates feminine and masculine character types and perpetuates patriarchy. It restricts women's mobility and it reproduces male dominance.

3. Control over Women's Sexuality:

Women are obliged to provide sexual services to their husbands according to their needs and desires. Moral and legal regulations exist to restrict the expression of women's sexuality outside marriage in every society, while male promiscuity is often condoned.

Another way of exercising control over women's sexuality is when men force their wives, daughters or other women in their control into prostitution. Rape and threat of rape is another way in which women's sexuality is controlled through notions of 'shame' and 'honour', family honour. Lastly, women's sexuality is controlled through their dress, behaviour and mobility which are carefully monitored by the family and through social, cultural and religious codes of behaviour.

4. Women's Mobility:

Besides control of women's sexuality, production and reproduction, men also control women's mobility. The imposition of purdah restriction on leaving the house, limit on interaction between the sexes are some of the ways by which the patriarchal society controls women's mobility and freedom of movement. Such restrictions are unique to women, while men are not subject to such restrictions.

5. Property and other Economic Resources:

Most property and other productive resources are controlled by men and are passed on from father to son. Even in societies where women have legal rights to inherit property, customary practices, social sanctions and emotional pressures that prevents them from acquiring control over them. According to UN statistics, “Women do more than 60% of the hours of work done in the world, but they get 10% of the world’s income and own 1% of the world’s property”.

We have seen how men control different areas of women’s lives through the patriarchal order of the society.

1.6 SUMMARY

Concepts are terms used by social scientists as analytical categories to study society and social behaviour. Concepts such as sex and gender, masculinity and femininity and patriarchy are important terms in gender studies.

Sex and gender are the first set of concepts being studied in this unit. The term sex refers to the biological and physiological differences between male and female. Feminists accept the basic biological differences but argue that the traits and characteristics of the biological male and biological female are socially constructed. The term gender refers to the social construction of the differences between men and women in a patriarchal society. In more recent writings of feminist there is an emergent view that it is difficult to accept the rigid distinction between sex and gender as wholly biological or singularly cultural.

Sex / gender differences raises the issue of male female, masculine feminine, male associated with masculinity and female with femininity. Such constructions translate the biological differences between men and women into social terms and descriptions. Feminist writers argue that biological differences get heightened through social descriptions of masculinity and femininity. Gender Binary is considered as the Norm which refers to the Heteronormativity as the Norm.

Feminist writers use the term patriarchy as a concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. They have developed a number of theories to understand the bases of subordination of women in the patriarchal society.

In the patriarchal society, men control women’s productive labour and their reproduction. Patriarchy idealises motherhood and thereby forces women to be mothers and also determines the conditions of their motherhood. Patriarchy restricts women’s mobility and reproduces male dominance.

These concepts are used in studies on gender to understand the basis of male dominance and female subordination.

1.7 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the terms sex and gender. Do you agree with the feminist view that they are social constructions? Give reasons for your answer.
2. To what extent do the term masculinity and femininity explain the differences between men and women?
3. Explain the term patriarchy. Discuss the reasons for women's subordinate status.
4. Explain Heteronormative Regime. Do you agree with Heteronormativity being considered as a norm?

1.8 REFERENCES

- Kamala Bhasin, Understanding Gender, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 2000.
- Kamala Bhasin, What is Patriarchy, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1993.
- Jane Pitcher and Whelahan, Fifty key concepts in Gender Studies, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 2005.
- Rosemary Tong, Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction.

GENDER BEYOND THE BINARY

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Understanding gender beyond binary
 - 2.2.1 Problems connected with binary model
 - 2.2.2 Existing Hierarchy and Binary
 - 2.2.3 Gender Binary impositions
 - 2.2.4 Gender Identity
 - 2.2.5 Doing Gender
- 2.3 Non-Binary Gender Examples
- 2.4 Gender beyond Non-binary Indian context
- 2.5 Mass Media and Non-binary
- 2.6 Access to treatment and non-binary
- 2.7 Religion and non-binary
- 2.8 Ways to treat non-binary gender
- 2.9 Summary
- 2.10 Questions
- 2.11 References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To learn about Gender beyond the binary model
- To understand why broadening the gender spectrum becomes important in the present times.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we would focus upon understanding the complexity and problems associated with the binary model of gender which has been practiced since long. As a student of sociology understanding these topics are important so that you become sensitive, aware about the problems faced by non-binary people. In this chapter we will try to understand the meaning of gender beyond binary and the marginalization in different areas like religion, healthcare etc. These topics would be very much important if you are planning career with gender studies for Masters, intent to work with non-governmental organization working on gender issues.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING GENDER BEYOND BINARY

Gender binary refers to a binary system in which only a woman or a male is recognized or considered. On the other hand, non-binary gender is described as genders that do not fit within the woman-man binary framework. The abbreviation LGBTIQA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual) stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual) and is developed from a Western perspective. This is example of non-binary groups.

2.2.1 Problems connected with binary model:

We live in a stratified, patriarchal, and hetero-normative society, where roles are at times clearly defined and strictly enforced. In many societies socialisation is often linked to the sex, which is often connected to birth, and as adult's individuals continue to learn it as men and women. Individuals are socialized according to their sex which is associated with them right from their birth – male/ female and later the learning is turned as masculinity traits, feminine traits. Generally, the binary model is viewed as normal and natural which is technically wrong. It prevents any interaction between the two genders. There is no space for movement or alternate creation. The binary looks to be entirely natural. But it does not provide both the genders equal rank. One takes the advantage of another. here also exists the hierarchy within this structure where the existence of binary has a hierarchy where male members have privilege and female are subordinate within in the hierarchy. For example- The female population is viewed as secondary in several patriarchal societies. The problem is severe irrespective of the class and caste too. A system of incentives and penalties is also used to reinforce gender standards. Any violation is punished with various forms like boycotting, honour killing, violence etc. There are also practices like Dowry which again marginalizes the females position in the society.

2.2.2 Existing Hierarchy and Binary:

In a broader framework, Conformity to the binary model is rewarded with cultural and legal rights, citizenship privileges, and familial support for those who comply. In both public and private places, those who oppose or transgress fear violence. These rules are enforced by all institutions, including family, school, and religion. Let us take the example of the ideal family drawings on the roads by the government – It would have Ham doh hamare doh and image of a male, female and one girl and another boy. The public spaces, like mall entrance, restrooms, queues, airport check points, classroom sitting, attendance register, every place operates in binary mode only. Any violation is faced with criticism or denied entry, discrimination, violence, abuse etc. In every location of social contact, gender is experienced, played, and demonstrated in combination with binary mode which is assigned by others. Hereby excluding the other groups who do not fit in the umbrella of the binary categories.

2.2.3 Gender Binary impositions:

The family, in particular, emerges as a source of significant conflict and antagonism. Gender expression monitoring, moral policing of sexuality, and forced heterosexual marriages are all examples of how gender binary standards are imposed. The gender binary imposition is used in the construction and design of public places. Rest rooms, public transportation, hospitals, airports, and other places employ this concept for the binary genders. This type of communal and individual policing of public areas is based on subjective assessments of how they seem and function. In such situations, maintaining one's gender may be a difficult balancing act. On the one hand, there is the pressure to conform, on one side. The threat of assault, abuse, prejudice, and stigma is constantly present. Trans people are not the only ones who encounter violence; cis-men and cis-women also do. When a person's gender expression does not match their perceived identity, they are scrutinised closely.

As a result, anyone who rejects gender conventions will have to fight gender fights. The intersection of one's caste, class, and racial location determines the level of marginalization. Imposing the gender is suffocating, unnatural for the human being who doesn't identify with a specific binary form like male, female.

2.2.4 Gender Identity:

People can arrive at the gender identification that appears most appropriate and comfortable for them via a variety of techniques. Some people figure out who they are early in life, while others take longer time. Others may lack the enabling factors of social status, for some favourable circumstances, or affirmative relationships hence they hide their gender identity.

Gender identity is often socialised. Other than asking a question "that is how I feel," there is no evident solution to the question "why are you' x' gender?" according to the study conducted by LABIA (2016). Gender identity must thus be considered as a work in progress, influenced by factors such as class, caste, and education, and negotiated via interactions with strangers as well as close relationships. Due to the realities of multiple identities and existence, we must soften gender norms and people's need to have freedom to choose the identity they wish. Extremely rigid gender norms must be relaxed. When the borders between men and women are blurred, the gender binary becomes less rigid and more flexible. The societal punishment for gender norm violations should be stopped completely as it is unethical and unjust too.

2.2.5 Doing Gender:

We are a society of labels, and I was having a hard time finding one that fit. Was I a man? A transman? A female-to-male transsexual? All or none of the above...It took me a while to decide, but now, several years later, I still use the label I selected in the beginning transman (Kailey, 2005, 26).

Gender, according to West and Zimmerman (1987), is not something we have, but something we do, a routine achievement that we attain via interactions in our daily lives. Gender performance and accountability are two components of "doing gender." Furthermore, this "accountability," according to West and Zimmerman, is a three-part structure that includes accountability to oneself, accountability to others, and accountability to society (Hollander 2013). Individuals are constantly answerable to socially created understandings of masculinity and femininity, even when they differ from them, because of these continuous accountability systems. These gender doings, practices are inculcated right from childhood as socialization practices, rituals, through role play, through the use of language, fear and sanctions. In a country like India, where joint families still exist and the head of the family has a stronger voice in many families following the rigid binary forms become natural out of fear. These practices are continued in the name of status, izzat, sacrifice, honour, being masculine etc.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is the meaning of gender non binary?
2. Discuss Doing Gender.

2.3 NON-BINARY GENDER EXAMPLES

Let us now look into some non-binary categories of gender examples, forms.

- **Agender:** A person who is agender doesn't always identify with a certain gender or has no gender at all.
- **Androgyne:** This refers to a person who considers oneself as who does have a gender which is either both masculine and feminine, or a gender that is halfway between the two.
- **Bigender:** A bigender is a person who identifies as having two genders.
- Bigender frequently exhibit cultural masculine and feminine roles.
- **Butch:** This phrase is commonly used by women, particularly lesbians, to describe how individuals display masculinity or what society deems as masculinity. However, according to the LGBTQIA Resource Centre, "butch" can be seen as a form gender identity too.
- **Cisgender:** A cisgender individual identifies with the sexual identity to which they were born. A cisgender woman, for example, is someone who nevertheless identifies with the sex — given to them by a doctor at birth
- Gender expansive is defined as a "umbrella word used for persons who expand their own culture's generally held concepts of gender,

including aspirations for its expression, identification, roles, and/or other recognized gender norms," according to the LGBTQIA Resource Centre.

- People who are transgender or whose gender broadens the definition of gender in the surrounding society are considered gender expansive.
- **Genderfluid:** A person who is identified as genderfluid has a gender identification and presentation that fluctuates between and outside of society's gender standards.
- **Outlaw of the gender:** A gender outlaw is someone who refuses to be defined by society's definitions of "male" and "female."
- **Genderqueer:** Genderqueer people have a gender identity or expression that is different from what society expects, assigned sex or assumed gender. Gender queer could also refer to someone who considers as a person who is neither male nor female, or who identifies as a blend of genders.
- **Cantered masculine:** The individual who uses this terminology is generally a lesbian or trans woman who prefers masculine gender experiences and performances.
- **Nonbinary:** When a person identifies as nonbinary, they do not feel gender in the traditional sense. Nonbinary people might at times experience crossover with other gender expressions, such as gender non-conforming.
- **Omnigender:** People belonging to this group- consider themselves members of all gender.
- Pangender and polygender are two different types of gender. People who identify as polygender or pangender have aspects of various genders and exhibit them.
- **Transgender:** It is an umbrella title for everyone who feels and identifies with a gender other than their designated sex at birth. Although most people associate transgender with trans men and trans women, the term also refers to persons who identify as a gender other than man or woman, such as binary gender nonconforming and genderfluid people as seen in the West.
- **Trans:** Trans is a broader word that encompasses those who describe themselves as nonbinary or genderless.

2.4 GENDER BEYOND NON-BINARY INDIAN CONTEXT

Although in the Indian tradition there exists a pre-colonial past historically acknowledged and embraced gender variety in temple sculptures, mythology (transgender groups in India worship such as Bahuchara Mata

and Aravan), and theological treatises, still transgender persons in India continue to experience terrible discrimination and violence. According to the 2011 census, there are nearly 4.9 lakh third genders in the country and these groups are subjected to societal prejudice and abuse very often. In India, there have been several cases of abuse reported aimed against transgender individuals in recent years. There is insensitivity, especially failure to respond effectively to violence aimed against transgender persons by individuals and authorities.

The transgender or any non-binary community has faced several mentally and emotionally demanding questions in their lives, unexpected, disrespectful replies from their friends and relatives. While some people are embraced by their families, others are rejected and abused. Yet all that the non-binary groups want is approval from their loved ones. The fear of rejection has had a profound influence on the physical and mental well-being. The system fails to provide them with safety, livelihood, education, and support, along with the cruel mistreatment. The transgender individuals and several non-binary groups suffer on a daily basis, which reduces their self-esteem and contributes to their dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a psychological term referring to anguish, unease, and anxiety that people experience when their gender identity clashes with the sex they are born with.

The Indian Supreme Court collectively agreed on September 6, 2018, that the 150-year-old Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code is unconstitutional, marking a significant step forward in the recognition and appreciation of LGBT people, respecting their fundamental rights. After overcoming its personal prejudices towards the LGBTQ+ population Tamil Nadu became the first state in India to ban conversion therapy. The Madras High Court Judge urged, "Ignorance is no basis to normalize discrimination." There is still a long way to go, but the accumulation of minor triumphs will eventually lead to a big shift in global mindsets.

During natural disasters, pandemic like lockdown the large number of transgender populations was affected financially. As many of them survive by asking money from others on traffic signals, trains, performing in events. These groups being working as informally and surviving on their own. Some even try saving money for surgery for changing the sex. Just to live a life of dignity and respect and to be approved by family.

It was in the 2011 census for the first time the transgender community was acknowledged and the option of Other was being included apart from Male, Female in the Census Survey. Even globally too there is lack of enough data related to the transgender communities and all other non-binary communities. This becomes very difficult to build enough policies and measures for the safety of the people. This is at times due to the biases of the enumerator, policies or documents which do not have columns to acknowledge the non-binary groups etc.

2.5 MASS MEDIA AND NON-BINARY

In the recent times, there are several movies, series which are including the characters who do not follow the traditional pattern of binary characters. For example – *Badhaai Do* – Where the marriage between two individuals takes place, out of peer pressure of parents but the individuals have their own partners and later are accepted by their own parents. The point to draw is, when we believe that media has an influential power then such characters bring scope for discussion, debate, opening new thoughts, breaking the existing patterns etc.

2.6 ACCESS TO TREATMENT AND NON-BINARY

Gender and sexual identity assumptions are still enforced as binary gender and sexual identity in health care even in the present times. Transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people are expected to fit within normative and heteronormative frameworks. As a result, any gender identity, gender expression, or sexual desire that did not fit within this framework is questioned and devalued. Many medical institutions still regard non-binary identities as if they don't exist since they don't fit into the gender binary of "male" and "female." This is problematic because non-binary people are frequently required to present as identifying with a certain binary gender in order to receive the treatment, they require.

Even when sex is not confused with gender, it is almost exclusively presented as binary and at times correlated with genes, hormones, reproductive organs, and general body. These societal standards tend to render persons with differences invisible by defining sex as a 'natural' binary, and they govern both our social spaces and our health care systems and practises. Some Western nations, for example, have begun to acknowledge gender identity as a spectrum and including gender identity and expression as protected classes in human rights law, as Canada did recently. Many nations' health-care systems are now also offering gender-affirming hormone therapy and procedures for transgender persons, and some are/ trying to include them in their universal health-care coverage.

2.7 RELIGION AND NON-BINARY

Religion plays an important role in influencing people thoughts, habits, behaviour. It acts as a social control formally and informally too in societies. At times, religion and politics also gets mixed with the issues connected to the non-binary framework. A study conducted to understand the role of religion in the lives of non-binary individuals revealed the complexity associated with the practice. Through interviews with 44 religious and previously religious nonbinary persons, demonstrated that the religion influences the binary gender ideology. The findings showed that nonbinary persons who want to keep their religious affiliations must either change their religion to fit with their nonbinary gender or tolerate misgendering to fit within their religious tradition. In addition, they must overcome intellectual, theological, and even ceremonial barriers while

negotiating the "religious gender binary,". The study also points out that there is need for more research in this area of religion, minorities and non-binary individuals .

Check Your Progress:

1. Write two non-binary gender identity examples
2. Write few lines about doing gender.

2.8 WAYS TO TREAT NON-BINARY GENDER

- To appreciate someone who is non-binary, you don't need to grasp what it means. It's understandable if some individuals haven't heard anything about non-binary genders or have difficulty comprehending them. However, even if some people don't comprehend the identity, you should respect it.
- Just use name that a person has requested. Because your name may not represent their gender identification, this is one of the most important components of being courteous of a non-binary individual. Don't inquire about a person's previous name.
- Make no assumptions about other people's gender. You can't really tell whether someone is non-binary by looking at them, just as you can't tell if they are transgender by looking at them.
- Unless you're unsure about someone's pronouns, inquire. Non-binary persons may use a variety of pronouns. Most non-binary persons refer to themselves as "they," while others refer to themselves as "he" or "she," and still others refer to themselves in different ways. It may seem strange at first to inquire about whether someone should be addressed as "he," "she," "them," or another pronoun, but it is one of the easiest and most meaningful ways to demonstrate respect for someone's identity.
- Work to support for policies that are non-binary friendly. Non-binary persons need to be allowed to remain, dress, and be respected for their gender at workplace, classroom, and in public areas.
- Learn more about non-binary persons by conversing with them. There really is no one-size-fits-all approach to being non-binary. Talking with non-binary individuals and listening to their stories is the greatest approach to grasp what it's like to be non-binary

2.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we began with understanding Gender binary which refers to a binary system in which only a woman or a male is recognized or considered. On the other hand, non-binary gender is described as genders that do not fit within the woman-man binary framework. The gender binary imposition is used in the construction and design of public places.

Rest rooms, public transportation, hospitals, airports, and other places employ this concept for the binary genders. The Indian Supreme Court collectively agreed on September 6, 2018, that the 150-year-old Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code is unconstitutional, marking a significant step forward in the recognition and appreciation of LGBT people, respecting their fundamental rights. The chapter points out that gender does not operate in the binary mode but there are multiple other layers, categories of gender, i.e gender beyond of binary. These non-binary groups face several problems like stigma, marginalization, however, they too have a life where they are to be treated with dignity, care and respect. The chapter also points out that the non-binary groups have been marginalized for years together. The Census took into account the Transgender groups existence and have included them with a separate column as others in the 2011 census survey. There is still scope for bringing more accuracy over the data so that policies could be made for improvement of their positions in the society.

2.10 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Ways to treat non binary gender.
2. Discuss the Gender beyond non binary with reference to Indian Context.
3. Write a note on problems connected with the binary model.

2.11 REFERENCES

- Rushton, A., Gray, L., Canty, J., & Blanchard, K. (2019). Beyond Binary: (Re)Defining "Gender" for 21st Century Disaster Risk Reduction Research, Policy, and Practice. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(20), 3984. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16203984>
- Shah, C., Merchant, R., Mahajan, S., & Nevatia, S. (2015). No outlaws in the gender galaxy. *Zubaan*.
- Lenning, E. (2009). Moving beyond the binary: Exploring the dimensions of gender presentation and orientation.
- Darwin, H. (2017). Doing gender beyond the binary: A virtual ethnography. *Symbolic Interaction*, 40(3), 317-334.
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/types-of-gender-identity#types-of-gender-identity>
- <https://themitpost.com/beyond-binary-gender-spectrum/>
- Brindaalakshmi.K (2020) Gendering of Development Data in India: Beyond the Binary #1 Introduction, Research Method, and Summary of Findings (Ed.) Sumandro Chattapadhyay

- Produced as part of the Big Data for Development network supported by International Development Research Centre, Canada, The Centre for Internet and Society, <https://cis-india.org>
- <https://www.sexualhealth.umn.edu/ncgsh/beyond-binary>
- Saewyc, E. M. (2017). Respecting variations in embodiment as well as gender: Beyond the presumed 'binary' of sex. *Nursing Inquiry*, 24(1), e12184.
- Helana Darwin, Navigating the Religious Gender Binary, *Sociology of Religion*, Volume 81, Issue 2, Summer 2020, Pages 185–205, <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srz034>
- <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-non-binary-people-how-to-be-respectful-and-supportive>

MANY WOMEN, MANY FEMINISMS AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Concept of Universal Sisterhood
- 3.3 Many Feminism
 - 3.3.1 Black Women Voices
 - 3.3.2 Women experiences from Developing, Underdeveloped countries.
 - 3.3.3 Indigenous Womens
 - 3.3.4 Lesbian women
 - 3.3.5 Standpoint feminism
 - 3.3.6 African voices
- 3.4 Meaning of Intersectionality
- 3.5 Contextualizing Intersectionality
- 3.6 Covid and Intersectionality
- 3.7 Possible Solutions
- 3.8 Summary
- 3.9 Questions
- 3.10 References.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand learn about the many feminism and the concept of sisterhood.
2. To learn about the concept of Intersectionality and its relevance in today's time.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter would be very useful if you are planning to work in the domain of gender studies, family studies in the future as your career. Understanding these topics would help you to apply the day to day situations of our lives and it will help you to learn how structural, location, racial discrimination operates.

During the early stages of the women's movement, the term "woman" was used to refer to a group of people who were oppressed because of their gender. The majority of 1970s vocal feminists were white, middle-class,

and university educated, their experience became universalized as "women's experience."

The 1960s and 1970s feminisms also marked the start of the second wave of feminism. Liberal feminism, Marxist and socialist feminisms, and radical feminism are the popular three often types used. Their origins were seen in the 18th and 19th century liberal political theory, which produced the notion of individual rights. The socialist feminist was inspired by Marx's 19th century criticism of capitalism and his concept of class consciousness, and 20th century anti-colonial politics and ideals of national development, respectively. With time the concept of sisterhood emerged.

3.2 CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL SISTERHOOD

The concept of sisterhood promotes female solidarity in the fight against sexism. Sisterhood, also promotes women to reach out to one another and to stop being sexist by being friendlier to other women. Sisterhood was also popularised by the French and American labour movements, as well as the American Civil Rights movement. They (White Feminists) choose what is required for the common benefit as a group and then give it in a logical manner. These feminists viewed sisterhood as a meeting of equals with a common goal. Sisterhood was a significant component of second wave feminism, and it offered a sense of communal togetherness and purpose while also displaying the feminist movement's solidarity (Morgan, 1970). Sisterhood emphasises horizontal rather than vertical interactions between women, avoiding the hierarchy inherent in the mother/daughter stereotype, which is sometimes imposed onto the second/third wave divide (Henry, 2004). However, this concept was criticized by the several feminists and even questioned.

3.3 MANY FEMINISM

Feminism, too, is a multi-voiced system of theories, ideologies, and action that advocates for an equal society for all genders. Feminist concerns and manifestations are diverse because they impact all elements of our social and personal life. Since the 1980s, it has been customary to refer to feminism in the plural form to emphasis the range of perspectives within feminism, such as liberal, radical, socialist, postmodernism, and so on. Although many choose to perceive it otherwise, variability in feminist positions is recognised as a sign of healthy discussion. Despite the fact that feminism may be used to express a particular political perspective, there are several major strands in contemporary feminist philosophy.

3.3.1 Black Women's voices:

Black women opposed the propensity to universalize the experiences of white, middle-class women by bringing the concept of 'diversity' to the forefront of feminist study. Women are neither a homogeneous group nor a monolithic entity. Black women are dually oppressed as females and even as being black.

According to Bell hooks, 'Racial antagonism between white women and women of colour is still a source of contention within the feminist movement. These tensions are frequently so overpowering that we lose hope that we will ever be able to live and work together in social areas free of dominance politics. With time when hope is fading, feminist activists must reinvigorate their commitment to political fight and build their unity. This involves confronting racism and the conflicts it causes with greater diligence, with the faith that persistent dedicated struggle will lead to a liberator feminist political programme'.

Women's oppressions are not all the same. The urge to deconstruct the category woman arises from the desire to recognise disparities among women. Gender is a social construct, and defining one's gender necessitates inquiries into race, class, caste, and political power relations. Long ago, the myth of mutual oppression and sisterhood was questioned. Women are therefore numerous, not one.

We can't consider a woman's gender identity in isolation from her other identities, such as caste, class, ethnicity, and so on. All women have different experiences, even if she is a middle-class Black woman in 20th-century or North America or a poor white woman in 17th-century France.

3.3.2 Women experiences from Developing, Underdeveloped countries:

The women in developing and underdeveloped countries are affected by a range of factors which the white women did not experience. Like they did not face the impact of colonization. They were not in the receiving end. In developing nations, the gendered division of work is the result of a lengthy history of colonisation. Women's traditional contributions to food production were marginalised by colonisation in favour of exportable commodities like coffee and the mining of raw resources like minerals. Men were preferred for employment, although they were only paid enough to cover their basic needs. Women in the household had to provide food for themselves and their children, but with excellent land stolen for plantations, they barely got by. Communal companies, traditional reciprocal food production, and shared child care were all undercut by Western concepts.

Industrialization and development, further created an economic exploitation of women in post-colonial countries. Labourer in factories were forced to work in both unhygienic and unsafe situations or do piece work at home. Women in developing nations in Central and Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa are paid less even today than males. Women in rural areas live on what their migrant husbands send them by growing food, and these women also earn money in whatever way they can to supplement to the household expenses.

3.3.3 Indigenous women's:

Indigenous women's own response to feminism is to organise their communities around their productive and reproductive duties as mothers, so that whatever helps them monetarily and physically is in the service of their families, not just themselves. However, the same community organisation and family service that Western development feminists wish to see destroyed may encourage the continuation of indigenous traditions like female genital mutilation. As whenever there is an identity imposition or view imposition taking place the existing norms becomes more firm and there is now a question of right to identity and roots, culture which emerges. The choice to respect traditional cultural behaviours that are physically damaging to females while also working to improve their education and health is needed. Indigenous women needed, caring, localizing which is a particularly difficult challenge.

3.3.4 Lesbian feminism:

Lesbian feminism has also been existing since long. They view Women as more nurturing, sharing, and understanding than males. The lesbian continuum is a theoretical lesbian feminist notion in which a lesbian can be any independent woman. This lesbian elevates female love to a level of identity, community, and culture. Lesbian iconography is a new vocabulary, a new voice, not a mirror copy of men's sexuality and relationships. Women's sexuality and bodies, mother-daughter love, and the cultural community of women, not merely sexual and emotional ties between women, are celebrated in lesbian feminism. Thus, again here the universal concept of sisterhood is questioned as lesbians experience, the problem they face are multiple in several ways. As their identity itself is not accepted.

3.3.5 Standpoint Feminism:

Standpoint feminism, which shifts from resistance to confrontation with dominant sources of information and values, combines radical, lesbian, and psychoanalytic feminist conceptions of women's oppression. Women and women's viewpoints should be fundamental to knowledge, culture, and politics, not invisible or peripheral, according to all gender resistive feminisms. whomever establishes scientific research goals, whoever shapes educational curriculum, whoever Hegemonic authority belongs to the person who picks the symbols that pervade cultural works. Hegemony is the ideology that legitimises unchallenged beliefs in a society. Science provides reasons for many of our notions about women and men in Western civilization. We take scientific "facts" for granted and seldom challenge their objectivity.

Thus, there have been voices about multiple identities over a period of time.

3.3.6 African voices:

African women have faced Slavery, colonialism, and subsequent exploitation and marginalisation in the global arena, as well as hegemonic power influence, have all shaped African societies. There have been conferences held in the discussion was on the need to develop writings on female experiences of Africa was highlighted. It is necessary to produce, more narratives, based on locations and even revise the feminist theories was decided. The conference also highlighted the need for multiple voices in the society. Even Cultural imperatives in several economic domains, such as marriage, family, and religion, are a reality in communities. Hence, there exist the dangers of generalisations and cultural universals.

3.4 MEANING OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality, as a term, refers to how our many locations/positions across caste/class/race/ethnicity/sexuality intersect in various ways to provide various oppressions and possibilities for various groups of people. The concept of intersectionality is very important in gender studies, and it's a useful tool for exposing flaws in the feminist movement.

Although second-wave feminists criticised conventional academia for universalizing men's experiences, black feminists and lesbians criticised these feminists for omitting race and sexuality from feminist analysis, and universalizing the experiences of middle-class heterosexual white women. Only a few authors, especially women of colour, were writing about gender, race, and class as interwoven oppressive systems in the late 1970s.

The Combahee River Collective, a Boston-based group of black feminists, is often regarded as being the first to theorise the linkages between gender, race, class, and sexuality. They were actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression. They believed in development of integrated analysis and practise based on the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocked. "A Black Feminist Statement," published in 1983 writes 'The conditions of our life are created by the synthesis of various oppressions' (p. 210). An intersectional approach to power relations challenges assessments of power relations that focus on one aspect of identity.

Intersectionality theory gained popularity in the 1970s, though its origins may be traced back to a speech given by Sojourner Truth (c. 1797–1883), a black woman who had been a slave, at the 1851 Women's Rights Conference in Akron, Ohio. "That man over there argues that ladies ought to be carried into carriages, hoisted over ditches, and given the nicest spot everywhere," she writes in one passage. Nobody ever assists me in getting into carriages, getting over mud puddles, or giving me the finest seat. Isn't it true that I'm a woman?" (p. 165 in Painter 1996).

"Sojourner Truth's identity claims are thus relational, produced in reference to white women and all males, and plainly indicate that what we

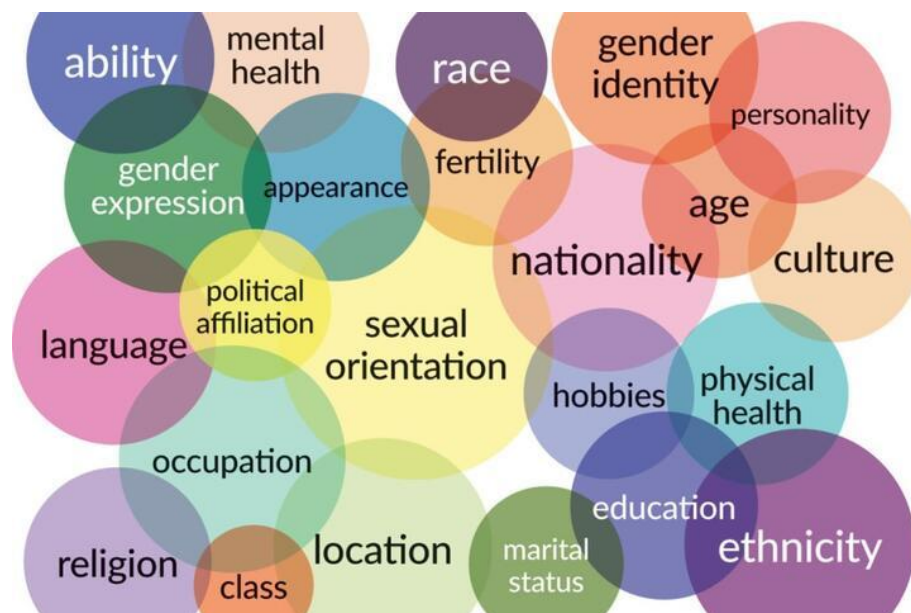
term 'identities' are not objects but processes constituted in and through power relations," write Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix (2004). (p. 77) .

Later, Kimberle Crenshaw, a American law Professor, used the word intersectionality in 1989 as a critique of US anti-discrimination legislation that failed to recognise that Black women's distinct experiences of racism and sexism as interrelated. It is critical to understand how racism and sexism are together rather than individually. According to Crenshaw, all inequality is not equal in nature and form. An intersectional approach demonstrates how people's social identities may interact, merge, collide and even have increasing discriminatory experiences. Recognizing the historical settings around an issue is also a important part of using an intersectional lens.

Intersectionality emphasises a fundamental and important premise: that power hierarchies exist not just between men and women, but also inside women. Power dynamics play a role in choosing who gets to speak for women and whose stories count. Much of the feminist rhetoric has been influenced by the experiences of wealthy women. The term intersectionality has today being used in academics and even in areas beyond black identities like queer theories, queer identities.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is discrimination faced by African women.
2. Discuss the meaning of Intersectionality.



In the above diagram we can see the different identities a individual carries in one's own life span. All these identities also intersect in a given time or even changes. This shows how intersectionality is a part which we cannot ignore. The source of the image is in the given below link.

3.5 CONTEXTUALIZING INTERSECTIONALITY

Long histories of violence and systemic discrimination have established fundamental imbalances that put certain people at a disadvantage from the start. Poverty, caste systems, racism, and sexism are examples of inequities that interact and deny individuals their rights and equitable chances. The consequences span generations. In such places the intersectionality as tool to study helps immensely.

Those most affected by gender-based violence and inequalities are also the most impoverished and marginalized—black and brown women, indigenous women, women in rural areas, young girls, girls living with disabilities, trans youth, and gender non-conforming youth," says Majandra Rodriguez Acha, a youth leader and climate justice advocate from Lima, Peru. She emphasises that the fact that underprivileged populations are disproportionately affected by natural catastrophes and the destructive impacts of climate change is not a coincidence.

Countries and communities all across the world are confronting several dangers that are accumulating. While the concerns differ by location, they always have the same impact of amplifying pre-existing demands such as shelter, food, education, care, work, and protection.

However, many times, crisis solutions fail to safeguard the most vulnerable. "If you are invisible in regular life, your needs will not be considered, much less addressed, in a crisis," says Matcha Phorn-In, a lesbian feminist human-rights defender from Thailand who works to meet the special needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals in crisis circumstances, many of whom are indigenous. The problems posed by the coronavirus epidemic have compounded long-standing imbalances and decades of discriminatory policies, resulting in uneven outcomes.

Hence, we must consider these difficulties. Failure to do so might result in multidimensional marginalisation being conveniently neglected, as happened during the 1970s women's movement. Liberal feminists during the time contended that women's absence from the public sphere of labour had contributed to their subjugation, and that feminisms should support women's admission into the public sphere of work and education to address gender inequality. Earlier the writings tended to generalise the experiences of a select group of women, the most of whom were white, middle- or upper-class heterosexual wives. This did not represent all women's experiences. For example, Black women in the United States have historically worked as bonded labourers or paid employees in public spaces. But rather than being a path to empowerment, it led to a lot of hard labour for little money, frequently in the low-status service industry.

Indian experience:

In India, something similar happened during the early debate on women's rights, which began as part of a social reform movement headed by upper caste/class educated male reformers. In India, women are oppressed

differently depending on their caste, class, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, marginalized women, for example, have quite different gendered experiences than upper-caste, upper-class heterosexual women. Similarly, tribal and rural women have different experiences than women who live in cities. It is critical to recognise these distinctions in the category of "women" so that we do not risk universalizing or generalising women's experiences. Migrant women during Covid especially poor women had different experience than the rich. Women's experiences and obstacles in Dominant caste families (sati, child marriage, purdah, and the prohibition on widow remarriage) were universalized as those of all Indian women. It was readily disregarded later that these traditions were not practised by women in marginal caste households.

Emerging Questions:

Intersectionality delivers a powerful critique of how feminism had operated earlier. However, it also presented some worrying issues. Does feminist politics lose its meaning if we can't conceptualise or designate all women as a group? Is there a way to keep women united despite their differences?

In today's time intersectionality has also been used as a important tool while building theories, in research both qualitative and quantitative research. However, qualitative research methodology has been using it very often as it helps to document the marginalized voices more clearly.

3.6 COVID AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Covid-19 has caused a stir in modern social life, but it is far from being a great equaliser. Preliminary research has shown that different social groups experienced varied levels of contagion risk and dealt differently with the emergency's diverse implications. Evidence reveals that minorities and migrants were at a greater risk of infection than white upper and middle-class whites, and that vulnerable populations are more prone to fatalities and viral transmission. Simultaneously, civilizations are dealing with social distancing tactics and their disruptive social and economic effects, which disproportionately affect society's most vulnerable members: women, children, low-income groups, and ethnic minorities. Comprehending what is happening in the present epidemic, both in terms of social factors and social repercussions, requires an intersectional framework. Intersectional researchers study the intersections of numerous systems of inequity (such as gender, age, class, and ethnicity) that have a multiplying impact when disadvantaged positions meet in the same individual to understand the inequality. Individual and community exposure to Covid-19 is the outcome of many and interconnected inequity patterns. Until date, social science research has undervalued the importance of intersectionality in evaluating the pandemic's social and economic implications.

3.7 POSSIBLE SOLUTION

One of the possible solutions for the problems faced for women is intersectionality. We can understand how diverse groups are confronting numerous, interrelated concerns at the same time when we look through an intersectional feminist lens. Standing in solidarity with one another, challenging power systems, and speaking out against the core causes of injustices are all necessary steps toward a future, so that leaves no one behind. "Seeing inequality as a "they" or "unfortunate other" problem is problematic," Crenshaw adds. "We have to be willing to look at all of the ways our systems replicate these inequities, including both the benefits and the costs."

Check Your Progress:

1. Discuss some solutions to the improve status of Women (you can add your own points).
2. Discuss the Indigenous women and feminism

3.8 SUMMARY

Many women many feminisms basically point out that the experiences of females are different. The second important topic in the chapter is that of intersectionality. It questions the focus on an overarching singular identity and questions the exclusion of others by pointing to the presence of numerous identities such as gender, caste, class, race, religion, and so on. It challenges the notions of sisterhood and a unified, monolithic women's movement. It claims that oppression cannot be defined universally, and that patriarchy cannot be the sole source of oppression.

3.10 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of Intersectionality and give some examples of how it can be applied to Indian context.
2. Discuss the black feminism and African marginalization through universal sisterhood.
3. Discuss the concept of universal sisterhood.

3.11 REFERENCES

- https://www.sas.rochester.edu/gsw/assets/pdf/sisterhood/SuggestedTopics_Agenda.pdf
- Kelli Zaytoun, & Judith Ezekiel. (2016). Sisterhood in Movement: Feminist Solidarity in France and the United States. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 37(1), 195–214. <https://doi.org/10.5250/fronjwomestud.37.1.0195>

- Evans, E. (2015). The sisterhood: inclusivity and spaces. In *The Politics of Third Wave Feminisms* (pp. 111-133). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Hooks, Bell. "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women." *Feminist Review*, no. 23 (1986): 125–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1394725>.
- Lorber, J. (1997). ^ The^ variety of feminisms and their contributions to gender equality. BIS Verlag.
- <https://diglib.bis.uni-oldenburg.de/pub/unireden/ur97/kap1.pdf>
- Colleen Dryden, Natasha Erlank, Youmna Haffejee, Kathy Hardy, Siza Nhlapo, Shelley Tonkin, and Humbulani Tshamano. "The Many Voices of Feminism." *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, no. 54 (2002): 113–21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4548079>.
- Mbabuike, M. C. (2002). African Feminists and Feminisms [Review of *African Feminist Fiction and Indigenous Values*, by D. R. Wehrs]. *African Studies Review*, 45(3), 63–66. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1515100>
- "Intersectionality ." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. . Retrieved April 25, 2022 from [Encyclopedia.com: https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/intersectionality](https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/intersectionality)
- Britannica, T. Editors of *Encyclopaedia* (Invalid Date). What Is Intersectionality?. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/story/what-is-intersectionality>
- <https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/intersectionality-lgbtqia-community>
- Maestriperi, L. (2021). The Covid-19 pandemics: why intersectionality matters. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 6, 52. AUTHOR=Maestriperi Lara
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>
- <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/3AVhUCGMLJ8FIQ> you can check this link for different posters and little notes about female movements, slogans, thought processes of a given period of history.

MODULE II

4

CLASSICAL: LIBERAL – MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT, RADICAL - KATE MILLET, SOCIALIST - JULIET MITCHELL

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Liberal Feminism – Mary Wollstonecraft
- 4.3 Radical Feminism - Kate Millet
- 4.4 Socialist Feminism – Juliet Mitchell
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Questions
- 4.7 References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the various strands of feminism
- To familiarize students with liberal, radical socialist feminist schools of thought

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Feminism is one of the oldest movements in global history. There's no single definition, but feminism boils down to ending gender discrimination and bringing about gender equality. The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests.

Feminism has altered predominant perspectives in a wide range of areas within Western society, ranging from culture to law. Feminist activists have campaigned for women's legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, voting rights); for women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy, for abortion rights, and for reproductive rights (including access to contraception and quality prenatal care); for protection of women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape; for workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; against misogyny; and against other forms of gender-specific discrimination against women.

During much of its history, most feminist movements and theories had leaders who were predominantly middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America. However, at least since Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech to American feminists, women of other races have proposed alternative feminisms. This trend accelerated in the 1960s with the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the collapse of European colonialism in Africa, the Caribbean, parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia. Since that time, women in former European colonies and the Third World have proposed "Post-colonial" and "Third World" feminisms. Some Postcolonial Feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, are critical of Western feminism for being ethnocentric. Black feminists, such as Angela Davis and Alice Walker, share this view.

Simone de Beauvoir wrote that "the first time we see a woman take up her pen in defense of her sex" was Christine de Pizan who wrote *Epître au Dieu d'Amour* (Epistle to the God of Love) in the 15th century. Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa and Modesta di Pozzo di Forzi worked in the 16th century. Marie Le Jars de Gournay, Anne Bradstreet and Francois Poullain de la Barre wrote during the 17th.

Feminists and scholars have divided the movement's history into three "waves". The first wave refers mainly to women's suffrage movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (mainly concerned with women's right to vote). The second wave refers to the ideas and actions associated with the women's liberation movement beginning in the 1960s (which campaigned for legal and social rights for women). The third wave refers to a continuation of, and a reaction to the perceived failures of, second-wave feminism, beginning in the 1990s.

The history of feminist politics and theory is often talked of as consisting of three "waves." First-wave feminism is generally associated with the women's suffrage movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. First-wave feminism was characterized by a focus on officially mandated inequalities between men and women, such as the legal barring of women from voting, property rights, employment, equal rights in marriage, and positions of political power and authority. Second-wave feminism is associated with the women's liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. While seeing themselves as inheritors of the politics of the first wave which focused primarily on legal obstacles to women's rights, second-wave feminists began concentrating on less "official" barriers to gender equality, addressing issues like sexuality, reproductive rights, women's roles and labor in the home, and patriarchal culture.

Finally, what is called third-wave feminism is generally associated with feminist politics and movements that began in the 1980s and continue on to today. Third-wave feminism emerged out of a critique of the politics of the second wave, as many feminists felt that earlier generations had over-generalized the experiences of white, middle-class, heterosexual women and ignored (and even suppressed) the viewpoints of women of color, the poor, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and women from the non-Western world. Third-wave feminists have critiqued essential or universal

notions of womanhood, and focus on issues of racism, homophobia, and Eurocentrism as part of their feminist agenda.

Classical: Liberal – Mary Wollstonecraft, Radical - Kate Millet, Socialist - Juliet Mitchell

Hence, feminism does not refer to one coherent theory, doctrine, or political movement. The range of movements and ideologies that thrive under the term feminism, however, are all committed to political and social change. Feminism recognizes that we live in a patriarchal world, that is to say a world in which women are, and have historically been, oppressed by and unequal to men. It opposes this, and strives to change existing power structures so that people of all genders and races have control over their own bodies, have equal opportunities and value, can participate fully in community life, and are allowed to live with dignity and freedom.

The First wave of feminism proved both a boon and a bane for the women's movement. On the positive side, it united activists for a common goal and provided the movement its methodical structure. However, certain activists became complacent after achieving suffrage rights for women, seeing it as a complete liberation for women. It was only with the emergence of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s that the movement got rejuvenated, especially with the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique* in 1963. In this book, Friedan has pointed out that women still felt frustrated, owing to their confinement to the domestic chores in roles of a mother and a housewife.

Consequently, the second wave feminism posited that the women question had remained unresolved despite accomplishment of legal and political rights. With the works of Germaine Greer and Kate Millet, what was earlier concerned with political rights of women, was now radicalized to include sexual, psychological and personal aspects of women's oppression. It was during the second wave that the slogan 'the personal is political' was coined by Carol Hanisch. Based on this, feminist activists saw political and cultural inequalities as closely interlinked.

It was a period when personal lives of women were seen as a reflection of deeply political power structures of patriarchal society. Thus, unlike the conventional feminists, radical feminists of this period kept politics of the personal at the centre of their movement. Consequently, this wave saw protests against the Miss America beauty pageant in New Jersey in the late 1960s, as it was seen akin to a 'cattle parade' by the feminists, who saw such events as objectification of women's beauty.

While the first wave of feminism was identified with heterosexual white women, mostly belonging to the Western middle-class, the second wave toiled to bring together women of developing nations, and of colour based on the ideology of solidarity and sisterhood. Simone De Beauvoir in her 1949 work *The Second Sex* argued that the problem with feminist politics was that women do not say "we", unlike labourers or blacks, foregrounding this argument in the observation that the women's movement lacked solidarity. To tackle this problem, it was prophesied that women's struggle is a class struggle, in which women form a social class

in whose case race, gender and class come together to lead to their oppression at the hands of the patriarchal class.

The emergent feminist political theory was a manifestation of intersection of three sets of ideologies – Liberal Feminism, Marxist Feminism (and its extension known as Socialist Feminism) and Radical Feminism. Besides this, during this wave, the feminists saw women having a better approach towards achieving solutions to social problems owing either to their long history of oppression or to their biological construction as more sensitive than men. In this context, the term Ecological feminism was coined to indicate that women are natural environmentalists, by virtue of being born as women.

4.2 LIBERAL FEMINISM–MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

Emphasizing equal individual rights and liberties for women and men and downplaying sexual differences, liberal feminism is the most widely accepted social and political philosophy among feminists. Liberal feminists defend the equal rationality of the sexes and emphasize the importance of structuring social, familial, and sexual roles in ways that promote women's autonomous self-fulfillment. They emphasize the similarities between men and women rather than the average differences between them, attribute most of the personality and character differences between the sexes to the social construction of gender, and tend to promote a single set of androgynous virtues for both women and men.

While rejecting strong claims of sexual difference that might underwrite different and potentially hierarchical rights and social roles, liberal feminists otherwise avoid the promotion of particular conceptions of the good life for either men or women, instead defending a broad sphere of neutrality and privacy within which individuals may pursue forms of life most congenial to them. While liberal feminists acknowledge that some choices made by women are questionable because conditioned by sexist social practices, they also tend to avoid maternalism and any second-guessing of those choices made without coercion, or threats. Fully informed and mentally competent adult women are assumed to be the final judges, of their own best interests. Thus, liberal feminists tend to resist legislative intervention that would gainsay the judgment of women.

The preeminence of this perspective owes much to the fact that it encompasses a wide range of related but distinct views that fit comfortably within the framework of political liberalism. It does not fundamentally challenge capitalism or heterosexuality; nor does it recommend separatism, as do more radical feminists. Instead, it aims to extend the full range of freedoms in a liberal democratic society to women, criticizing practices that deny women equal protection under the law as well as laws that de facto discriminate against women. Liberal feminists reject utopian visions of an ideal society in favor of one that eliminates coercion and promotes autonomous choices among all its citizens.

Liberal feminism has its roots in the writings of, among others, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), and Harriet Taylor Mill (1807-1858). Many writers prior to Wollstonecraft, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), had explicitly argued that men and women were by nature not merely different in kind but different in "natural rank," with women being weaker physically, intellectually, and emotionally (358-61). Men were said to be more rational, women more emotional; their respective educations should reflect these differences.

A few philosophers, such as John Locke (1632-1704), had argued that the sexes should receive the same education and that they shared equal rights and responsibilities with respect to their children. Nonetheless, these writers stopped short of defending complete sexual equality (either for social roles or legal rights), and putative sex differences have been, and in some parts of the world continue to be, the basis of laws denying women the right to retain property in marriage and the right to vote.

Mary Wollstonecraft was an English writer and passionate advocate of educational and social equality for women. She outlined her beliefs in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), considered a classic of feminism. The daughter of a farmer, Wollstonecraft taught school and worked as a governess, experiences that inspired her views in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787). In 1788 she began working as a translator for the London publisher Joseph Johnson, who published several of her works, including the novel *Mary: A Fiction* (1788). Her mature work on woman's place in society is *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which calls for women and men to be educated equally.

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman is one of the trailblazing works of feminism. Published in 1792, Wollstonecraft's work argued that the educational system of her time deliberately trained women to be frivolous and incapable. She posited that an educational system that allowed girls the same advantages as boys would result in women who would be not only exceptional wives and mothers but also capable workers in many professions. Other early feminists had made similar pleas for improved education for women, but Wollstonecraft's work was unique in suggesting that the betterment of women's status be affected through such political change as the radical reform of national educational systems. Such change, she concluded, would benefit all society.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write about liberal feminism.

4.3 RADICAL FEMINISM - KATE MILLET:

Radical feminism is a philosophy emphasizing the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and women, or, more specifically, the social domination of women by men. Radical feminism views patriarchy as dividing societal rights, privileges, and power primarily along the lines of sex, and as a result, oppressing women and privileging men. Radical

feminism opposes existing political and social organization in general because it is inherently tied to patriarchy. Thus, radical feminists tend to be skeptical of political action within the current system and instead tend to focus on culture change that undermines patriarchy and associated hierarchical structures.

Radical feminism was rooted in the wider radical contemporary movement. Women who participated in the anti-war and New Left political movements of the 1960s found themselves excluded from equal power by the men within the movement, despite the movements' supposed underlying values of empowerment. Many of these women split off into specifically feminist groups, while still retaining much of their original political radical ideals and methods. "Radical feminism" became the term used for the more radical edge of feminism.

Kate Millett, author of the groundbreaking bestseller *Sexual Politics*, was the feminist who launched the second wave of the women's liberation movement. Millett, who has died aged 82 in 2017, developed the theory that for women, the personal is political. The basis of *Sexual Politics* (1970) was an analysis of patriarchal power. Millett developed the notion that men have institutionalized power over women, and that this power is socially constructed as opposed to biological or innate. This theory was the foundation for a new approach to feminist thinking that became known as radical feminism.

Sexual Politics was published at the time of an emerging women's liberation movement, and an emerging politics that began to define male dominance as a political and institutional form of oppression. Millett's work articulated this theory to the wider world, and in particular to the intellectual liberal establishment, thereby launching radical feminism as a significant new political theory and movement. In her book, Millett explained women's complicity in male domination by analyzing the way in which females are socialized into accepting patriarchal values and norms, which challenged the notion that female subservience is somehow natural.

Sexual Politics includes sex scenes by three leading male writers: Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and D.H. Lawrence. Millett analysed the subjugation of women in each. These writers were key figures in the progressive literary scene. Each had a huge influence on the counterculture politics of the time, and embedded the notion that female sexual subordination and male dominance was somehow "sexy".

Millett invented feminist literary criticism. Before her, it did not exist. Her urgent, elegant 1970 masterwork, *Sexual Politics*, with its wry takedowns of the casual misogyny and rape scenes that had made the reputations of the sexual revolutionaries du jour—Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, D.H. Lawrence—introduced a new and remarkably durable idea: you could interpret literature in light of its gender dynamics. You could go to novels and poems for an education in sex as power. You may not agree that

literature is the proper medium for consciousness-raising, but you can't deny that Millett made reading a life-changing, even world-changing, act.

Classical: Liberal – Mary Wollstonecraft, Radical - Kate Millet, Socialist - Juliet Mitchell

She wrote *Sexual Politics* as a dissertation in the English department at Columbia, but, graduate student or not, she was going to get to the bottom of how her sex came to be so degraded—if she had to take on all of human history to do it. If some of *Sexual Politics*, such as her long disquisition on Freud, feels dated, that's partly because Millett changed the way we think about figures like him. Hardly anyone reads Freud literally anymore. "Penis envy" now sounds like a phrase you'd splash onto some ironic retro poster, not a real diagnosis. The idea that a political order based on domination has its origin in the subordination of women—well, it no longer seems novel, and she bears some responsibility for that, too.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is radical feminism?

4.4 SOCIALIST FEMINISM – JULIET MITCHELL

Adding to the contentions of the Marxist feminists that capitalism acts as the primary reason of oppression against women, socialist feminists acknowledge patriarchal arrangement of power distribution as the secondary reason for the same. At the heart of the socialist feminist movement lies an understanding that women's oppression is not a product of any one system of repression, rather it is a common outcome of multiple forces of discrimination like sexuality, class, race, ethnicity, and of course gender. Thus, in order to achieve liberation of women, the movement aimed at dealing with these issues collectively.

However, since for socialist feminists, economic oppression and patriarchy constitute the basis of all other forms of subjugation, they argue that even though women are oppressed in almost all societies, the degree and character of oppression depends upon the economic realities of a given society. Socialist feminists like Barbara Ehrenreich, Sylvia Walby, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Donna Haraway, Emma Goldman and Selma James, etc. stress the significance of women's role as birth giver, child-rearer and socialiser, care-taker of the sick, and one who transforms the household in a place worth living for men who invest their labor outside.

They argue that this emotional labor of women is often ignored owing to the patriarchal character of society. And even when women engage in what Marxists would call as productive labor in the job-market, they are subjected to biases like lower wages compared to their male counterparts and sexual harassment. Thus, socialist feminists organized themselves into women's unions like the Chicago Women's Liberation Union to demand justified rights for a dignified living.

In 1974, at the height of the women's movement, Juliet Mitchell shocked her fellow feminists by challenging the entrenched belief that Freud was the enemy. She argued that a rejection of psychoanalysis as bourgeois and patriarchal was fatal for feminism. However, it may have been used, she

pointed out, psychoanalysis is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but rather an analysis of one. “If we are interested in understanding and challenging the oppression of women,” she says, “we cannot afford to neglect psychoanalysis.” Mitchell reflects on the changing relationship between these two major influences on twentieth-century thought. Original and provocative, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* remains an essential component of the feminist canon.

If women's existence is defined by capitalism and patriarchy through their ruling ideologies and institutions, then an understanding of capitalism alone (or patriarchy in isolation) will not deal with the problem of women's oppression. As Juliet Mitchell has written, “the overthrow of the capitalist economy and the political challenge that effects this do not in themselves mean a transformation of patriarchal ideology.”

Check Your Progress:

1. Explain socialist feminism.

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we saw three main perspectives – liberal, radical and socialist. Liberal is the variety of feminism that works within the structure of mainstream society to integrate women into that structure. Its roots stretch back to the social contract theory of government instituted by the American Revolution. Mary Wollstonecraft proposed equality for women. As is often the case with liberals, they slog along inside the system, getting little done amongst the compromises until some radical movement shows up and pulls those compromises left of center.

Radical feminism provides an important foundation for the rest of "feminist flavors". Seen by many as the "undesirable" element of feminism, Radical feminism is actually the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from feminism; ideas which get shaped and pounded out in various ways by other (but not all) branches of feminism.

Socialist feminism is the result of Marxism meeting radical feminism. Echols offers a description of socialist feminism as a marriage between Marxism and radical feminism, with Marxism the dominant partner. Marxists and socialists often call themselves "radical," but they use the term to refer to a completely different "root" of society: the economic system.

4.6 QUESTIONS

- Elaborate on the contribution of Mary Wollstonecraft.
- How relevant was Kate Millet's contribution to feminism?
- Write a note on Psychoanalysis and Feminism.

4.7 REFERENCES

- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2022, April 23). Mary Wollstonecraft. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mary-Wollstonecraft>
- <http://routledgesoc.com/profile/feminist-social-theory>
- Juliet Mitchell. *Women's Estate*. Penguin 1971. 182pp. pp 75-122
- Kate Millett. "Sexual Politics." 1970
- Mary Daly, "The Church and the Second Sex: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation." 1968
- McAfee, Noëlle and Katie B. Howard, "Feminist Political Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.).
- Millett, K., MacKinnon, C., & Mead, R. (2016). *Sexual Politics*: Columbia University Press.
- Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research* (Vols. 1-0). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781412957397
- Morales, H. feminism and ancient literature. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Retrieved 7 May. 2022, from <https://oxfordre.com/classics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.001.0001/acrefore-9780199381135-e-8235>.
- Friedan, B. (2010). *The Feminine Mystique*: Penguin Books.

CONTEMPORARY - BLACK FEMINISM - BELL HOOKS, POSTMODERN FEMINISM: JULIA KRISTEVA

Unit Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Black Feminism - Bell Hooks

5.3 Postmodern Feminism – Julia Kristeva

5.4 Summary

5.5 Questions

5.6 References

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand contemporary feminist movement
- To familiarize students with Black feminism
- To know what is Post-modern feminism

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Feminism emerged as a protest against the domination of women by men in all walks of life. It seeks to promote the role of women and empower them to seek their rightful place in society. Feminism views the existing social order essentially as male-dominated where women are positioned at a disadvantaged level. They reject the idea that the sexual differences are the cause of miseries of women. They instead argue that it is 'gender', a social construct, rather than a biological fact of sex, which stereotyped womanhood, designated her for less significant social roles. Feminism seeks to identify the institutions and methods of oppression, on the one hand, and, seek to identify the possible ways to challenge this oppression, on the other.

Contemporary feminist thought has transcended ideological boundaries and easily crisscrosses and benefitting from other disciplines. Over the years, newer dimensions have emerged in the feminist theory which looks beyond the classic issues of justice, equality, thus broadening the horizon of feminism. New insights from cultural studies, literary theory, postmodern theories, psychoanalysis and postcolonial studies have opened up new areas of feminist contention in the recent times.

Feminist theory in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is not limited to thinking about the lives of men and women and all those in

between, but rather, offers explanations of how gender shapes the entire social world. Contemporary feminist theory moves beyond the general categories in ways that reformulate the key concerns of both feminist intellectual inquiry and politically engaged activism. This chapter focuses on the contemporary feminist theories that expand, critique, and otherwise engage with second-wave feminist theories.

Wollstonecraft vehemently pointed out that women in her times were oppressed, marginalized, uneducated, and isolated from the real world. Along with the education of girls, she advocated for universal education also. She writes, "Men and women must be educated in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in", and without any crucial change in society, there can be no real "revolution in female manners".

Towards the end of nineteenth century, some male thinkers began to argue for rights of women and marked a shift in the history of feminism. William Thompson and John Stuart Mill acknowledged the inspirational influence of their wives. William Thompson published his *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Restrain them in Political and thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery* and describes this book as "the protest of at least one man and one woman" against the "degradation of one half of the adult portion of the human race".

Eventually, a host of thinkers and writers reacted to Western feminism as it focused on gender discrimination only and neglected differences of race and class which are very much interrelated with gender. It lacked the comprehensiveness to encompass the existence of black women and other women of color. Brazilian women have asserted the Eurocentric view of feminism as it avoids the discussion of problems like racism, health issues, and other problems related to work. Western feminists are confronted with the problems of sexism and political and social inequalities while the 'Third World' women confront and face even more complicated and intricate problems.

Bell Hooks in her *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* (1984) critically argued about and analyzes, that the women "who are most victimized by sexist oppression . . . who are powerless to change their condition in life have never been permitted to speak". She holds the view that Western feminism is basically racist and has disappointed and dissatisfied many women. Sojourner Truth was one of the first feminists who drew white women's attention to black slave women and made them realize that women could work like men.

With this as a context, let's now look at Black feminism as well the Post-modern feminism, with special emphasis on its intellectuals.

5.2 BLACK FEMINISM - BELL HOOKS

Black women writers analyze the complex and complicated social issues because of being black and women. They clearly express the immeasurable and fathomless pain, injustice, and horror of slavery. Black women have faced many kinds of oppression both from the white people and black men. This experience has provided them enough material whereby they can vent their feelings of oppression. These writers have been deliberately made inconspicuous by both the traditions—the women’s literary tradition and by the African-American literary tradition. The black women’s writings have been “patronized, slighted and misunderstood by a cultural establishment operating according to male norms out of male perceptions”.

The white female scholars and writers deliberately excluded the works of black women writers from literary anthologies and critical studies. The best illustration of this can be found in Patricia Meyer Spacks’s book *The Female Imagination: Literary and Psychological Investigation of Women’s Writing* where one finds definite apathy and complacency for black female writers. The black female writers were pityingly disenfranchised from both the critical works on the tradition of white women writers as well as black men writers of their own native literary tradition.

White women very hypocritically thought the movement to be theirs and ignored the fact that women are divided by various differences—sexism, racism, and class privilege. Hooks writes her own experience in feminist groups and declares that white women applied a very condescending attitude towards non-white women. By doing so, they reminded them that it was them who allowed these women to participate in the feminist movement. They never saw them as equals.

bell hooks, pseudonym of Gloria Jean Watkins, (born September 25, 1952, Hopkinsville, Kentucky, U.S.—died December 15, 2021, Berea, Kentucky), American scholar and activist whose work examined the connections between race, gender, and class. She often explored the varied perceptions of Black women and Black women writers and the development of feminist identities.

hooks, in her early years of education, was subjected to racial discrimination in schools. Growing up with trauma, she moved to an integrated school in the late 1960s. She eventually received her B.A. in English Literature from Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She completed her PhD at the University of California. Since 2004, hooks taught at Berea College in Kentucky, the liberal arts college that offers free tuition, reports *The Guardian*.

Hooks’s first book, “*And There We Wept*”, a collection of poems was published in 1978. Her first major work, ‘*Ain’t I a woman?*’, published in 1981 was widely recognised as a landmark feminist text. The book was

written by a 24-year-old hooks and in 1992 it was declared one of the 20 most influential books in the past 20 years by Publishers Weekly.

In the 1980s hooks established a support group for Black women called the Sisters of the Yam, which she later used as the title of a book, published in 1993, celebrating Black sisterhood. Her other writings included *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (1984), *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989), *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992), *Killing Rage: Ending Racism* (1995), *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies* (1996), *Remembered Rapture: The Writer at Work* (1999), *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (2000), *Communion: The Female Search for Love* (2002), and the companion books *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (2003) and *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004). *Writing Beyond Race: Living Theory and Practice* was published in 2012. She also wrote a number of autobiographical works, such as *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) and *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (1997).

hooks work has always been centred around how the feminist movement is confined to the upper-class, white women with lesser regard to the needs and struggle of the poor and non-white women. In her book, 'Ain't I a Woman', hooks wrote, "It is obvious that many women have appropriated feminism to serve their own ends, especially those white women who have been at the forefront of the movement; but rather than resigning myself to this appropriation I choose to re-appropriate the term 'feminism', to focus on the fact that to be 'feminist' in any authentic sense of the term is to want for all people, female and male, liberation from sexist role patterns, domination, and oppression."

hooks was always vocal about the representation of the Black culture in music, films and the field of art. She also held strong views on rap music and its roots, which majorly stems from the control exerted on Black people inside their homes and on the streets.

hooks views on patriarchy and masculinity were also deemed controversial. However, with her ferocious commitments and beliefs, she had once said, "I want my work to be about healing". In her book, 'The Will To Change: Men, masculinity and love', a rather controversial book during its time of publication, hooks argued that masculinity is a hole and a regime that presses everyone including men.

Black feminism stresses upon the fact that sexism, racism, and class oppression are very much interlinked and intersectional. Black feminists had to face different challenges: to show other black females that feminism was not a white women movement, to persuade and command white women to share power with them and to fight to end the misogynist tendencies of Black Nationalism.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a great growth in black feminist writers. They openly criticized gender, white male patriarchy and other types of hegemony and dominance. 1980s was a significant time in which some

black women writers and literary critics strictly speculated about gender and black women as subjects in historical contexts.

Check Your Progress:

1. Who was bell hooks?

5.3 POSTMODERN FEMINISM – JULIA KRISTEVA

Postmodern feminism explores the idea of gendered writing and rejects those concepts. Postmodern feminism can be broken down into postmodernity and feminist theory. Postmodernity traditionally refers to the social, political, technological, and economic changes that have led to a globalization and mass culture (Laughey, 2007). Feminism studies refers to the diverse ideologies and understanding of gender and womanhood that broadly look to understand and address the inequality between the sexes (Laughey, 2007).

Postmodern feminists aim to establish how language can be a divisive and an overarchingly sexist factor, since it was never created for women (Tong, 1998). They also reject classically traditional feminist thought and values, with some key members going as far as to reject the term “feminist” (Tong, 1998). Postmodern feminists contentiously reject the idea of essentialism or the belief that there is an inherent difference between men and women (Tong, 1998). Postmodern feminism plays into deconstructing the patriarchy and the systematic values it furthers (Tong, 1998).

When dealing with gendered language, postmodern feminist scholars interreact with the texts of Jacques Lacan and his theory of the Symbolic Order. The Symbolic Order is the theory that when young children learn language, they will have to submit to the Order so they can follow linguistic patterns of society (Tong, 1998). By doing this, the child will eventually speak the language of the Symbolic Order. Since the Symbolic Order regulates society through the regulation of individuals, individuals constantly use the language and perpetuate the standards that define gender roles and other social roles (Tong, 1998).

Postmodern feminists like, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva use the ideas of the Symbolic Order and relate theme to the gendered language postmodern feminism deals with. For example, Luce Irigaray looks into the Symbolic order and Freud by distancing their masculine philosophical thoughts in order to liberate the feminine (Tong, 1998). Irigaray examines how everything that is known to women is from a masculine linguistic point of view. This understanding of the feminine reasserts the masculine system and its singularity (Tong, 1998).

Expanding off that Irigaray touches base on the idea speculum to clarify the sameness that is used with Freud and Lacan. Irigaray argues that the speculum is based around how men are unable to discuss and define women because the “masculine discourse has never been able to understand woman, or the feminine, as anything other than a reflection of

man, or the masculine” (Tong, 1998, p. 202). Men cannot do these processes because women are reflections of the men rather than a separate entity of a women (Tong, 1998). Julia Kristeva, like Irigaray, argues with Lacan’s theory of the Symbolic Order; however, her critique focuses on rejecting feminism. Kristeva, importantly rejects the idea of masculine or feminine identification of the Symbolic Order, understanding that different genders can exist and operate under masculine and feminine norms (Tong, 1998).

Born in 1941, Kristeva is a Bulgarian-born French feminist and form the part of what is called French Feminism, along with other feminists like Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray. French feminism is considered quite different than the Anglo-American feminism for the reason that French feminism, which heavily uses ideas from philosophy, psychoanalysis, linguistics, post-modernism and post-structuralism, is, and as rightly pointed out by various feminist critic, theoretical in nature.

Kristeva argues that western philosophy and the entire patriarchal system is founded on the idea of repressing any difference, and has thrived by suppressing this difference. Anything that deviates this system, defies its logic and structure is labelled as “abnormal,” “perversion,” “unnatural,” criminality and many other such things which this system tries to suppress with complete force and authority, lest it will disrupt and break the very foundation of it.

Kristeva, like other French feminists, uses Freud and Lacan’s psychoanalysis to prove one point, that gender difference is a social construction that a child tries to enact in his sexual stages as discussed by Freud, and his behaviour towards his and other’s sexuality is heavily influenced by our circumstances one is brought up in.

So, like Lacan, Kristeva points out that it’s the language that creates the awareness of the sexual difference in a child when the child starts categorising and understanding the patriarchal world, including the authority of father and patriarchy which makes the child suppress lots of desires and ideas.

Although many feminist theorists and literary critics have found Kristeva's ideas useful and provocative, Kristeva's relation to feminism has been ambivalent. Her views of feminism are best represented in her essay "Women's Time" in *New Maladies of the Soul*. In this essay originally published in 1979, Kristeva argues that there are three phases of feminism. She rejects the first phase because it seeks universal equality and overlooks sexual differences. She implicitly criticizes Simone de Beauvoir and the rejection of motherhood; rather than reject motherhood Kristeva insists that we need a new discourse of maternity. In fact, in "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," Kristeva suggests that "real female innovation (in whatever field) will only come about when maternity, female creation and the link between them are better understood".

Kristeva also rejects what she sees as the second phase of feminism because it seeks a uniquely feminine language, which she thinks is

impossible. Kristeva does not agree with feminists who maintain that language and culture are essentially patriarchal and must somehow be abandoned. On the contrary, Kristeva insists that culture and language are the domain of speaking beings and women are primarily speaking beings. Kristeva endorses what she identifies as the third phase of feminism which seeks to reconceive of identity and difference and their relationship. This current phase of feminism refuses to choose identity over difference or vice versa; rather, it explores multiple identities, including multiple sexual identities. In an interview with Rosalind Coward, Kristeva proposes that there are as many sexualities as there are individuals.

Postmodern feminism still carries an important role in society for breaking down the boundaries of sexism and patriarchal values. That being said, critics of postmodern feminism believe that the writings and the theorists focus too much on the academia of postmodern feminism rather than being applicable to society.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is Postmodern feminism?

5.4 SUMMARY

The white feminist theorists did not take cognizance of issues related to racism, gender discrimination, and class conflict and such urgencies of black female experience. The exclusion of black women from the feminist theory and antiracist discourses became clear for the first time in the social movements of the 1960s and 70s which fought for racial and gender equality. The task was accomplished by the black theorists like Bell Hooks, Angela Davis, and Patricia Hill Collins who stressed on the marginalization of black women due to race, sex, class, and gender.

Black women joined the feminist movement to put an end to sexist oppression but soon they were to realize the harsh reality that white women were hardly concerned with the various problems faced by the non-white women. The participants came to realize that the feminist movement was concerned with the small minority who had organized the movement. Their role in the movement was never given due credit and their efforts went unnoticed.

The racial segregation against the black women was so brazen that the term “women” meant “white women” and the term “blacks” signified “black men.” Black women were always destined to suffer from stereotyping and were portrayed negatively and suffered many atrocities like persecution, beating, torture, etc. This cruel, pathetic, and piteous racial attitude of white female folk towards black women resulted in the unavoidable emergence of women’s organizations whose sole aim was to end racism.

Bell Hooks is another important feminist theorist who contributed to the intersectionality theory. In the preface to her *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* (1984), Hooks discussed the black Americans in her

hometown and explained the meaning of her title, “From Margin to Centre.”

Contemporary - Black Feminism
- Bell Hooks, Postmodern
Feminism: Julia Kristeva

Postmodern feminism’s rejection of gendered language is becoming more and more applicable to society. Gendered language is common and can often go unnoticed when it is not searched for. It can also be associated with the pronouns that individuals are labeled by in society. As pronouns fall into the masculine (he) or feminine (she) of society they tend to also be defined by the masculine binary established in the Symbolic Order. Furthermore, as more individuals are identifying as nonbinary, they are therefore rejecting the masculine or feminine binary that is established by the Symbolic Order by not relating to a specific gendered identifier. Many languages already use this practice with pronouns. Though gendered pronouns do not directly tie into the ideas of postmodern feminism, they both to an extent question the idea of gendered language and how it effects a society’s language.

Kristeva’s theories synthesized elements from such dissimilar thinkers as the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, the French philosopher Michel Foucault, and the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Two distinct trends characterize her writings: an early structuralist-semiotic phase and a later psychoanalytic-feminist phase. During the latter period Kristeva created a new study she called “semanalysis,” a combination of the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud and the semiology, or semiotics (the study of signs), of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Her most important contribution to the philosophy of language was her distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic aspects of language. The semiotic, which is manifested in rhythm and tone, is associated with the maternal body. The symbolic, on the other hand, corresponds to grammar and syntax and is associated with referential meaning. With this distinction, Kristeva attempted to bring the “speaking body” back into linguistics and philosophy. She proposed that bodily drives are discharged in language and that the structure of language is already operating in the body.

5.5 QUESTIONS

1. Who was Julia Kristeva?
2. What is Black feminism?
3. Compare Black feminism and Liberal feminism?

5.6 REFERENCES

- Bakytzhanova, A. (2020). The development of contemporary feminism.
- Beasley, C. (2000). What is Feminism?: An Introduction to Feminist Theory. London: Sage.

- Beauvoir, S., & Parshley, H. M. (1972). *The second sex*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2022, February 11). bell hooks. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/bell-hooks>
- Meagher, M. (2019). Contemporary Feminist Theory. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Sociology* (eds G. Ritzer and W.W. Murphy).
- Brenden. (2017, November 11). Every Single Time James Charles has said “Hi sisters” for One Minute Straight [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wmyn_q2YjoA
- Kweeny Kween. (2018, April 15). The Evolution of Shanes’ “Hey What’s Up You Guys, Yes” [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjdLz0ISvSs>
- Laughey, D. (2007). *Key Themes in Media Theory*. London: McGraw Hill.
- Tong, R.P. (1998). *Feminist Thought* (2nd ed.) Colorado: Westview Press.

KUMUD PAWADE'S THOUGHTFUL OUTBURST AND DALIT FEMINISM

Unit Structure

6.0 Objective

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Personal Narrative of Caste Consciousness

6.3 The Autobiography Talks about Gender Awareness

6.4 Conclusion of Antasphot

6.5 Dalit Women's Autobiography and Dalit Feminism: Important Themes

6.6 Summary

6.7 Questions

6.8 Reference

6.0 OBJECTIVE

- To introduce students to the writing of Kumud Pawde
- To raise awareness of Dalit Feminism among students

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Kumud Pawade is a writer, feminist, and social thinker from Maharashtra. She was born in Nagpur in 1938 and is a Dalit. Her autobiography, *Antasphot*, was first written in Marathi in 1981. It is made up of stories from her life that tell a story about herself and the people around her. Also, the autobiography tells us how different social and political institutions made Kumud's life hard and how she overcame them. *Antasphot* also talks about the different ways that the Hindu social order is unfair to Dalit men and women, which makes their lives hard. The word "antasphot" means "outburst" in English, but as she said in the beginning of the story, it is a thoughtful response to one's own and other people's experiences. So, it is a Thoughtful Outburst in a real sense.

In her story, the narrator shows that she has a critical awareness of herself, her social position in her community, and the system that put her and her community on the outside. She says that the institution of caste shapes the lives of both individuals and groups. At the same time, women are used because of their caste and because they are women. She agrees that Dalit women are exploited twice as much as other women and are also left out twice as much. She says bad things about the way Hindu society and the lives of women are run by caste, class, and patriarchy. In many places in

the text, the author says what she thinks about the oppressive environment. She talks about caste and her family's patriarchy, and she speaks out against both caste and gender inequality.

Thoughtful Outburst is an English translation of Antasphot. It is made up of nine short special testimonies that allow the author to call on women to break the rules that have been passed down from the past. Some of the most important ideas in the text are rituals, the power of men in the family and society, Dalit propaganda, and what's really going on behind the curtain. Kumud Pawade is so upset by how oppressive Indian society is that she has no choice but to strongly criticize it. She says, "How can I see my life and the lives of my wounded community as human beings when a culture based on hierarchy, like Indian society, literally rips the flesh off the minds of individuals and communities and hurts them?" This question won't leave me alone. Because of this, I start to feel like my brain is going to explode, and when this feeling comes out in words, it's called a "thoughtful outburst." This is how I feel about Antasphot.

6.2 PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF CASTE CONSCIOUSNESS

Dalit autobiographies are important because they show how unfair the "high caste" has been to them and make them feel bad about it.

Kumud Pawade is a voice of the oppressed who attacks the stratified Hindu religion for its unfortunate ideas and values. Kumud did not have to deal with extreme poverty or grow up in a bad place. She didn't miss out on the most important things in life, like getting an education and being safe. She was learning in the city of Nagpur with other children from the upper caste. She was still very hurt by the way the mothers of her upper-caste Brahmin friends treated her differently. Quite a few times, insulting words were said to her. "Don't go near her! Don't get too close to her! Don't mess around with her. If you don't change, don't come home anymore!" "I take a bath every day with soap, just like they do," she thinks. All of my clothes are clean. I think my house is even cleaner than theirs. So why do they look down on me?" She gets angry. One day, the young girl goes to the home of a Brahmin school friend for a religious ceremony. She stays there, mesmerized, as Vedic Sanskrit Mantras are chanted. All of a sudden, she is severely reprimanded and sent out of the house. As she cleans up, she hears, "These Mahars are so full of themselves these days!"

Kumud talks about how people treated her differently because of her marriage to someone from a different caste. Since she got married to a Maratha boy, she is no longer a Dalit girl. Still, her original identity kept her from joining the social life of the upper class. Dr. Ambedkar worked to get rid of caste, and he thought that marriages between people from different castes were one way to do this. But the author says that caste is a social idea that can never be taken away from a person. In this place, people are known not by their names but by their caste. She has seen for herself how rigid caste can be. She talks about how strange her father-in-

law was. He was so stubborn and old-fashioned that he wouldn't let go of his son for marrying a Mahar girl. Even after he had a grandchild, his anger did not go away. She says with great excitement, "I was very angry." My son was not held by the old man. Even though this man was related to us by blood, he didn't touch his grandson because he was born to a Mahar woman." She says how angry she is that he is being treated wrongly. During their hard times, instead of helping their son, he cut off all ties with him because he was getting married to Kumud. During an argument with his wife, he told her, "It's your son who has hurt my reputation in the community." I own 450 acres of land and a metric tonne of gold. People are scared of me just because of my name, Gulabrao Patil, which is now mud. How can a son be my son if he causes his father to lose his caste? "70). People care so much about their caste that they are willing to cut ties with their family and friends in order to keep their "status" in society.

In *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies, and Considerations*, Sharankumar Limbale said that caste awareness is the most important thing about Dalit writing. Dalit literature is written by Dalits who know what it's like to be Dalit and are aware of being Dalit. Dalit autobiographies show the real lives of Dalits, which can only be understood if you know about caste. Kumud is a symbol of how her Mahar caste thinks. She says that people with high castes will never give up on their empty religious values. She talks about the differences between castes that she has seen in her family and in the outside world. After he got married, Kumud moved to the neighborhood of wealthy Marwaris and Brahmins. When her mother-in-law invited her neighbors to her house, they always came up with a reason not to go. When Kumud found out why, she politely turned down their invitations on the grounds that it wasn't clean. Her education and the Phule-Ambedkarite spirit helped her come up with a sharp answer.

The Dalit women's organisation is supposed to help the lowest caste women get ahead, but she is shocked to see that the members care less about the organization's original goal and more about copying the morals and manners of the upper caste elite. She is a member of the group, so she has seen how their platform hides their real goal. She thinks, "If this tendency to act like the upper class takes root among us, we will also become prisoners of class consciousness." She says that she doesn't like how her people are getting into high culture. She says, "This is a day that the people in charge of this culture wouldn't have let us see." We can only see this day because of Babasaheb, who had a great soul. How much do we owe him? But when I see how proud they are and how bad their position smells, I want to grind up the high values of Buddhism and pour them down their throats." True Buddhists are sad that most educated and well-off Dalits have chosen not to follow Buddhism's simple path. Baby Kamble wrote about the same pain in her work. Kumud said something mean about what hurt her heart. The situation was serious because of her bold claims. She told me, "When the man from the huts walks into this hall, he doesn't think about his simple home. When he becomes a man of the classes, the man of the masses turns his back on the masses. He

completely forgets that he has something to give back to the place where he was born. For comfort and ease, we sell ourselves. Our tragedy is that."

Kumud makes a difference between Dalit women from the upper class and Dalit women from the countryside who don't belong to any class. Caste fights still happen in rural villages, where Dalit women don't have access to basic things like toilets, bathrooms, drinking water, and so on. At the convention, one of her friends asked about the safety of Dalit women, who are always afraid of being used. The caste system is a big reason why Dalit women who live in rural areas, are poor, and don't know how to read or write are mistreated, exploited, robbed, and hurt. She thinks that the Dalits' fate is because of their caste. She says, "The left needs to remember that this society is not just based on class, but also on varna and caste." "Religion is a strong tool in this place. In fact, religion should bring people together and make them feel like brothers and sisters, but Hinduism encourages people to be separate and keep the lower caste from the higher caste. The ideas of caste and religion are criticized in her writing.

Kumud talks about what happened to Sanat Kumar, a very close friend of hers. Even though he was from the Jain community (an upper caste), he went to Kumud's house often. His dynamic ideas went beyond the limits of caste. He was afraid to tell his parents about her caste. He told his mother that Kumud was Kunbi when he met Kumud for the first time (maratha). Kumud felt bad about having to hide her own caste, which she was very proud of. Even though she has been married to someone from a different caste for sixteen years, others still care about caste. She wasn't welcome at parties or with her family. Only because she was brave was, she able to face people. She would say, "Will the party get dirty if I sit down to eat?" if something poked her. She talks about one of her brothers-in-law who helped her and her husband when they got married and pretended to be a Phule follower but acted in a different way when he was alone. Kumud said that people like this were "hidden enemies of Phule's ideas."

Kumud remembers that after the reservation policy and scholarship programmes for SCs started, there were a lot of negative comments made about Dalits. They were punished for going to school and making progress. Many people would try to make it harder for Dalit students to go to school. On a legal level, untouchability was done away with, but who will get Manu out of the minds of millions of people? Her pain is mostly for their own people, who are being led away from the Phule-Ambedkar vision because they are being misled. Many female professors were rude to Dalit students and got involved in small-scale caste problems. She said, "Savitribai did some radical things that made it possible for women in Maharashtra to get the same education as men. But it wouldn't be wrong to say that these women are moving away from what Phule wanted. Isn't this dishonest?" This is the tragedy of our time: educated young people don't know what it's like to grow up in India and how hard it is. Because of this, men and women are getting caught up in the showy life and don't care about those who also help society. This is Kumud's pain, which makes her sad and restless.

She wrote down another memory from 1978. In a local marriage hall, her brother got married. Even lower-class people like cooks and workers had to follow the rules of caste hegemony. When they saw the pictures of Buddha and Ambedkar on the stage, they began to talk about it in low voices. It was clear that the people who cleaned didn't want to do the dishes after the meal. When Kumud's family told the hall manager about it, he said he couldn't do anything because he couldn't make the workers do anything against their will. In her life, she met a lot of people who still believe in the horrible old ideas about purity and pollution. They are biased in how they think about and treat Dalits. Dalits are untouchable, dirty, unhygienic, uneducated, and unworthy, according to them. So, when she talked about a personal experience, she told herself, "One can live in India or outside of India, but caste remains." Not only did she think about food, pollution, and purity taboos, but she also thought about other things, like how she learned to speak Sanskrit, which was thought to be a godly language that a Dalit or even a woman could never learn. She wrote about how she felt: "For a few hundred years, things that we couldn't even touch have become clear, and things that were kept in a hard shell have become easy to get to." The knowledge wrapped in a shroud of mystery has been taken up by someone who religion says is no better than a lowly bug." When she learned the language, many conservative people from outside and inside her community would turn their heads the opposite way to show they didn't like it.

Kumud wanted to show the world that no matter what caste a person is in, they can still be the best. But they can't because the world won't let them. For her, caste is always there, even when people try to put it aside and forget about it. Even though she tried very hard to get a job, she was still unemployed two years after she finished her master's degree. She didn't get a job as an assistant professor at a government college until she got married to a Maratha. This fact still makes her feel bad. She says that Kumud Pawade got the job, not Kumud Somkuvar. So, "All the credit for Sou (Mrs.) Kumud Pawade being a professor of Sanskrit goes to the so-called Savarna identity." Her old caste is still at a disadvantage."

As a social thinker who is against caste and religion, Kumud hopes that the country's mind will change. These changes must be in line with what Phule and Ambedkar believed in terms of ideas. Neo-Buddhists should go ahead and break the chains of caste from their minds and form a new "Biradari" (community) based on humanitarian values because, according to her, religion breaks people by dividing society into caste pieces. So, broken people turn to humanism, which is a religion started by Buddha and accepted and praised by Ambedkar for a good cause. Dalits and people who are not Dalits should not only think about their own interests. She says in the end, "We want to find out what people have done for other people out of a sense of humanism." In this kind of humanism, the person should be the most important thing. Birds, cows, and even ants can live on after people do. But here, birds are important. Cows are given the food of the last rite, and ants get sugar, cow's grass, monkey's nuts, and fish balls made from flour. But a person's child has to pick up pieces of food from garbage dumps while getting kicked and hit by the elite."

6.3 THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY TALKS ABOUT GENDER AWARENESS

A woman with a sensitive heart is likely to be a rebel at heart. Patriarchal norms put a lot of restrictions on women, so Kumud Pawade's education went against them. In fact, patriarchy is what Indian society is most known for. Women are always treated worse than men. Only during religious ceremonies do they get to be the most important thing. If not, their lives would be like a garbage dump. As an educated woman, Kumud spoke out against the way women were treated. She has written a lot about the Savitri Vrat, which is a fast that married women do to make sure they have the same husband in their next seven lives. The first part of her story is called "How I Stopped Savitri (pooja) Fasting", and it's about a ritual that a relative of the author took part in. The Hindu religion has created rituals that are meant to be done only by women. Often, these rituals are done because the women don't understand, because they feel like they have to, or because they don't know any better.

A family member of Kumud's was beaten up by her husband at her home. Under the excuse that she can't have children, he gets a second wife and moves her into the house. Since then, not only her husband but also his second wife have been cruel to her all the time. She was tortured over and over again in that house, and when it got too bad, she decided to move in with the author. A woman who has been taken advantage of for no reason is still willing to do the Savitri Vrat and fast in honor of her husband. Once, the author asked again, "Why do you keep fasting for a husband like that?" Her relative says, "Well, at least God will hear me." At least he'll be smarter in the next life." The writer tells her to think about things in a reasonable and logical way so that if she gets the same husband in her next life because of the vrat, his second wife will also ask for the same husband, and she will suffer again. So, since the writer doesn't see any reason to fast, her relative Mayabai stops doing the Savitri pooja for good.

The story was about how women have blind beliefs and follow others without looking at their scientific side. She says that this religious practice is unfair because it is only for women. She says that she doesn't like that people have such wrong ideas. "Are all the Bible stories meant to make a woman obey?" she asks. Even if such cruel religious practices are covered in gold, they can't be admired. Even though I was happy being with my husband, there were many other women who were going through hell being with theirs. Even though these women kept wishing for the same hell, I had my own job to do. Why should I keep doing such bad things when I know how bad they are? And shouldn't I tell these women that these traditions are cruel and have no point? She is strongly against the pull of patriarchy and doesn't want men to be in charge. In Hindu society, there are many rituals and rites that make women feel less important, and Kumud, as a modern, educated woman, will never accept this.

But it's shocking to see how most Indian women have accepted patriarchy as something they can't change. So, the customs are so deeply ingrained in

their minds that even a reformer would have a hard time getting rid of them. She says, "I was very upset to see how blindly those women followed the false ideas without giving them a second thought." In this society, did women and Shudras have any role other than that of slaves? By making their deaths more important than their husbands', they were taught to sacrifice, even for bad reasons. Because of these beliefs, women used to pray, "O God, let me die before my husband. Let me leave this world wearing green bangles, a yellow sari, and kumkum on my forehead."

Rege says, "When Kumud publicly disagreed with the idea that a wife should die before her husband, she got a lot of flak from her group because they were so stuck in their customs and traditions." She thought that if death was one of the things that couldn't be denied, then it was true for both men and women. The idea that women are slaves and men are masters, followed by the idea that a woman is a bhogdasi, is what makes these customs and values related to marriage status. Men who are sad about their wives' deaths are made fun of and become jokes. Kumud says what she thinks about the relationship between a husband and his wife. She thinks that a husband should be more than just his wife's partner; he should also be her friend. A wife should stand next to or in front of her husband, not behind him.

Under the title "After All, We Are Women", Kumud has written a whole chapter about women. She talks about how Dalit women are standing up for their rights and how their views of their own community have changed. She talks about how patriarchy is popular in the Dalit group. Because they are "women," men treat women badly and look down on them. She talks about the incident with the railway officials to show how patriarchy can show up in the Dalit community. The author and some of her friends were going to Delhi to go to a conference for women. At the train station, the man at the ticket counter didn't give them the tickets for no reason. He wanted to make them feel bad about themselves, so he started a fight with them.

Kumud says that the people who live there are to blame for this. She was sure that Ambedkar had become a Buddhist because Buddhism is based on rationality, tolerance, patience, and caring for others. Even though the Dalit community puts a lot of emphasis on Buddha's teachings, the author isn't sure if they really follow them. She says, "Each person makes up the community." It will only move forward if the person does. But if one person is corrupt, rude, violent, and has a degrading and repressive attitude, the whole community will become the same way. If Buddhists follow the same path of karma phala and don't follow Dnyanamargaa, then Babasaheb's followers will be the reason why both Babasaheb and Buddha lose. Kumud thought that Babasaheb's way of teaching and the path he showed to the low-class Dalits did not change the minds and hearts of the upper-class Dalits.

In her story, Kumud brings up the problem of women being used because of their gender, which has been a problem in our society for a long time.

In fact, her story goes beyond the limits of autobiography, as it is clear from the story that she wants to spread the idea that the Dalit is a respectable person. In the same way, she wants to open the eyes of the well-off Dalit class so that they can see their brothers and sisters who are still being crushed by caste, class, and patriarchy. So, at the beginning of the story, she says that her outburst shouldn't be taken as an emotional one. Instead, it's meant to make people think because it's supposed to make sense.

She also thinks of Dalit women as forward-thinking people who are interested in many different modern jobs. Her life is like a graph of the lives of Dalit women going up. Her humble opinion is that Dalit women should improve their intellectual skills and write about how patriarchy is wrong. Her programme for Dalits and Dalit women is groundbreaking and shows how far she wants to move forward. Dalit women have to deal with both oppressions based on their caste and oppression based on the power of men. And because of this, she is more oppressed than other women, both in material and non-material ways. But many of the time, the rich, well-educated women who work directly with Dalit women to give them more power are not aware of the problems ordinary women face.

She had a similar experience at the Dalit movement convention, where the girls who are exploited and raped because of their caste and servitude were not taken as seriously as they should have been. They said it was a "dirty subject" to talk about. Kumud says, "The shame and pain that our poor, helpless women have had to go through for centuries are just a dirty thing for these powerful women." These women are bored by the talk. How can they honestly think about it? What are you thinking? We forget everything when we eat something good. So... is there anyone who can wake up the conscience? Are there any honest people? Why then blame us? Besides, we're just women anyway!" "Just women" is a way for men to admit that women aren't important to them, or it's a way to irritate women by making them wonder if they are as smart or able to work as well as men. It could also be her anger and disgust at the ways that society's social and cultural norms make women feel small.

She tried hard to learn the Sanskrit language, but people told her not to bother. India's social history shows that only Brahmins were allowed to learn Sanskrit. No one else was allowed to learn it. It was out of the question for women and Shudras. In a society with this kind of mentality, Kumud was able to reach the top by getting past all the problems and criticism he faced. She writes, "Just like the last time, our smart neighbors laughed at me. Some of them taught college or were lawyers. How can that be? Even though you did well in high school, is it easy to get an M.A. in Sanskrit? One shouldn't brag about what they can do. People were talking. And what was most funny was that most of them were from our own caste. It was strange to hear the smart people in her community say things that made her feel bad about herself. It was just a male ego with a patriarchal view of the world talking badly. They say that a woman should never be better at being a man than a man. She strongly criticized and rejected this patriarchal hegemony, which means that men are in charge.

In fact, the educated part of the community expected mutual trust, unity, and cooperation from women so that they could fight against oppressive social norms and values and make their own space. But she is worried about how people in her community treat each other because they think some are better than others.

6.4 CONCLUSION OF ANTASPHOT

In her writing, Kumud Pawade shows how caste and gender are not as simple as they seem. In her autobiography, she shows that Dalit women have more problems than high-caste women, both because they are Dalit and because they are women. Her research into caste and gender issues made her a pioneer in the 1980s and 1990s, when Dalit feminism began to take shape. The women's movement has done a lot of work on issues such as low wages, economic exploitation, unemployment, women's legal rights, and so on. But these studies are done without understanding how caste works and what life is like for Dalit women. So, the women's movement hasn't done enough to solve the problems that Dalit women face because of their caste. Kumud Pawade asks all Dalit women to spread Dr. Ambedkar's ideas. So, the poor village women and Dalit women go on to live lives of respect.

Kumud Pawade talks about caste, class, and patriarchy in the lives of Dalits who live in cities. Kumud Pawade teaches the Sanskrit language. In her story, she talks about the lives of Dalits, the Dalit movement, the Dalit elite, and, most importantly, how the political and social worlds don't care about the Dalit community. In the same way, she has shown that sub-caste is a source of tension among Dalits. She says that Hindu holy books, like the Ramayana, are to blame for this kind of division. She says that it makes her sad that people praise God even though they have done bad things. Her autobiography is a search for the many ways to understand what it means to be Dalit.

Women's stories help us learn about a hidden world of disapproval, disagreement, and protest among women. In ways that have never been said before, their works also show how and why women are sensitive and creative in ways that are shared. They show up as a way to fight against the fact that the political, economic, and power structures are dominated by men. They show how controlling and repressive male hegemony is in the family and in the community. In their honest and brilliant autobiographies, intellectual Dalit women talk about things like women's relationships with each other, cooperation and relationships within and outside the community, religious rituals, and daily work relationships.

The writings are a challenge to writers and historians who only care about the lives of famous people. In this way, Dalit stories break with literary traditions because the main characters aren't great leaders or social workers. Instead, they are very ordinary, invisible men and women who are fighting against the odds in their personal and social lives. Their focus is on people who don't seem to be important in history, but their writings

can still be seen as historical records that shed a lot of light on the state of humanity under the influence of what is now called "Ambedkarism."

6.5 DALIT WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND DALIT FEMINISM : IMPORTANT THEMES

To find out what Dalit women's autobiographies are like as a whole, it is important to look at what makes them different.

The Real and Honest Portrayal of Dalit Society:

The stories told by Dalit women show what Dalit society is like. They describe in detail how people live, what their customs are, and what they believe. The stories written by Dalit men are about how the upper caste stratum kept them down in social and political ways.

Caste Concerns:

Dalit women have hard lives because of their caste and gender. This is why they are called "the voiceless among the voiceless." Urmila Pawar could not get a place to live because of her caste. Kumud Pawade talks about violence based on caste in a way that is both moving and shocking.

Awareness of gender:

A lot of Dalit women writers are writing about gender issues that haven't been talked about much in the past. They focus on oppression based on things other than gender, such as class, caste, language, religion, etc. Being a Dalit woman means that they have to be aware of their gender.

A Sneak Peek at Patriarchy:

The patriarchal structure of Dalit society is openly criticised in the autobiographies of Dalit women. Their work shows how hard it was for them to live in a patriarchal society. Most likely, the Dalit woman's writings are all about showing this truth. They also explain clearly what they did to help the bigger cause.

Concerns of women:

In their autobiographies, Dalit women talk about problems that all women face. They talk about both caste oppression and women's problems in general. The people at the top of society always see them as things they can use. The fact that they are women means that they have to deal with these problems.

Realistic expression that is honest and true:

Dalit women's stories are more realistic because they question the bad things the Dalit community does, showing the apathy of women on the inside. They tell the truth about what happens in Dalit society because patriarchy is so strict. In the men's autobiographies, Dalit women are portrayed as patient mothers, obedient wives, and helpless daughters.

Pay attention to everyday things:

Dalit women's autobiographies are mostly about their everyday lives. People can read about the horrible things that Dalit women do in the villages. By showing how people live their private lives, the autobiographies show the bad side of the patriarchal system.

Domestic Violence:

Dalit women's autobiographies show what domestic violence is really like. Dalit men's writing shows that they only care about themselves and don't care about women. Manu tells men how to act, and he celebrates the fact that men keep women as slaves.

The focus is on the group rather than on each person:

Dalit women's stories do not separate them from their own surroundings, their families, or society as a whole. Their focus is not on the flaws of each person, but on the pain, grief, and misery of the whole community. The focus is on the group rather than on each person.

Poverty:

Almost all Dalit autobiographies talk a lot about poverty, which is a major theme of their writing. Baby Kamble's story shows that Dalits live in terrible poverty. They are poor not because they are left out, but because they are sent away, don't know what's going on, and don't fight back.

Education:

Dalits see education as a tool that can help them fight against all odds. It is seen as a way out of the social oppression they have had to deal with for a long time. Almost all of the written testimonies by Dalit women talk about this issue as a way to help their families. Also, their writings talk about what education is and what it takes to get an education. In Kumud Pawade's autobiography, you can see this at work. When she finishes college, she has to change her last name in order to get a job. Dalit women's writings show that the Indian social order is based on caste and that it is a harsh reality. Baby Kamble's story shows how Ambedkar's teachings have helped people. Urmila Pawar's book "The Weave of My Life" shows how education has changed and helped her family in many ways.

Ambedkarite Ideology:

The Dalit women's autobiography is likely a result of how Ambedkar's ideas have affected them. The autobiographies talk about how to get rid of superstitions and tell their readers to follow the path of reason with their great leader as their guide.

Dalit Feminism Put Into Words:

Dalit literature is mostly about Dalit men, but sometimes it talks about how Dalit women are treated badly. Baby Kamble's autobiography is a

challenge to the way Dalit men tend to treat their women as second-class citizens. Urmila Pawar and Kumud Pawade also write their stories from the point of view of strong women.

6.6 SUMMARY

Kumud Pawade's autobiography, *Antasphot*, was first written in Marathi in 1981. It is made up of stories that tell a story about herself and the people around her. She talks about caste and her family's patriarchy, and she speaks out against both caste and gender inequality. *Thoughtful Outburst* is an English translation of *Antasphot*. Kumud Pawade is upset by how oppressive Indian society is that she has no choice but to criticize it.

Some of the most important ideas are rituals, the power of men in the family and society, and Dalit propaganda. Kumud grew up with other children from the upper-caste Brahmin community in Nagpur, India. She was hurt by the way her Brahmin friends treated her differently. In India, caste is a social idea that can never be taken away from a person. Dr. Ambedkar worked to get rid of caste, and he thought that marriages between people from different castes were one way to do this.

But author Gulabrao Patil has seen for herself how rigid caste can be. Dalit autobiographies show the real lives of Dalits, which can only be understood if you know about caste. Kumud is a symbol of how her Mahar caste thinks. She talks about the differences between castes that she has seen in her family and in the outside world. Kumud says she wants to "grind up the high values of Buddhism and pour them down their throats".

True Buddhists are sad that most educated and well-off Dalits have chosen not to follow Buddhism's simple path. Baby Kamble wrote about the same pain in her work. Kumud: Caste fights still happen in rural villages where Dalit women don't have access to basic things like toilets, bathrooms, drinking water, and so on. She says the left needs to remember that society is based on class, but also on varna and caste. After reservation, Dalits were punished for going to school and making progress.

Kumud says educated young people don't know what it's like to grow up in India. She says they are being led away from the Phule-Ambedkar vision by those who care about society. Kumud: "One can live in India or outside of India, but caste remains". She wrote about how she learned to speak Sanskrit, which was thought to be a godly language that a Dalit or even a woman could never learn. The knowledge wrapped in a shroud of mystery has been taken by someone who religion says is no better than a lowly bug.

Kumud wanted to show that no matter what caste a person is in, they can still be the best. For her, caste is always there, even when people try to put it aside. Neo-Buddhists should go ahead and break the chains of caste from their minds. Kumud Pawade is a writer who has written about the Savitri Vrat, which is a fast that married women do to make sure they have

the same husband in their next seven lives. Her family member was beaten up by her husband and moved into a second wife's house.

Kumud says that this religious practice is unfair because it is only for women. She is strongly against the pull of patriarchy and doesn't want men to be in charge. In Hindu society, there are many rituals and rites that make women feel less important. Author Kumud Rege has written a book called 'After All, We Are Women'. She talks about how Dalit women are standing up for their rights.

She says patriarchy is popular in the Dalit community where men look down on women because they are "women". Kumud's story is meant to make people think because it's supposed to make sense. She was sure Ambedkar had become a Buddhist because Buddhism is based on rationality, tolerance and patience. Kumud wants to spread the idea that the Dalit is a respectable person. Kumud: Dalit women should improve their intellectual skills and write about how patriarchy is wrong.

She had a similar experience at the Dalit movement convention, where girls who are exploited and raped were not taken seriously. Kumud's programme for Dalit and non-Dalit women is groundbreaking. Kumud was able to reach the top by getting past all the problems and criticism he faced. She tried hard to learn the Sanskrit language, but people told her not to bother. India's social history shows that only Brahmins were allowed to learn Sanskrit.

Kumud Pawade was a pioneer in the 1980s and 1990s when Dalit feminism began to take shape. She shows that Dalit women have more problems than high-caste women because they are Dalit. Her autobiography is a search for ways to understand what it means to be a Dalit woman. The autobiographies of Dalit women show a very different side to the Dalit narrative. They are writing about gender and class issues that haven't been talked about much before.

Their writings shed light on humanity under the influence of what is now called "Ambedkarism". Dalit women's autobiographies are more realistic because they question the bad things the Dalit community does. They tell the truth about what happens in Dalit society because patriarchy is so strict. Almost all Dalit autobiographies talk a lot about poverty, which is a major theme of their writing. Dalit women's writings show that the Indian social order is based on caste and that it is a harsh reality.

Almost all of the written testimonies by Dalit women talk about education as a way to help their families. The autobiographies tell their readers to follow the path of reason with Ambedkar as their guide.

6.7 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Kumud Pawade's main points as they appeared in her Antasphot write-up.
2. Discuss the central themes of Dalit autobiography and Dalit feminism.

3. Write an essay about the caste and gender equation using Antasphot as an example.

6.8 REFERENCE

- Pascal, Roy. 1960. Design and Truth in Autobiography. London: Routledge and K. Poul
- Devy G.N. 2006. The G.N. Devy Reader. Hyderabad: Orient Longman
- Valmiki, Omprakash. 2003. Joothan: A Dalit Life. Kolkota: Aamya Publications.
- Rege, Sharmila. 2006. Writing Caste, Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonies. New Delhi: Zubaan Publications
- Kumar, Raj. 2010. "Dalit Literature: A Perspective from Below". Dalit Assertion in Society: Literature and History. (eds.) Ahmed, Imtiaz and Upadhyay S.B. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan
- Guru, Gopal. "Afterward". Kamble, Baby. Prisons We Broke, (trans.) Maya Pandit, 2009, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan
- Poitevin, Guy. "Dalit Autobiographical Narratives: Figures of Subaltern Consciousness, Assertion and Identity"
- Pawar, Urmila. Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir
- Guru, Gopal. 2003. „Dalit Women Talk Differently“. Gender and Caste. (ed.), A. Rao. New Delhi: Women Unlimited
- Pawade, Kumud. 1981. Antasphot. Aurangabad: Anand Publication
- Dangle, Arjun. 1992 (ed.). Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature. Hyderabad: Orient Longman

QUEER PERSPECTIVES: JUDITH BUTLER

Unit Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 What Queer identity means?
- 7.3 Queer Theory
- 7.4 Judith Butler
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Questions
- 7.7 References

7.0. OBJECTIVES

- To understand queer perspectives within the feminist discourse
- To familiarize students with the works of Judith Butler

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Feminism is a very broad set of ideologies and movements that focuses on defining and achieving social, economic, and political equality for women. The term was coined in 1837 by a French philosopher named Charles Fourier and has undergone a great deal of change since then. Many of us are familiar with the term Queer feminism and for many of us it might be a very new terminology/ideology that needs to be explored. As a beginner, let us start with an understanding that feminism is varied and there are different forms of feminism that men, women and others follow and these varied forms of feminism may or may not have commonalities between them.

Feminism as a movement emerged to challenge the invisibility of women and other marginalized communities in the making of the global world but in doing so the movement made the similar mistakes of being racist, homophobic, transphobic and being imperialist. Queer feminism in this regard was at the far end of the margins and in a way excluded from the mainstream feminist movement. In order to understand Queer feminism, first we must understand what Queer is? The earliest recorded use of the word 'Queer' as a form of homophobic abuse is said to be an 1894 letter by John Sholto Douglas, the Marquis of Queensberry. He was the father of Alfred Douglas and famously accused Oscar Wilde of having an affair with his son. Queer in time became a derogatory term for same-sex sex or for people with same sex attractions, particularly 'effeminate' or 'camp' gay men.

Queer is an identity which stands on the other side of the hetero identity. Initially being queer meant being "strange" or "peculiar" states Wikipedia. Queer was negatively used against those with same-sex desires or relationships in the late 19th century. Around late 1980s, queer scholars and activists started reclaiming their identity as separate from the gay political identity to establish their own distinct community. Simultaneously, Queer identities became essential for those who shunned the traditional gender identities and were looking for a broader, less conformist, and deliberately ambiguous alternative to the label LGBT that is lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender population.

Queer includes those who openly wear sexual identities like lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and those who use indigenous terms like hijras, kothis, panthis to describe themselves. In addition to this, there are regional identities of sexual non-conformity, such as jogappa and jogtas (Karnataka) and ganacharis (South India). Queer feminism is feminism with a difference - a feminism that directly challenges the issues mentioned above and does not rest on its laurels. They further believe that the definition of feminism is very restrictive in nature as it focuses only on the equality between men and women by excluding nonbinary genders and ignores the serious problems created by patriarchy that harm people of any gender and can be aggravated by people of any gender. Queer feminists' stands in radical opposition to patriarchy, a system that encourages:

- Racism, imperialism, genocide and violence
- Strict rules about gender and sexuality that hurt male, female, both or neither
- Blaming and shaming trans people, queer people, sluts and anyone who does not fit into a narrow and arbitrary body standard
- Rape culture
- A tendency to claim that democracy and liberal politics fixes all ills, rather than addressing society's problems.

Now queer feminism or Queer feminists are mainly those who identify themselves as a radical group in opposition to patriarchy. Not only this they define feminism as an inclusion of queer people and goes beyond LGBT and other gender/sexuality minorities. The term 'queer' is an umbrella term to include both who are closeted and who are public about their non-heterosexual inclinations to those who prefer to label themselves and the ones who choose to reject labeling or unable to choose a label and name themselves'. Queer includes activism and protest through art, literature, academic criticism and included too forge alliance with any counter hegemonic project.

7.2 WHAT QUEER IDENTITY MEANS?

Queer identity invariably means:

- Acknowledging infinite identities outside dualistic categories
- Believing that everyone has the right to be themselves and express without being judged or hated
- Being aware of the fact that our own identities and sexualities are never static
- Recognizing alternate gender identities
- Being attracted to anyone, with no regard to a person's gender or sex, could be attracted to more than one person at a time
- thinking about sex in different ways other than the heterosexual, male-pleasure-oriented, meant-for-reproduction kind
- constantly questioning what's considered "normal" and why that norm gets privileged over other ways of being
- addressing and understanding the intersectionality between race, gender, sexuality and class and how it affects each person's experience and identity differently
- searching for alternate ways of being and living
- looking for ways to be as inclusive as possible in order to create a world where everyone feels safe and accepted
- Embracing a free and open-ended identity and defining ourselves simply as human beings.

7.3 QUEER THEORY

The purpose of Queer theory, by its most common definition, is to challenge heteronormativity and existing, already defined categories of sexuality constantly. It speaks about the specificities and limits of struggles, which are produced by these categories. Queer theory formed the basis for Queer activism. The latter aimed, in parallel with the fight against the firmly entrenched normativity, to identify power relations and privileges in the lesbian and gay movement itself; Queer theoreticians discussed the potential or apparent benefits of their demands and raised issues that have historically been overlooked in the conduct of these struggles.

The Queer theory posed the question; did lesbian and gay movement join the ranks of the oppressive system, willingly or unwillingly? Shouldn't the primary demand still be undermining the existing patriarchal and normative order? The Queer theory, like the feminist theory, speaks of change through self-criticism and reviewing own experience, often with

gross directness for the observer. Queer theory, over time, saw the need for talking about failure and feelings.

Queer theorists spoke about depression and emotions, the essence of happiness, hope. They emphasized on the cruel optimism, which sometimes becomes a barrier for having imagined life. It became clear that the feeling of constant danger that accompanied the Queer people defined them and closed possibilities for them. There emerged the problem of realization and reproduction based on the chasing success in Queer movements as well, which is an echo of the system and power relations in which we all live.

Women, including queer women remain invisible in our history as if they never existed. Similarly, feminism too kept away queer feminism for the longest period of time as if they didn't exist. Like feminism, queer feminism too has feminisms within and it is not necessary that they match with each other. Likewise, queer theory too has multiple theories, several of which contradict with each other. In fact, many queer theorists refused to talk about any theory as they believed that it's difficult to theorize 'being queer'. Queer theory has been criticized for being inaccessible and for containing difficult words.

Queer theory is a theoretical approach that goes beyond queer studies to question the categories and assumptions on which current academic and popular understandings are based. One of the main tenets of queer theory is that their understanding of sex and sexuality, sexual identity and pretty much everything about life is contextual- that is all their understanding is a lived experience in different ways over time and across cultures. Queering is the process of reversing and destabilizing heterosexuality as a norm.

Queer theory finds its roots in post structuralism and in deconstructionism. Queer theory is also closely tied to the multicultural theory in sociology and is integral to the rise of postmodern social theory. Hence in order to understand the rise and development of the queer theory, one need to refer to the work of Foucault, Derrida, Lacan and Butler who engaged in the deep understanding and theorizing of queer theory. Michel Foucault is one of the most important founders of queer theory and his main idea which he discussed at length in 'archaeology of knowledge (1966)' and 'genealogy of power (1969)' brings out the queer ethos in a major way as in line to the queer theory, he is interested in understanding, exploring and analyzing the action and not interested in defining the origin.

Foucault is important as his work in many ways attended to the discussion of sexuality and homosexuality in academia which remained absent in the mainstream sociological discussion for a very long period of time. Queer theory gained momentum due to the fact that it promised to be more inclusive and vaster as against the 'lesbian and the gay studies' which in many ways remained limited and confined to a few identities and not include other.

You could consider queer theory a theory that takes into account all of the marginalized sexual identities that exist and gives permission for them to

be acknowledged as a legitimate alternative to traditional sexual identities. Queer theory rejects the idea of sexuality as a stable concept and of heterosexuality as a norm. This destabilization of sexual identity places queer theory in the tradition of postmodern theories and deconstructionism.

Judith Butler, one of the leading theorists in the fields of feminism and queer theory, offers the idea that gender is constructed by society. In other words, she believes that gender—the concept of a female identity or a male identity—is formed by society rather than inherent to an individual. What it means to be a woman or a man, in Butler’s view, depends on a number of systemic and systematic features of larger society. What we get, then, are gender “norms”—the behaviors, practices, and other signals that constitute what is normal for a given gender category.

According to Butler, even sexual practices are among these norms. Since Butler does not see anything inherent in gender, she suggests that gender is a kind of performance. “People perform their “womanness” or “manness” through behavior, modes of dress, activities, and so forth. Essentially, we act out our gender identity in the way that we might perform a role in a play,” she says.

Let us explore further to understand the contribution by Judith Butler within the overall discourse on Queer feminism in particular and feminism in general.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is Queer theory?

7.4 JUDITH BUTLER

Judith Pamela Butler, (born February 24, 1956, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.), American academic whose theories of the performative nature of gender and sex were influential within Francocentric philosophy, cultural theory, queer theory, and some schools of philosophical feminism from the late 20th century.

Butler’s first book, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (1987), a revised version of her doctoral dissertation, was a discussion of the concept of desire as it figures in G.W.F. Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its subsequent interpretations by various 20th-century French philosophers.

In her best-known work, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), and its sequel, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’* (1993), Butler built upon the familiar cultural-theoretic assumption that gender is socially constructed (the result of socialization, broadly conceived) rather than innate and that conventional notions of gender and sexuality serve to perpetuate the traditional domination of women by men and to justify the oppression of homosexuals and transgender persons.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler questioned the validity of much feminist political theorizing by suggesting that the subject whose oppression those theories attempted to explain—“women”—is an exclusionary construct that “achieves stability and coherence only in the context of the heterosexual matrix.” Her suspicion of the category led her to doubt the wisdom of conventional political activism aimed at protecting women’s rights and interests. She emphasized instead the subversive destabilization of “women” and other categories through consciously deviant gendered behaviour that would expose the artificiality of conventional gender roles and the arbitrariness of traditional correspondences between gender, sex, and sexuality.

Butler’s *Gender Trouble* was one of the founding texts of queer theory, and her work continued to inform much debate within cultural theory, especially in the United States, in the early 21st century. It also attracted significant criticism, however, for both its substance and its style. Even sympathetic readers of Butler’s work, for example, worried that her view of the subject as performatively constituted left her without a coherent account of individual agency. Others complained that her conception of politics as parody was impoverished and self-indulgent, amounting to a kind of moral quietism. Perhaps the most widely voiced criticism concerned her dense, jargon-laden prose and her nonlinear style of argument, both of which were viewed by some readers as rhetorical devices serving to conceal a paucity of original ideas. Butler argued in her defense that radical ideas are often best expressed in writing that challenges conventional standards of lucidity, grammar, and “common sense.”

Judith Butler, as part of third-wave feminism, applies Foucault’s ideas to the categories of gender and sexual orientation, and asks: Are there really masculine and feminine traits that come exclusively with the genes that make us male and female? Is anything really “abnormal”? Isn’t every behavior just a performance, meant to please someone or something? When examined within this framework, gender seems to be about living up to (or not living up to) a society’s expectations of what men and women should do and should be. It was this realization, accompanied by the fact that the broad swathes of the feminist movement have been plagued by racism, homophobia, transphobia, imperialism, sex-negativity, and similar ills that led to a whole new field of study called queer feminism.

Check Your Progress:

1. What was Butler’s main contribution to feminist movement?

7.5 SUMMARY

Queer theory's origin is hard to clearly define, since it came from multiple critical and cultural contexts, including feminism, post-structuralist theory, radical movements of people of color, the gay and lesbian movements, AIDS activism, many sexual subcultural practices such as sadomasochism, and postcolonialism.

Although queer theory had its beginnings in the educational sphere, the cultural events surrounding its origin also had a huge impact. Activist groups pushed back in the 1980's against the lack of government intervention after the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic. Queer theory as an academic tool came about in part from gender and sexuality studies that in turn had their origins from lesbians and gay studies and feminist theory. It is a much newer theory, in that it was established in the 1990s, and contests many of the set ideas of the more established fields it comes from by challenging the notion of defined and finite identity categories, as well as the norms that create a binary of good versus bad sexualities.

Queer theorist's contention is that there is no set normal, only changing norms that people may or may not fit into, making queer theorists' main challenge to disrupt binaries in hopes that this will destroy difference as well as inequality. One of the key concepts in queer theory is the idea of "heteronormativity," which pertains to "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged.

Heteronormativity is a worldview that promotes heterosexuality as the normal and/or preferred sexual orientation, and is reinforced in society through the institutions of marriage, taxes, employment, and adoption rights, among many others. Heteronormativity is a form of power and control that applies pressure to both straight and gay individuals, through institutional arrangements and accepted social norms.

Some of the core theorists in the development of queer theory include Michael Foucault, Gayle Rubin, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler. Michael Foucault's work on sexuality said that it was a discursive production rather than an essential part of a human, which came from his larger idea of power not being repressive and negative as productive and generative. In other words, power acts to make sexuality seem like a hidden truth that must be dug out and be made specific. Foucault refuses to accept that sexuality can be clearly defined, and instead focuses on the expansive production of sexuality within governments of power and knowledge.

The theorist most commonly identified with studying the prevailing understandings of gender and sex is Judith Butler, who draws much from Foucault's ideas but with a focus on gender. She argues in her book, *Gender Trouble*, that gender, like sexuality, is not an essential truth obtained from one's body but something that is acted out and portrayed as "reality". She argues that the strict belief that there is a "truth" of sex

makes heterosexuality as the only proper outcome because of the coherent binary created of “feminine” and “masculine” and thus creating the only logical outcome of either being a “male” or “female.”

In her later book, *Undoing Gender*, Butler makes it clear that performativity is not the same as performance. She explains that gender performativity is a repeated process that ultimately creates the subject as a subject. Butler’s work brings to light the creation of gender contesting the rigidity of the hierarchical binaries that exist and is what makes her work invaluable in queer theory.

7.6 QUESTIONS

1. What Queer identity means?
2. Elaborate on Queer theory.
3. Elaborate: ‘Gender Trouble’
4. Describe the relationship between Judith Butler and Queer theory.

7.7 REFERENCES

- Berker, M. J (2016): *Queer: a Graphic History Could Totally Change the way you think*; Icon Books.
- Butler, J. (1999). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge.
- Nair, R., & Butler, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Intersectionality, Sexuality and Psychological Therapies: Working with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Diversity*. UK: Wiley.
- Walters, Suzanna Danuta. "Queer Theory." *World History Encyclopedia*, Alfred J. Andrea, ABC-CLIO, 2011. Credo Reference.

MASCULINITY STUDIES

Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Meaning of Masculinity
- 8.3 Meaning of Masculinity Studies
- 8.4 Feminism and Masculinity Studies
- 8.5 Different Types of Masculinity
- 8.6 Masculinity as Social Construction
- 8.7 Indian context and Masculinity Studies
 - 8.7.1 Course regarding Masculinity
 - 8.7.2 Case study of MAVA NGO
- 8.8 Global Masculinity
- 8.9 Conclusion
- 8.10 Questions
- 8.11 References

8.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the meaning of Masculinity
2. To learn about the various dimensions of Masculinity studies.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will learn about masculinity studies. In several countries, male studies and masculinities studies are emerging as academic disciplines. Some institutes have separate departments, such as masculinity studies with a chairperson, funded by publicly funded donors or institutions. In our country, it is still an emerging field; however, there are several Non – Government organizations like MAVA – Men against Violence and Abuse who are working in their own way to create awareness and actions among people. This discipline is also an important domain area to understand the population, composition of population growth, discrimination towards women, psychology, men's problems, etc. In the field of literature, too, there are authors like Murakami, a Japanese writer who has published a book titled Men without Women, where he writes about men's lives and how they face problems being a man too, like loneliness, etc. Hence, this subject has much scope from a career viewpoint and as a social issue too. Before understanding Masculinity studies, let us look into the meaning of Masculinity.

8.2 MEANING OF MASCULINITY

Masculinity refers to a set of social behaviors and cultural representations that describe individuals being with certain characteristics of a man. The word ‘masculinities’ is also used to acknowledge the forms of being a man and cultural representations. These forms are related to men which is also varied throughout societies, and between various groups of men within the same civilization, and both historically and culturally (MacInnes 1998: 1) . Men’s actions, social roles, relationships, and the meanings ascribed to them are also linked to “masculinity.” Unlike the meaning of male, which emphasizes biological sex, masculinity emphasizes on gender. As a result, research of masculinities is generally not always restricted to biological men .

There are different explanations existing through which we can look into understanding masculinity, such as natural scientist’s view, masculinity in relation to male, and view it even closely related to physiological characteristics in men, such as hormones and chromosomes. Robert Bly (1991) believes that modern society’s circumstances have harmed masculinity. Masculinities may also be viewed as a sort of power dynamic, both inside males and between men and women. Masculinities, according to essentialism, emerge from the social circumstances in which men live, such as their roles in various institutions and organizations in their society and even in the framework of socially available gender discourses.

Most masculinities literature has unclear, ambiguous, and inconsistent definitions of the concept. According to MacInnes (1998), the point that differentiates masculinities from one another is that they are diverse, flexible, and hybrid. Many writers on masculinities, according to MacInnes, also view masculinity as biological males than otherwise social constructionist accounts. ‘Masculine’ bodies, behavior, or attitudes, in other words, can be seen as social practices of persons who are otherwise classified as ‘women’ (see, for example, Francis 2010; Halberstam 1998; Paechter 2006). Masculinity/ies continues to be a topic of heated discussion even today. Connell reviewed and reconstructed the idea of hegemonic masculinity in light of criticism (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) and rebuilt it to account for the complexity of the gender hierarchy, women’s agency, the interaction of local, regional, and global geography, embodiment, privilege, and power, as well as an understanding of hegemonic masculinity’s internal contradictions. Connell (2000a) also emphasizes that masculinities is a concept that “identifies patterns of gender practice, not merely groupings of individuals”: Masculinities is a term that “identifies gender practice patterns, not merely groupings.”

8.3 MEANING OF MASCULINITY STUDIES

Masculinities Studies is an interdisciplinary field that studies males and masculinity from a gender perspective. It is an academic branch within Women’s and Gender Studies, which was developed in the 1970s.

Masculinity Studies looks at what it means to be a man and how masculinity shapes boys and men. When, for example, is masculinity harmful because it restricts one's ability to express a complete spectrum of feelings and emotions? Why, for example, do many males live shorter lives than women? What are the repercussions of male identity and expression on a social, political, and historical level? Brod is largely regarded as a pioneer in the field of masculinity research. Dr. Brod, an author or editor of eight books, taught St. Norbert College's first-ever "Introduction to Masculinities" undergraduate course .

Any sensitive areas require a different set of methods to study. Generally, Social surveys, statistical analyses, ethnographies, interviews, memory work, qualitative, discursive, deconstructive, textual, and visual analyses, as well as mixed methodologies, have all been utilized often to study masculinities. Reflexivity is also used often to document life stories of individuals.

Masculinity Studies is also a critical and scholarly examination of contemporary masculinities, theory and research. It also focuses on conceptualizing and comprehending the area of masculinities which could impact upon future gender and men's research. Intersectional theorizing in partnership with feminist, queer, and sexuality studies is investigated along with masculinities studies. Masculinities studies in addition also examines identity, sex, sexuality, culture, aesthetics, technology, and other crucial social issues. It is also a trans-disciplinary topic .

According to Kimmel, et al. 2005, masculinity studies as a field is valuable for professionals in different fields of research like family, education, for building theories, etc. Masculinities studies is a lively, multidisciplinary area of research that is broadly concerned with the social creation of "manhood." Masculinities researchers also investigate the social roles attached to masculinities and its different meanings. Masculinities academics look at the different ways in which males are privileged as a group, as well focusing on the drawbacks of those benefits. They also look how not all men have equal access in the society.

Masculinity studies also consider the wide range of identities, behaviors, and meanings associated with the term masculine rather than just assuming that they are universal. Scholars of masculinity frequently use the plural form to emphasize the wide range of meanings, roles, and behaviours associated with the term. Despite the fact that gender is typically perceived as a deeply personal aspect of our identity, masculinities are formed and reproduced in the course of our everyday interactions as well as within broader societal structures.

Masculinity studies also include materials including an overview of historical studies of masculinity, theories of masculinity, and gender inequality. It also looks into the link between masculinity and sexuality, and literature on various men's movements and overviews the function of various social institutions (education, the family, the workplace, sport, and the media).

Check Your Progress:

1. Explain masculinity studies meaning in few lines.

2. Is masculinity a social construct – comment on this.

8.4 FEMINISM MASCULINITIES STUDIES

Masculinity studies can be also viewed as a field of study which is feminist-inspired, multidisciplinary discipline that arose as a topic of study in the final few decades of the twentieth century. There are researchers who point out that a great bulk of research on gender inequality focuses on women and the ways in which they are structurally and systematically disadvantaged by men. However, scholars of masculinity point out that inequality has two sides: disadvantage and privilege. (oxford)

Studies of men and masculinities follow in the footsteps of feminist studies of women and gender, aiming to uncover the social construction of gender as well as the ways in which men contribute to gender and sexual inequity. Men's studies aim to emphasis both the collective benefits that men as a group enjoy as well as the disadvantages that different groups of men experience. However, there are different viewpoints too. McMahon (1993) points out that a number of Men, Masculinities, feminism works "selectively appropriates variants of feminism whose explanations of gender relations de-emphasize fundamental themes of sexual politics" or "fails to acknowledge feminist theory and practice.

8.5 DIFFERENT TYPES OF MASCULINITY

Connell (1995, 2000a) saw social scientific study of masculinities as part of a larger, relational view of gender. According to Connell, gender is the outcome of ongoing interpretations and definitions of the reproductive and sexual capacities of the human body. Masculinities (and femininities) are thus the result of numerous interpretations and definitions: on bodies, personalities, as well as a society's culture and institutions.

According to Connell, masculinities rank higher than femininities in the 'gender hierarchy' typical of modern Western societies. He goes on to say that hegemonic masculinity is at the summit of the gender hierarchy, the culturally dominant ideal of masculinity geared on authority, physical toughness and strength, heterosexuality, and paid work. The next level of masculinity, according to Connell, is referred to as 'complicit masculinity' since it is an ideal of masculinity that few actual men live up to but from which most men profit. This is followed by 'subordinated masculinities,' the most notable of which is gay masculinity. Subordinated masculinity

refers to a range of masculine behaviors that do not strictly adhere to the macho ideals of hegemonic masculinity. The gender hierarchy places femininities at the bottom. (Emphasised or ‘compliant’ femininity and ‘resistant’ femininity are all subjected to masculinity.) According to Connell’s argument, socioeconomic events in the twentieth century (in the industrialized West) have destroyed gender hierarchy and the dominance of hegemonic masculinity in society.

In this setting, masculinity politics have emerged: “those mobilizations and conflicts where the definition of masculine gender, and with it, men’s position in gender relations, is contested” (1995: 205). Connell goes on to outline the many types of masculinity politics that exist in Western industrialized countries, like masculinity therapy (as promoted by Bly (1991), homosexual liberation, and ‘exit politics,’ in which heterosexual males publicly reject hegemonic masculinity. Others have questioned the term’s relevance due to writers like Connell theorizing several masculinities.

In the context of modern masculinity shifts, one major topic of writing about masculinities is the concept of ‘hybrid’ masculinities. Hybrid masculinity is defined by men’s selective assimilation of identification and performance components associated with marginalized and oppressed masculinities (including homosexual masculinities) and femininities, according to Bridges and Pascoe (2014). In the view of Bridges and Pascoe, hybrid masculinities are also narratives and performances that symbolically separate males (particularly young, white, heterosexual men) from hegemonic masculinity. They also portray masculinities offered to young, white, heterosexual men as less relevant than masculinities linked with other marginalized and dispossessed ‘others.’ Hybrid masculinities, according to Bridges and Pascoe (2014), strengthen existing social and symbolic boundaries in ways that frequently aim to hide gendered power and inequality structures in historical ways.

8.6 MASCULINITY AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Masculinity scholars look at men and masculinity as social constructs. Instead of concentrating on biological universals, social and behavioral scientists study the many meanings of masculinity and femininity in various circumstances. While biological “maleness” changes little, what is considered “masculine” in terms of roles, actions, bodies, and identities do. Scholars can use this diversity to their advantage.

Making and creating are important concepts in studying male identities because they hint at their historical and social character. If it were a naturally endowed feature, the different discourses of ‘correct’ masculine behavior—in books, films, and ads, for example—would be unneeded. The fact that masculinity has to be reinforced on a regular basis—“If you purchase this motorbike, you’ll be a true man”—suggests the flimsy and difficult character of gender identities. It also highlights the opportunity of highlighting alternative masculine models.

Masculinity and Honour:

The concept that ‘real men’ are directly accountable for maintaining a moral order is another crucial trait displayed through representations of societal violence and integral to a culture of masculinity. When the order is upset, the guardians must restore it. The girl deserved the terrible punishment meted out openly and immediately by an older, wiser man in the community because she had broken the group’s honour. Some other way is there to keep men as protectors of the social order cultural invaders must understand their social roles.

8.7 INDIAN CONTEXT AND MASCULINITY STUDIES

In the Indian context, the construction of masculinity begins with the family and even before the child is born. It is more of socialization that operates within closed walls of family, media, which promotes Machoism again as greatness. The model of manhood is also taught by parents, peers, public and multiple other ways. When a man stops behaving in the expected way, he is seen as feminine and again discriminated.

The problems faced by men are also not restricted to behavioral but also financial in nature. For example – A man is expected to have a stable career, look after his parents, have a home, etc. Men who are under financial hardship are more likely to have committed violence in the last year or ever. This might be due to masculine norms that encourage the idea that males are the major economic providers for their families. As a result, economic hardship might jeopardize men’s faith in themselves. They may become more dominating and aggressive towards their spouses as a result of their own powers. Let us look both from academic view point Masculinity studies and also from that of field viewpoint –

8.7.1 Course regarding Masculinity:

School of Human Studies Ambedkar University Delhi offers a course on Masculinity for Masters's Students specializing in Gender Studies.

- **Masculinity and History:** Pre-Colonial, Colonial, and Post-Colonial Settings.
 - Indian Masculinities Prior to Colonialism
 - Masculinities in the Colonial Era: Indian Men’s Formation
 - The Nation and Its Men: Post-Colonial Masculinities
- **Learning to be a Man:**
 - Members of the family
 - Education

- Spirituality
- Employment
- Social class
- **Masculinity and Sexuality:**
 - Sexuality, Men, and Women
 - Masculinity, Homosexuality, and Heterosexuality
- **Masculinities, 'Honour,' and violence:**
 - Maintaining Masculinity vs. Losing Masculinity
 - Masculinity and War
- **Masculinities, Beauty, Physicality, and Fitness:**
 - Sculpting the Male Body
 - Masculinity in the Arts

8.7.2 Case Study of MAVA:

MAVA has been engaging and mentoring thousands of young men in schools, colleges, and communities in healthy conversations about sexual health and gender-sensitive behaviour for the past 27 years. The methods used are unconventional methods such as interactive workshops, wall newspapers, story-telling, folk songs, street-theatre, travelling film festivals, youth blogs, and other social media. MAVA began through a newspaper as an inspiration from an Indian express Article that discussed about issues faced by men.

Mava views men's dominance over women has come at a cost: the inability to laugh and cry freely, to befriend one's children and spouse, to be vulnerable, and to share rather than sit alone in one's throne. In addition to supporting women's empowerment and creating a gender-just society, men must recognize that eliminating or avoiding gender-based violence against women will make their lives more humane, and their collaboration with women will improve their quality of life.

Mava views males as socially conditioned to be domineering and aggressive rather than being genetically designed to be such. There is numerous other rising men's organizations throughout the world, demonstrating that males can grow into sensitive human beings who can help prevent and eradicate gender-based discrimination and violence against women. In the last 13 years, MAVA has trained 700+ youth mentors working in nine Maharashtra districts have reached out to over 4,00,000 young men and adolescent boys through strategic collaborations with local colleges, universities, women's groups, and grassroots community-based organizations, and individual health activists. These

young people are spreading the word that woman should be respected and treated with respect.

In an informal way there are several groups out in social media like Facebook, where men approach one another for free or charged legal counseling against the crimes they have witnessed, which is practiced due to the misuse of laws by women. The percentage is also large which cannot be ignored. Hence, more encouragement in research is needed too. So, people reach out to NGOs and guide each other through social networking sites.

8.8 GLOBAL MASCULINITY

Masculinity cannot be restricted locally but globally. In Nationalism, Masculinity is used largely for military purposes. The image, power relations, division of labor, and emotional ties linked with evolving global patterns of hegemonic masculinity are used by nations attempting to build and preserve national unity, loyalty, and strength, particularly military might.

Scholars of masculinity come from various areas, demonstrating the various levels of masculine diversity. To begin with, what constitutes masculinity has evolved over time, as has what is deemed manly. Second, masculinity is culturally specific—different cultures have different conceptions of masculinity. Finally, masculinity alters intra-psychically, which implies that what it means to be a man changes through time. Finally, masculinity varies depending on the context—even within the same culture and historical period, different people may interpret masculinity differently.

Simply put, not all American, Nigerian, Chinese, or Australian men are the same. To put it another way, “being a man” means quite different things to a middle-aged homosexual Latino man in San Francisco than it does to a college-aged white heterosexual youngster in Maine. Because masculinity is so different, we can’t talk about “it” as if it were a timeless essence shared by all men. Instead, we should talk about “masculinities,” because masculinity means different things to different individuals in different countries and periods. The white masculinity is different from that of White male experiences or with a black migrant. Hence, documenting masculinity-based literature becomes very important.

Check Your Progress:

1. List out the different types of masculinity.

2. Write the name of Non-Governmental Organization which works on issues related to Men in India.

8.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we began with learning about the meaning of Masculinity. Masculinity refers to a set of social behaviors and cultural representations that describe individuals being with certain characteristics of a man. The word ‘masculinities’ is also used to acknowledge the forms of being a man and cultural representations. These forms related to men is also varied throughout societies, between various groups of men within the same civilization, and both historically and culturally. We also saw the emergence of masculinities studies as a discipline and the main areas with it deals. Masculinities Studies is an interdisciplinary field that studies males and masculinity from a gender perspective. It is an academic branch within Women’s and Gender Studies, which was developed in the 1970s. Masculinity Studies looks at what it means to be a man and how masculinity shapes boys and men. When, for example, is masculinity harmful because it restricts one’s ability to express a complete spectrum of feelings and emotions? Why, for example, do many males live shorter lives than women? What are the repercussions of male identity and expression on a social, political, and historical level? Brod is largely regarded as a pioneer in the field of masculinity research.

Different methods are used in masculinities studies like survey, reflexivity, etc. We also saw how with time, from the twentieth century, scholarship shifted away from biological determinism theories and toward a better understanding of masculinities as social constructs that exist not just as personality traits but as practices that are adopted by individuals and embedded in organisations, institutions, and global systems. We also saw the different types of masculinities like hegemonic, hybrid masculinity, etc. Scholars in the twenty-first century investigate a wide range of “masculinities.” Increasingly men are becoming conscious of masculinity as everything they do and perform instead of something they are, as well as the systemic disparities created by unequal gendered power relations in masculinity practice. We need a humanistic approach to understand the problems of men and figure out ways to rebuild the conditioning especially in societies like ours.

8.10 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss meaning of Masculinity
2. Explain meaning of Masculinity Studies
3. Write a Case study on MAVA NGO
4. Explain in brief Masculinity as a construct in the society
5. Discuss the different types of masculinity.

8.11 REFERENCES

- MacInnes, J. (1998) *The End of Masculinity*, Buckingham: Open University Press. (2011). Masculinity. obo in Sociology. doi: 10.1093/obo/9780199756384-0033
- <https://www.snc.edu/cvc/programs/2016-17/harrybrod2016/>
- Hearn, J. (2013). Methods and methodologies in critical studies on men and masculinities. In *Men, masculinities and methodologies* (pp. 26-38). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-International-Handbook-of-Masculinity-Studies/Gottzen-Mellstrom-Shefer/p/book/9781032176345>
- Waling, A. (2019). Rethinking masculinity studies: Feminism, masculinity, and poststructural accounts of agency and emotional reflexivity. *The journal of men's studies*, 27(1), 89-107.
- Pilcher, J., & Whelehan, I. (2016). *Key concepts in gender studies*. Sage.
- Priya, N., Abhishek, G., Ravi, V., Aarushi, K., Nizamuddin, K., Dhanashri, B., ... & Sanjay, K. (2014). Study on masculinity, intimate partner violence and son preference in India. New Delhi, International Center for Research on Women.graphy, embodiment, privilege, and power, as well as understanding of hegemonic masculinity's internal contradictions.
- <http://www.mavaindia.org/about.html>
- "Masculinity Studies." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. . Retrieved June 10, 2022 from Encyclopedia.com: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/masculinity-studies>

CHILD MARRIAGE, WIDOWHOOD, SATI, EDUCATION, POLITICAL RIGHTS

Unit Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction: Colonial encounter and women's question
- 9.2 Reform in the status of women as a civilizing mission
- 9.3 Family and community; the last bastion of banished freedom
- 9.4 Child marriage
- 9.5 Widowhood
- 9.6 Sati
- 9.7 Education
- 9.8 Women and Education
- 9.9 Women and Political rights
- 9.10 Conclusion
- 9.11 Reference

9.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the learners with the evils against women
- To understand various reforms brought about to fight those evils
- To analyse the role of women in politics

9.1 INTRODUCTION: COLONIAL ENCOUNTER AND WOMEN'S QUESTION

From very early period “women's question” featured prominently in the colonial discourse on India. Westernization, enlightenment and modernity were equated with progress. In this discourse the Indian fared badly as they did not treat their women well. Therefore, the women became the target of reformist agenda in the first half of 19th century as modern Indian intellectual try to respond to western critic. Thus, female infanticide was banned, sati was abolished and widow remarriage was legalized. But it is well known that the actual social impact of these reforms was limited.

In pre-colonial India, as Romila Thaper has argued, the status of women varied widely. The absence of freedom was more problem of the high cast women following a Brahmanical gender code, than the lower cast women and untouchables whom the very existential compulsion and demand for productive labor help them to break the barriers of freedom.

It is important to study the sanskritization behavior of the upwardly mobile cast, who had started accepting the behavioral norms of the cast system which was compulsory mandatory for moving up in its ranking scale. Thus, middle ranking peasant and trading cast, who owned property were forced to follow the rules of marriage inheritance and succession prescribed by the Brahmins. The Brahminical code of marriage and patriarchy had a distinct impact on the status of their women who had previously enjoyed more freedom and autonomy.

To put it in a different way, as owners of property, they now felt compelled to have legal “heirs” and hence felt the compulsion to control female sexuality and reproductive power and maintain her patriarchal family structure, which previously were the concerns mainly of the property-owning Brahmins and the upper cast. Thus, there was now an increased tendency on the part of the middle peasant and trading cast and Dalit group to reproduce Brahmanical gender codes within their communities.

In Hindu society the caste hierarchy is connected with the ideology of patriarchy and maintenance of ritual purity. The composite substance of “Jati” was transmitted to the progeny through reproduction: through semen and uterine blood. And here the role of women became crucial as they had a burden of maintaining patriarchal line. It was there for essential to control female sexuality and reproductive agency.

As women were considered responsible for bodily purity of caste, pre-pubertal marriages were prescribed and ban on inter-caste marriage was emphasized.

9.2 REFORM IN THE STATUS OF WOMEN AS A CIVILIZING MISSION

In 19th century as the “women’s question” became a part of the discourse of progress, there was a movement for female education, representing a search for a new model of womanhood as imagined by the educated colonial males. The educated middle-class males dreamt of educated gentle women as ideal companion for marriage. This new model of Indian womanhood, being a fine blend of the self, sacrificing Hindu wife and the Victorian help mate, further domesticated women as good wives and better mothers. Uneducated women were regarded as impediment to progress or modernization or bad for the family, children, community and nation. “Wrongly educated” or “overeducated” and more precisely Westernized independent women were considered to be threats to the cherished moral order of a modernized Hindu patriarchy.

An important agenda of social reform was the streamlining of marriage rules and the family structure, thus establishing strict control over female sexuality and reproductive power following the orthodox norms of Hindu society.

9.3 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY; THE LAST BASTION OF BANISHED FREEDOM

In the symbolic world of Hindu society, the moral codes that structured the position of women varied in each stratum of the hierarchy, but almost in every situation the burden of maintaining the “honor” of the community and family rested on women and this acted to their disadvantages.

It is well argued that women in this stratum of society began to lose their autonomy as their communities. Many began to experience social mobility and felt pressured to reinvent their identity within the norms of the Brahmanical culture.

9.4 CHILD MARRIAGE

The literary and autobiographical evidence of the pre-colonial period suggests that the child marriage was the universal norm in higher caste Brahmin families, where girls were married off by the age of 10 or 11 in the late 19th century as Ramakrishna Mukherji's study shows that 63% of caste Hindus and 31% of scheduled caste of Bengal practices child marriage as preferred form of wedding arrangement for their daughters.

The age of consent Bill of 1891, which proposed raising the age of marriage to 12 for girls evoked passionate resistance in Bengal. However, the 1991 census showed that educated upper castes were slowly abandoning it whereas the socially mobile lower castes had increasingly begun to adopt it at the turn of the century.

However, in the second decade of the 20th century child marriage began to decline as the popular form of marriage. But this decline was not so much because of any sympathy for the helpless child brides. It was due to another significant change—the replacement of bride's price with dowry. Among the higher caste, the practice of dowry was prevalent from Vedic age the gift of the virgin and the gift of dowry were the two inseparable parts of their marriage rituals.

The economy of this marriage custom was related to the compulsion of the child marriage unmarried daughter remaining in the parental family beyond the prescribed age was considered inauspicious and brought infamy to the male line. The father of an unmarried girl would therefore stake everything to get an appropriate match for the respectable lineage. This obviously increased the demand for dowry and marriage alliances were always negotiated within the context of status and power in addition to ritual purity of the families involved. By the 19th century the respectable and well-to-do members of the peasant and trading caste also began to imitate their betters.

As the Hindu nationalists' opposition to the age of consent bill of 1891 gradually subsided the custom of child marriage began to lose its emotional sensitivity. There was a growing but less visible campaign to discontinue the practice as it was thought to be contributing to

demographic decline of Hindus. The subarnabankis passed a resolution condemning the practice at their annual conference held at Calcutta in 1927. The Namasudras began to speak about the evils of this practice and in their annual conference in Jessore in 1908 they resolved that any Namashudra marrying his son under 20 or daughter under 10 will be excommunicated.

9.5 WIDOWHOOD

The widow remarriage gaining the focus of rationalist – modernist – reformist project is an issue which has been commented upon by a number of historians today.

The widow remarriage Act of 1856 legalized widow remarriage, in the sense that children born of such marriage would inherit ancestral property. But the legalization could not make widow remarriage socially acceptable. Widow Remarriage remain exceptional among educated even today, as it was in 19th and the early 20th century. There was a practical defeat of this reform movement, Despite its greater acceptance among the educated and enlightened masses.

In Bengal widow remarriage was strictly forbidden among the upper caste and the most middle ranking caste. It was allowed among the lower cast, but they too appear to have shared values of their social superiors. The couples following widow remarriage occupied lower place referred to as Krishna – Paksha (dark fort night after full moon), which those married in the regular way were described as Sukla Paksha (bright fort night after new moon) the widow involved in the first proposed case of widow remarriage was later let down by her husband and was declared “out caste” by the society. Even the observers who participated in widow remarriage were “completely out casted” by the Badralok in Calcutta.

The spiritual values of Indian society legitimize the notion of ascetic widowhood as model of spiritual remuneration and socialized women to accept the noble idea of self-denial and sacrifice.

Prasannomoyee Debi in her reminiscences of household life in her family (1901) described the condition of the widows in the following glowing language of abortion:

The widow wore the marks of white (the colour of sacrifice) sandal paste on their forehead, with their disciplined life, wearing white garments, with thin bodies, emancipated by the performance of sacred rights, they were the true renouncer (Brahmcharini), looking like the beautiful goddess Mahasweta (another name of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, who also dresses in white), full of compassion, bearing the burden of widowhood with a smiling face, they dedicated their lives to the nurturing of the sick and caring for everyone in the household.

Such aesthification of the image of ascetic widowhood in the early 20th century indicated clearly the degree of adulation Hindu society had for

such a model. This model was also propagated as nationalist semiotic model by Gandhiji as the most authentic symbol of essence of Hinduism.

The battle over widow remarriage had become a fight for symbol and authenticity for traditional elites against rationalist modernity. Widow Remarriage would mean violation of a part of Hindu Shastras, which most of the religious minded people would not be courageous enough to risk.

Even while Vidyasagar was criticizing the unreasonableness of the people, he too seems to be convinced with hierarchical ethos of traditional Hindu society throughout the reform movement. The notion of patriarchic control over women in Hindu society was also accepted and internalized by him. His reform phrases clearly revealed his concern for maintaining patriarchic control over female sexuality and family discipline.

The increasing social tendency towards adultery and feticide was attributed to the insatiable sexual appetite of widowed women. Unable to lead a life of self-denial, they were considered to be indulging in illicit sex and thus put to shame all the three lineages of their husband, father and mother. So, it was considered necessary to regulate and direct this unrestrained and wayward female sexuality into a socially legitimate channel that of marriage and for this it was essential to remove the prohibition on widow remarriage.

The reform in other words, was meant to ensure social discipline and patriarchic control over women's bodies and desires.

Another important point to mention about this reform movement is the marginality of women in the whole process. While Vidyasagar had started movement out of his compassion for young widows, what followed was a battle for a cultural symbol. The plight of widows had become subsidiary issue and in the scriptural polemics, women did not even figure as objects. They had not yet emerged as a conscious subject of history, trying to assert their own rights.

None of the champions of widow remarriage ever thought of mobilizing women's opinion in favour of the reform. Individual or independent voices of women, either in support of the reform or against it, have remained unrecorded, confirming only their marginality in this crucial social debate.

9.6 SATI

Since 19th century the practice of sati had begun to grow in popularity in Bengal it witnessed the revised of Brahmanism after Buddhist hegemony. It was also given textual sanction, in spite of the fact that there was no consensus about it. In 16th C it was not prescribed as ideal even for Brahman widows.

Its growing popularity can be dated only from the late 18th century. Some of the upwardly mobile shudra families began to adopt it in order to legitimize their social status. According to one estimate, 45 percent of the

widows burnt in Bengal in 1815-16 came from the lower range of caste hierarchy. Between 1851-1927, more than 42% of sati was in families belonging to other caste than the three traditional higher caste of the region. The adoption of this practice was connected to the process of social mobility in association with affluence status with reasonable income or literal category was involve in this practice.

The statistics, despite some possibility of a margin of error, show the connection between the popularity of sati and contradiction of a colonial modernity.

The reformist campaign resulted in abolition of sati in 1829. It strengthened Hindu theological construction of widowhood. Widow remained a site rather than a subject of this debate. Rammohan made a reformist argument that ascetic widowhood rather than sati enjoyed the textual sanction. It made the task of Vidyasagar for widow remarriage very difficult.

If one break into the semiotics of lower caste marriage reforms, it is clear that these were attempts on the part of upwardly mobile lower caste mates to take control of their private space and regulate the sexuality, fertility and labour of their women, who were now projected, following the norms of Hindus patriarchy, as the symbol of honour of their respective families and caste.

Although social mobility was one positive impact of the introduction of colonial modernity in India, it also generated the contradictory tendency of universalizing the ethos of Brahmanical patriarchy across Hindu society.

9.7 EDUCATION

The most contentious issue in the realism of gender reforms was female education. Education became a privileged in the 19th century as the women's question became a part of discourse of social progress. Important personalities and institutions like Radhakanta Bebb, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshub Chandra Sen , the school book society and Brahmo Samaj became involved in this campaign of 20th century.

The peasant caste like Mahishyas through their journal began to urge literate women to educate their female neighbors and thus to spread literacy among the womenfolk of their community. This example was followed by another peasant's caste as well.

The female education remained a hotly contested terrain of social reforms on one hand it became a compulsion for educated elite to respond to reformist discourse of progress on the other hand it was considered as a potential threat to the harmony of the family and the peace of the households expected to train women to become Sahadharmini in the true sense of the term to become a helpful companion. These dilemmas and anxiety of a revivalist nationalists' discourse of the late 19th century resonated against the lower caste literature in the early 20th century.

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the news the name of the woman who actually passed the exam was mentioned instead the family and community were credited for their extraordinary achievement. Her identity remains located in her family and could be indicated sufficient through the names of her husband and father. However, the discourse of the community could not conceal male anxiety over community could not conceal male anxiety over female insubordination within the family and provoke lot of resistance. Some ethical and moral training was preferred for women against higher education with the fear that they would start protesting against the males. But off late with breeze of higher education many had developed a sense of liberation.

The resistance to higher education took biological argument as a last resort to connect it with the pleasure of conjugality. They argued that men and women are differently constituted and therefore demanded for a new curriculum to be devised. In simple words, education seems to be affecting the sexuality, emotions and biological functions of women. Thus, the reformist had to seek a fine balance between female education, gender roles and the demand of conjugality.

What is being neglected here is the image of liberated women. There were strong voices against higher education for women. Female education was supposed to be confined to domestic science along with rudimentary knowledge in art and literature so that they can have some intelligent conversation with their husband. Knowledge of literature would help them comprehend the epics, books and local history. Little mathematics would help them to maintain the day-to-day family account and elementary lessons in hygiene would help I nursing their ailing children and other members of the family.

Majority of the educated peasant and trading castes dreaded their over educated women and favored only that kind of female and the community.

It was very well argued in a mission statement of Mahishya Mahila that it was women who made or ruined the family Therefore for their proper education it would present article dealing with female dharma Shastriya ethics, historical anecdotes, biographies to great men, and some useful recipes. It published short stories and featured article with specific focus of proper feminine behavior chastity and devotion to husband.

9.8 WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Since the reform of social evils was linked to the issue of preserving and strengthening basic family structure and creating good wives and mothers the question that frequently lose was that of female education a policy support by both progressive and orthodox reforms. Many liberal reformers complain in favour of female education like Vidyasagar who established 40 girls' schools in Bengal between 1855 and 1858. Jyotiba Phule in the 1850s set up school for girls in Pune and 2 school for untouchables. conservatives also joined the campaign for female education in the 19th Indian reformers through that social evils could be eliminated only

through education however the concept of education was limited to producing good home makers and perpetuating orthodox ideology christen missionaries were keen to use education for proselytizing girls school were started by missionaries and British residents especially in Bengal . In 1820 the first girls school was founded by Davia Hare in Calcutta professor pattern founded a girls school in b 'boy 1848 in 1851 , Bethune started Bethune girls school in Calcutta which later become the 14 women's college many Indian reform groups like Arya samaj and Brahma Samaj non education institution for women and Indian women such as Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade were involved in project for female education

By 1870 women had begun to white literacy work in English and also translate works from other European languages in the 1880's, Indian women also started to graduate from university, the just being 2 students of Bethune school, who completed their studies at Calcutta university in 1883 . By 1901, there were 256 women in colleges and by 1921 about 905. In 1916 the Banaras Hindu University was founded with an affiliated women college.

Although some women benefitted from access to schools and universities education for women was mainly confined to the needs of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie the policies of promoting women education and the types of education provided were not intended to promote women's emancipation or independence, but to reinforce patriarchy and the class system. The plea that education would only improve women's efficiency a wives and mothers left its indelible mark on the educational policy. However, education enabled some women to break into avenues of employment that had previously been denied to them. Many women were trained as teachers, nurses and midwives Corelia Sorabjee, a parsi, was the first Indian women to graduate in law at oxford in 1882 and only by 1923 women were allowed to practice law. Analalisai Joshi was among the early women doctors and there were other Kadambini Ganguli (Bengal's 1st women doctor) Annis Jagannathan and Rukmabai to name a few. These women had to battle against the full weight of conservatism against the full weight of conservatism.

9.9 WOMEN AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

It was in the political struggles against imperialism that Indian women began to participate. The expansion of women education and their admission to universities had produced a number of English educated middle class women by late 19th century and they made their presence felt in political activities. Bengali writer Swarna kumara Devi was among the earliest pioneers of reform and political agitation. In 1882, she started the Ladies theosophical society, for women of all religions. In 1886, she began a women association which was concerned with promoting local handicrafts made by women. Women continued to participate in congress politics in the 1890,s including activists like Pandita Ramabai and women professionals such as Dr .K. Ganguly .In the early 20th century, women became more involved in politics with the increase in nationalist activities,

and women joined the agitations, organized Swadeshi meeting, and boycotted foreign theosophist movement. Many foreign theosophists also participated in the nationalist and women's movement, the foremost being Annie Besant. She came to India in 1893 and was active in the theosophical movement and in education. She not only formed the Home rule league in India but also become the first women president of the Indian national congress in 1917. Other theosophists who were concerned about Indian women's status include, Margret Noble, who arrived in India in 1895 and under the influence of Swami Vivekananda took the name of sister Nivedita and worked in Bengal. Her work in education, cultural activities and agitation for Swaraj was characterized by revolutionary zeal.

The congress leader saw the advantages of mobilizing women and always urged them to join the nationalist struggle as equals. Gandhi's basic ideas on women's right were equality in some spheres and opportunities for self-development and self-realization. He realized that her subordinate position was the result of domination by man.

Gandhi was very conscious of the power that women could have in snuggle based on the concept of non-co-operation. He stresses the importance of their participation in political and social matters and urged them to join nationalist movement. he claimed that women had great ability to adore suffering and could therefore play an important part in the movement. He claimed that the principle non-violence and political non-violent. It was suggested that being used to form of passive resistance in their daily lives, they could effectively participate in socially organized passive resistance and non-co-operation moreover, Indian women themselves were soon to take up the Gandhian ideology and advocate Satyagraha as a form of struggle particularly suitable for women.

Despite intentions of reform the status of women, most of the men still saw a women's role basically as that of a housewife within a conservative family structure. Women activists become subsumed in the political struggle. However, the real issues that concerned them as women were regarded by the men as of secondary importance. The agitation of the early social reformers about the social evils that affected. women in the family were supplanted by nationalist issues, resulting in the neglect of women unequal social and economic position. The few women's issues that were taken up were those that interested the middle-class organization such as right to vote. The effort of Sarojini Naidu, Margaret Cousins bore fruit and women were give the right to vote. Women were also through their struggle given the right to enter the legislature. Dr S. Muthulakshmi Reddi become the first women legislative councilor social legislation such as the Devdasi bill, banning temple prostitution of young girls, met with opposition and was unsuccessful. In the mass movement of the 1920's and 1930's women's participation was much in evidence in certain acts such as the Khadi campaigns , in the picketing of shops selling foreign good and in the salt march of 1930 , as well as in the general political demonstrations and mass agitation which resulted in the call by congress for civil disobedience . Women all over the country joined the struggle for independence and many thousands were jailed. Sarojini Naidu during her

years of political activity campaigned for women right, including franchise, education and divorce. more radical then Sarojini Naidu was her sister in law, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya whose life reflected the many strands of activities and participation, she was also involved in the women's movement. Women during the 1920's were also active in the Indian communist Party.

9.10 CONCLUSION

The study of the participation of women in the political struggles of Indian in the 19th century and in movement for the improvement of the status for women provides historical understanding of some of the problems faced by women's movement in the 3rd world. The most revealing aspect has been the essential conservatism of what appears to be like radical change. While highlighting and legally abolishing the worst acts like sati, emphasizing female education and mobilizing women for Satyagraha, the movement gave the illusion of change while women were kept within the structural confines of the family and society. Women in the nationalist struggle did not use the occasion to raise issues that affected them as women. While Indian women participated in all stages of the movement for national independence, they did so in a way acceptable and dictated by men. never the less, the participation and involvement in political activities show that Indian Women have a prominent part in anti-imperialistic, anti-capitalist and democratic movements of protest over a long time.

9.11 REFERENCES

- Basu Aparna, Bharati. 1990. Women's Struggle- A history of All India Women's conference 1927- 1990. New Delhi: Manohar Publications
- Bandyopadhyaya, Shekhar. 2004. Caste, culture and hegemony: Social dominance in colonial Bengal. Sage publications: New Delhi
- Kumar Radha. The History of doing: An illustrated account of movements for women's rights and feminism in India. 1800-1990. New Delhi: Kali for women

EMERGENCE OF THE AUTONOMOUS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: CAMPAIGNS AGAINST DOWRY, RAPE AND WOMEN'S RIGHT TO HEALTH

Unit Structure

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Background – Women's Movements in India

10.3 Women's Movements in India – Post-independence

10.4 Autonomous Movements – Dowry, Rape and Women's Right to Health

10.5 Summary

10.6 Questions

10.7 References

10.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand autonomous women's movements in India
- To know its background, challenges and roadmap ahead

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Sociologists and philosophers have discussed and defined the term autonomy in different ways. In general, it signifies the ability to make one's own decisions and choose one's own course of action. Conversely, paternalism implies a lack of respect for a subject's autonomy, as it involves interference with a person's actions or beliefs against that person's will. Although paternalism might be advanced as promoting a person's good, it hurts that individual's autonomy. It is quite common for women in India to encounter this issue. According to so-called Indian culture, women are to be taken care of by their men.

The ancient Indian Manu-smṛiti (Laws of Manu) says that the father protects a woman in her childhood, the husband in her youth, and the son in her old-age. The Sanskrit text has been interpreted in such a way as to indirectly deny the autonomy of the female, saying that she does not have to do anything since everything is taken care of by the men in her family. This is frequently quoted throughout India as a proof-text for controlling a female by categorizing her as just a 'family-woman', an example of how cultural and religious concepts have long denied the autonomy of Indian women. Unlike in the West, the numerous religions and castes in India control women, making a woman's freedom and identity a complex issue

on various levels. It has been a constant subject of feminist discussions and has been addressed by autonomous women's groups. But the autonomy of women's groups themselves is a matter of concern.

Women's movements have demonstrated autonomy in their practice, according to Gail Omvedt (2004), who finds the Indian women's movement made up of groups representing all ideologies. Organizations connected with various communist parties, social organizations, and independent groups have reacted to dowry deaths, rape, and issues of personal law. However, the question of autonomy had led women to ask: 'Should we have a separate women's organization?'. The answer was 'yes', although with many reservations. It was clarified by certain individuals familiar with Western feminist theory and activism. Many socially concerned women thought it mandatory to have women's groups to respond to the violence against women.

When the autonomous Indian women's movement was formed in the 1970s, its main agenda was to protest against such violence. In most cases, political parties and religious authorities hesitated to take action against people accused of rape or violence towards women, and female leaders allied with them seldom raised their voices in protest. Autonomous women's groups organized women who would speak out in the name of justice without fearing reprisal. They had to expose the male domination within the party and outside in society to show what it meant to be a progressive. Most feminists eventually abandoned the Left political parties to form their own women's groups for autonomy and impartial social interventions on behalf of women's welfare.

10.2 BACKGROUND – WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

In the first wave of the feminist movement, women's organizations were able to draw both on the benefits of modernity (from colonial rulers and male Indian reformers) and from the idiom of "Indianness" constructed in the nationalist discourse. Both the colonial rulers and nationalist reformers were enthused by the 'ideals' of modernity – to uproot the social evil of sati, sanction widow remarriage, prohibit child marriage, diminish illiteracy, standardize the age of consent to marriage and guarantee property rights through legal interventions. The involvement of women in the reform movements demanding their civil and political rights, largely under the leadership of the nationalists, produced a 'unique blend of feminism and nationalism'.

Throughout the country, a few women associations were also established. Under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen (Brahmo Samaj) in Kolkata, Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar, Madhav Govind Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar in Pune and Mahipatram Rupram Nilkanth and his associates in Ahmedabad organizations were formed to demand prohibition of child marriage, widow remarriage and women's education. By the end of the nineteenth century a group of women, from the reformed elite families, came to establish a number of women's organizations.

Swarnakumari Devi, the daughter of Devendranath Tagore, institutes the Ladies Society (1882 Kolkata) for empowering the deprived women. Ramabai Saraswati establishes the Arya Mahila Samaj (also in 1882) in Pune and Sharda Sadan in Bombay. Sarala Debi Chaudhurani (daughter of Swarnakumari Devi), the archetype of the first phase of women's movement in India – being critical of the women's meetings held in conjunction with the National Social Conference – calls attention to the necessity of a distinct association for the women. In 1910 she establishes Bharat Stree Mahamandal and developed its branches in Lahore, Karachi, Allahabad, Delhi, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Bankura, Hazaribagh, Midnapur and Calcutta to unify women from all race, creed, class and party on the grounds of moral and material progress.

The first phase of women's movement in India, during the inter-war years of 1917 and 1945, successfully addresses two significant issues: i) voting rights (1917-1926), and ii) reform of personal law (1927-29). Edwin Montague, the Secretary of State for India, proclaims (in 1917) the British government's intention to include more Indians in the governing process. The All-India Women's Conference was set up in 1927 at the initiative of Margaret Cousins to attend the issue of women's education. It was soon comprehended that the issue of education remains tagged to the general social problems including purdah, child marriage, and other social customs. AIWC thus conducted a campaign to rise the age of marriage. This resulted in the passing of the Sarda Act in 1929. AIWC also began to campaign for the reformation of the personal law. Facing resistance to a common civil law, it called for the reform of Hindu laws forbidding polygamy, offering women the right to divorce and to inherit property.

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe women's movements in pre-independent India.

10.3 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN INDIA – POST-INDEPENDENCE

The post-independence women's movement in India—which saw its heyday in the late 1970s to early 1980s—is said to have come of age.⁸ Its sustained and self-identified 'feminist' activism has borne fruit in a number of areas of which the most recent law reform (in 2013) post the Delhi gang rape evokes earlier modes of holding the state accountable when it comes to violence against women.

The cause of women remained a national concern in the post independent India. The principle of gender equality adopted in the Fundamental Rights Resolution of 1931, was later secured as a constitutional measure guaranteeing "Equality between the sexes" (Articles 14 and 16). Various administrative bodies were also set up for the creation of opportunities for women. The question remains: who were these women the government of

India were aiming at? Now, there had been a subtle shift of attention of the nationalist elites: from the upper- and middle-class women in the early 19th century – to the women at large in the Gandhian politics – culminating in marking the poor woman as the icon of independent India. Women's Role in a Planned Economy (WRPE) happened to be the first Plan on women, by the National Planning Committee (NPC) 1938.

All the way through women's movement continued in fragments till the culmination of the new women's liberation movement in the late seventies. This has its roots in the late sixties' radicalization of the student, farmer, trade union and Dalit politics. Since the early seventies, quite a few movements on the radical left (Naxalbari movement in West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab) and the socialist fronts had interesting implications for women's movement including the growth of the various women's organizations.

In 1973-74 the Maoist women established the Progressive Organization of Women, instigating a feminist critique of the radical leftist politics. On the other corner of the country, the Chipko movement, initiated in 1973 and joined by women in 1974, laid a milestone for the women's movement in India. The Chipko (embrace the tree) movement, a non-violent environmental protest against commercial logging in the Himalayas, holds a deeper meaning for the eco-feminists. It is considered as the first political-environmental movement led by the women representing their 'deep connection' with nature (shaped by their gendered role of nurturing).

The United Nations organised the World Conference on Women in Mexico (1975) and acknowledged 1975–1985 as the International Decade of the Woman. As a part of the 'World Plan of Action' the National Committee on the Status of Women was set up in India to look at the 'status of women' in the country. The Committee published and presented the Towards Equality Report (1974) in the parliament. The report, prepared by the scholars with an interdisciplinary outlook, exposed the abysmal state of women in contemporary India manifested in: the declining sex ratio, the increasing rate of female mortality and morbidity, economic marginalization of women and the evils of discriminatory personal laws. It made several recommendations vindicating the role of the government in achieving 'gender equality' in the demographic legal, economic, educational, political, and media spheres (through the: eradication of dowry, polygamy, bigamy, child marriage - provisions for crèches, better working conditions, equal pay for equal work - legal reforms on divorce, maintenance, inheritance, adoption, guardianship, maternity benefits - establishment of the Uniform Civil Code - universalization of education and so on).

But the report did not comment on violence against women in the civil society and by the custodians of law and order (Patel 1985). However, it got a remarkable response from the state and media. Research bodies like the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) came up with financial support for women related research. Yet even after a quarter

century, as per the report of the National Commission for Women entitled Towards Equality: The Unfinished Agenda, the Status of Women in India 2001, much of these recommendations remain unfulfilled. The publication of the Towards Equality Report (1974) and The Convention on the Abolition of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979 CEDAW) offered the moral and rational basis of a new wave of autonomous women's movement manifested both in the activist and the academic spheres.

Contrary to the formal structural mandate of the affiliated organizations – the autonomous groups, representing women across classes-castes-communities, were coupled together through 'informal networking' and a rising 'feminist press'. Their mode of communication and commitment had a leftist charge. Oriented towards pan-Indian protests, throughout the 1970-80s, the autonomous groups primarily addressed: violence against women and the overtly patriarchal nature of the society. They addressed the questions of sexual oppression and violence against women in the form of dowry killings/deaths, bride burning, rape, sati, honour killing and so on. It is interesting to note that, in the 1980s, almost all campaigns against violence on women resulted in pro-women legislations. The second phase of women's movement is significant for its 'real' achievements both in the form of consciousness raising and legal enactments.

Check Your Progress:

2. How did post-independent India work towards the women's movements?

10.4 AUTONOMOUS MOVEMENTS – DOWRY, RAPE AND WOMEN'S RIGHT TO HEALTH:

The country wide anti-rape movement was inflicted by the Supreme Court judgment acquitting two policemen accused of raping a minor tribal girl, Mathura, despite the fact that the High Court had indicted them. Four eminent lawyers addressed an open letter to the Chief Justice of India protesting the unjust decision. This flared-up a series of country-wide demonstrations by the autonomous women's organizations like Nari Niryatana Pratirodh Mancha (Kolkata), Progressive Organization of Women (Hyderabad), Forum Against Oppression of Women (Mumbai), Stree Sangharsh, Samata and Saheli (Delhi), Stree Shakti Sangathan (Hyderabad), Vimochana (Bangalore).

Several other rape cases became parts of this campaign where redefining 'consent' in a rape trial was one of the key issues. After long discussions with women's groups, the rape law was amended in 1983 by the government of India. The late 1970s saw the growth of a movement against dowry and the violence against women in the marital home. POW,

Stree Sangharsh, Mahila Dakshita Samiti, Dahej Virodhi Chetna Mandal organized public protests against dowry deaths which received wide media coverage. In the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the definition of 'dowry' was too narrow and vague. Continued movement of the women's organizations succeeded in getting the dowry law amended in 1984 and then again in 1986.

Madhushree Dutta, a women's movement activist was assaulted by few men, late in the night, in a railway station. Without supporting her, the police labelled her as a 'prostitute' soliciting in a public place. This was followed by a series of demonstrations against the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls (SIT) Act, 1956 which penalizes the victim on the grounds of her immoral nature. Eventually the act was amended and given a new name: The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1988.

The 1971 Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act provided women the right to safe, scientific and legal abortions. However, this right got associated to female foeticide. Campaigns against this resulted in a central legislation banning pre-natal sex selection techniques facilitating female foeticide. While addressing the problems pertaining to marriage, divorce, maintenance, alimony, property rights, custody and guardianship rights, the misogynist nature of the existing personal and customary laws came into open. All personal laws help persisting patriarchy, patriliney and patrilocality. This culminated to a nation-wide, still on-going, debate on the Uniform Civil Code.

On the other hand, a long thirty years of movement demanding Protection of Women from Domestic Violence resulted in an Act in 2005. Continued protests against female foeticide resulted in the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique Act (2002). The Public Interest Litigations to address sexual harassment at work place registered by the NGOs resulted to the 1997 Supreme Court directives for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace. The Vishakha guideline, as it was popularly known, later took the shape of a law: The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

Violence against women, ranging from the visible to the invisible – from battery to sexual atrocities like molestation and rape, dowry tortures and murders, trafficking and female infanticide – continues to be perpetrated by families, communities and the state. Abortion of female fetuses is still rampant in spite of a law banning it. Violence against women and girls within the family, both parental and marital continues, as does sexual harassment at the workplace. Community-based honour killings are still common, and caste and communal power struggles take recourse to chilling forms of sexual violence against women. Aggressive masculinity leading to rape and murder of women, including minors and adolescents, are other heinous examples.

The National Conference of Autonomous Women's Movements represents a wide participation of various women's organisations belonging to diverse streams ranging from radical to pure feminist groups,

urban women's groups as well as rural women's organisations, feminist intellectuals and women writers etc. The overwhelming majority of these women's groups are NGOs or NGO-backed. Some of these organisations have done exemplary work in many specific areas concerning the women's movement. The National Conference has, over a decade and a half, succeeded in giving some sort of national character to the grassroot women's groups.

The first national-level conference of autonomous women's groups took place in Bombay in 1980, in the context of the then anti-rape campaign. The autonomous groups were defined as, "those who had created their own space as distinct from women's wings of established political parties, state supported women's groups as well as mixed organisations of men and women". According to a note circulated by the National Coordinating Committee — a body that prepares for the national conferences — on the eve of the Fifth National Conference held at Tirupathi, the First Conference was attended by around 200 women from around 38 organisations. The focus of the conference was rape and other forms of atrocities on women though various other issues related to the women's movement were also taken up.

Besides women-specific issues like rape, domestic violence etc., the autonomous women's movement was also addressing issues like environmental degradation, housing and development policies. Despite the aversion for politics, the focus on issues like communalism and state violence was objectively forcing the movement to articulate its response to the events in mainstream politics.

Check Your Progress:

3. How have women's movements dealt with the issue of rape?

10.5 SUMMARY

The genesis of the new women's liberation movement lay in the radicalization of Indian politics in the late sixties. The rebellious mood of the youth, poor peasants, marginal farmers, educated Dalit and tribal men and women, industrial working classes found its expression in the formation of innumerable special interest groups addressing themselves to the needs and demands of the local masses. Macro political processes were also finding major shifts in their rhetoric as the protest movements of the subaltern masses had taken militant paths guided by different political ideologies. The official communist parties faced major political challenge in the form of the Naxalbari movement in Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab.

Parallel to the practices of exclusion and violence against women, India evokes an animated history of movements and protest. Women's resistance, assimilating formal and informal mechanisms, acquires

manifold forms: writing, public march, non-cooperation, prolonged political and legal battles, hugging trees, excessive salting of meals, singing songs of celebration or remembering injustices. They defy the ostensibly resolute structures and norms concerning women's work, education, sexuality, family roles, and motherhood.

Multiple contexts and issues, across caste-class, region-language-sexual orientation, have raised multiple and contending voices. The gradual weakening of the supposed unity, which used to be the hallmark of the first and to some extent the second phase of women's movement in India, is not always a matter of apprehension. The fading of the purported solidarity could be considered as a mark of increasing consciousness at multiple levels. For a nuanced politics of women's movement internal differences are often constitutive.

Many autonomous groups have done pioneering work in all these areas and have made impressive advances in mobilising women to fight on all these issues. It must be admitted that we are still lagging behind in these areas. We also started late on such issues. Though there can be no two opinions on the need for women's organisations, whether autonomous or radical, to take vigorous initiatives on all these issues, there is a difference over priority and emphasis.

10.6 QUESTIONS

- Compare pre-independent and post-independent women's movements.
- Elaborate on laws pertaining to dowry w.r.t. autonomous women's movements in India.
- How are women's movements in India different from its counterpart globally?

10.7 REFERENCES

- Desai, N., & Studies, S. N. D. T. W. s. U. R. C. f. W. s. (1988). A Decade of Women's Movement in India: Collection of Papers Presented at a Seminar Organized by Research Centre for Women's Studies, S.N.D.T. University, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House.
- Kumar, R. (2014). The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800-1990: Zubaan.
- Ramaswamy, B. (2013). Women's Movement in India: Isha Books.
- Roy, S. (2015). The Indian Women's Movement: Within and Beyond NGOization. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 10(1), 96–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973174114567368>

- Ray, P. S. R., & Ray, R. (1999). Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India: University of Minnesota Press.
- Calman, L. J. (2019). Toward Empowerment: Women And Movement Politics In India: Taylor & Francis.

Emergence of the Autonomous
Women's Movement: Campaigns
Against Dowry, Rape and
Women's Right to Health

CURRENT DEBATES: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND RIGHTS IN MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Unit Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Marital Rape
- 11.3 History of Marital Rape in India
- 11.4 The Model for Criminalization of Marital Rape
- 11.5 Ground of Divorce
- 11.6 Summary
- 11.7 Questions
- 11.8 References

11.0 OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize students with important current debates within the feminist discourse
- To know more about the rights of women pertaining to marriage and divorce

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Many contend that the logical solution to woman abuse in marriage/cohabitation is for women to exit through legal separation, divorce, or other means. However, a growing body of empirical work shows that separation or divorce does not necessarily solve the problem of woman abuse. For example, in addition to experiencing lethal or nonlethal forms of physical violence and psychological abuse, many women who try to leave, or who have left their male partners, are sexually assaulted. Much of the existing research on intimate male violence against women has focused on the prevalence of and response to abuse that occurs within an ongoing intimate relationship. Little attention has been paid to the abuse that occurs after women have ended relationships.

In what is actually an understatement, Renzetti, Edleson and Bergen (2001, p. 1) remind us in the Sourcebook on Violence Against Women, “In only about three decades, research and writing about violence against women has mushroomed.” Even leading experts in the field argue that “keeping up” with the rapidly growing body of social scientific knowledge on the many intentional male-perpetrated harms women endure in intimate heterosexual relationships is an overwhelming and constantly

ongoing task. This is because scores of social scientists have not only produced rich data on the extent, distribution, correlates, and outcomes of a broad range of highly injurious male-to-female assaults in a variety of relationships and social settings, but they have also constructed and tested many competing theories.

Consider those who want to end, are planning to end, trying to end, in the process of ending, or who have ended a relationship with a marital/cohabiting partner. Only a few North American studies have focused on women who are trying to leave or who have left “the house of horrors” (Sev’er, 2002), and all of them show that separation/divorce can result in homicide or major violence-inflicted injuries. Clearly, the women victimized in these ongoing relationships “do not represent the entire spectrum of abused women”.

Based on the small amount of literature summarized here and elsewhere (e.g., Hardesty, 2002), we can conclude, then, that the risks of nonlethal violence and intimate femicide are highest when women seek freedom from their abusive spouses or other men they have been living with in an intimate relationship. Nevertheless, abuse, regardless of whether women are in ongoing relationships, are trying to end them, or have ended them, is “multidimensional in nature”.

Specifically, in addition to experiencing lethal or nonlethal forms of physical violence and psychological abuse, many women who try to leave or who have left their partners are sexually assaulted. For example, Fleury et al. (2000) found that of the 49 women in their sample who were assaulted by an ex-partner, 20% were raped. There are, of course, other types of sexual assaults that many other women may have suffered. However, we do not know for sure because social scientists have devoted very little attention to separation/divorce sexual assault. Thus, a major research gap needs to be filled.

11.2 MARITAL RAPE

Rape is the gravest kind of sexual violence against an individual- an extreme manifestation occurring in the continues sequence of sexual violence which nullifies the human rights of an individual completely. According to section 375 of the Indian penal code, rape is defined as, “A man is said to commit “rape” who, except in the case hereinafter excepted, has sexual intercourse with a woman without her will and consent.” It is said that Rape stems from sexist value and beliefs and it is not any normalized issue that is affecting individual women. Whereas it is a social as well as a political issue directly connected to imbalance of power between men and women.

Marital rape is a rape committed when the evil doer is the victim’s spouse. Where the definition of the rape remains the same, which means that the essential ingredient to prove the crime of rape is to prove lack of consent. Where the burden of prove is on the victim. In some instances, consent it is assumed that consent does not exist, i.e., minor’s consent. On other

hand, in some cases consent does to even matter, and are assumed to exist, i.e., married women / wife. In such instances, the idea of marital rape becomes antithetical.

At present, 150 countries have criminalized the offence of marital rape and there are only 36 countries left, which include India. It is astonishing that countries recognize rape as a crime and prescribes penalty for the same, they exempt the cases when a marital relationship exists between the victim and the evil doer. The exception is named as “marital rape exception clause”. There are four main justifications given for not criminalizing the offence of marital rape. With the passage of time and advancement in the gender equality, first two have been almost eliminated.

First justification- wife understood as subservient of the husband. Thus, it is said that there is no scope of rape in marriage since husband is assumed to be master of his wife.

Second justification- a married women does not have any individual identity. An identity of a married women combines with her husband i.e., ‘the unities theory’ which means after marriage the identity women merges with that of her husband.

Third justification- “the implied consent” theory i.e., after marriage it is widely assumed that when a man and women enter into marital contract, the consent to sex preexist. Marriage is considered to be a civil contract and consent to sexual activities is thought to be the defining element of this contract.

Fourth justification- the most recent and vague, that criminal law must not interfere in the marital relationship, since marital issues are once personal problem and must be dealt in private sphere.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is marital rape?

11.3 HISTORY OF MARITAL RAPE IN INDIA

Section 375 of IPC has a wider scope of rape which includes both sexual intercourse and other sexual penetration such as oral, anal of the women. However, in the exception of the same section excludes the application of rape crime in case of husband and wife. The exception to the crime can be due to an irrefutable presumption of a consent established in the relation of victim and the evil doer. Or it can be that legislature decides to excludes the married couple from the section giving the holiness of the relation believed by the society. This is probable since according to §376B where spouses are exempted from this exception, i.e., when the husband and wife are on judicial separation.

On analysis of these two sections (§375 & §376B) it can be assumed that legislature beliefs that husband and wife living together is an ingredient that denotes the consent for sexual intercourse.

The first report to deal with the rape issue was 42nd Law Commission Report. Many amendments to the law have been witnessed following this report, the report is limited to understanding the prism through which the law commission views marital rape. In this report, two suggestions were made, first, in case of judicial separation the exception clause must not be applied. The reason given for this was unclear, which was “in such a case, the marriage technically subsists, and if the husband has sexual intercourse with her against her will or her consent, he cannot be charged with the offence of rape. This does not appear to be right” this statement is seemed to be vague since it does not give a reason why is exception not right.

The second suggestion was related to non-consensual sexual intercourse between girl aged between twelve and fifteen. Where the suggestion was to separate this crime form the crime of rape, because at that time there was different punishment for rape when wife was of age between twelve and fifteen. The suggestion failed to classify marital rape as rape, but at best as a lower form of sexual minor wrongdoing. Although the report tried to highlight the presumption of consent in case of husband and wife, and difference between marital rape and rape, where the former is vied to be less serious. But fails to indemnify whether to retain or delete the exception clause 2.

The Law Commission directly dealt with the issue of validity of exception clause 2 in 172nd report the commission argued that if all other forms of violence by the husband to wife are criminalized then why is this solely left in the shadow. Upon this argument the commission completely rejected the proposal. And stated that it will be unnecessary too much interference in the personal life of individual and shelters the light on relation between martial rape and the holiness of marriage.

One of the commissions recommend the criminalization of marital rape. The law commission former under justice J.S. Verma, due to the wide spread of heinous crime of sexual assault against women. The report presented by the committee suggested some amendments, one was the criminalization of marital rape, by deleting the exception 2 under §375 of IPC and by clearly stating that any relation being husband wife or any such relation could not be used as a defense for the offence of rape, or determining whether it was consensual or nonconsensual. The report also stated that how this immunity has been withdrawn in many jurisdictions, and that now days marriages are no long treated as a contract where wife becomes part of husband of servant of husband, but is a relation between two equals and individuals.

Flowing this amendment Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 2012 was drafted. As per bill, the word “rape” was edited to “sexual assault” so that the scope of crime can be increased but still the bill missed out on criminalization of marital rape. Which means that the amendment bill

2012 was not made keeping in consideration the suggestions made justice J.S. Verma committee. In the 167th standing committee report (the parliament standing committee on home affairs) reviewed the amendment bill 2012 and setup public consultations. Once again, the same suggestion was delivered, deleting on exception clause. But the committee straight forward denied but stating two reasons, one that it will be disturb the entire family system and will just be unnecessary delivery of more injustice in the system, second was that families are self-versed to deal with such issues and in case of legal remedy, criminal law already has the concept of cruelty under §498A IPC.

In 2015 when a private member bill was present in the house to criminalize the marital rape, the denial was made on the bases that, one the “marriage is treated as sacrament” second, “the matter is already under consideration by law commission and no decision will be taken before the report is out”.

Check Your Progress:

2. How has been marital rape perceived in India?

11.4 THE MODEL FOR CRIMINALIZATION OF MARITAL RAPE

The J.S. Verma Report is the landmark report in the history of debate on marital rape. As discussed above, the committee gave some suggestions to criminalize marital rape. The committee asked for the removal of the exemption clause, it asked to specifically mention that it is not a defense, that there would not be a presumption of consent and lastly, that the quantum of punishment is the same. But the 42nd Law commission responded by stating that marital rape is to be put under separate section, moreover not to be called as “marital rape” and also have different punishment.

1. Marriage relationship: not a walkout: Merely omission of exception clause in §375 IPC is not sufficient to ensure the crime of marital rape is covered. Because, this will lead to too much judicial interpretation thus increase in judicial cases and discretion. A separate definition must be established and if exceptions laid, should be clearly stated to reduce the scope of too much interpretation.
2. Presumption of consent: As stated by J.S. Verma, consent is not something to be presumed in the case of marital rape. But practically judiciary will no-doubted look into some threshold of force to understand consent in such cases. There are three ways to treat consent while criminalizing marital rape. One, assume consent and leave burden of proof on victim; second, assume no consent and leave burden of proof on evil doer to establish consent. Third, the most important

draw a particular system to trace consent in special cases like marital rape using Indian evidence act. The above-mentioned ways have its own backdrops, since a sexual act is committed in a private sphere/ inside four walls. And producing evident to prove consent/ no-consent will be difficult for both the parties.

As per the law currently, usage of force is not essential to prove consent in cases of marital rape. Moreover, as stated in Uday v. State of Karnataka, consent is understood on the basis of circumstantial evidence. Keeping into consideration the nature of crime, producing evidence will be extremely difficult and a minor gap of interpretation will can also lead to false rape charges to take revenge and can also lead to more crime against women since evidence production is hard, men will feel safe from any kind of eviction.

3. Problems in case of marital rape range from psychological, social, physical and so on.
4. Existence of sexual intercourse is not evident to prove marital rape. Since it is assumed that married couple will engage in sexual intercourse. Thus, differentiating marital rape form the normal rape case.
5. The presence of evidence of sexual intercourse along with signs of physical injury, or other form of cruelty can be considered as sign of marital rape.

Check Your Progress:

3. Explain J. S. Verma’s report on marital rape.

11.5 GROUND OF DIVORCE

There are primarily two marriage acts in India the Hindu marriage act 1955 and special marriage act 1954, but there are some legislative acts to govern the marriages in minority groups namely Muslim marriage act, 1939; Parsi marriage and divorce act, 1862; Indian Christian marriage act, 1872. But grounds of divorce are same across all the acts, i.e., cruelty, male being impotent at the time of marriage, no maintenance given for two years, adultery, change in religion, failed to maintain restitution of conjugal right for two years, etc.

From all the decrees given by the act for divorce, it is clear that any king of cruelty, assault, not able to perform martial functions like sexual intercourse, distancing for more than 2 year or not taking care of the partner which means that state has penetrated the “privacy sphere” or “marital sphere” and granting cruelty as a ground give the scope of validity for marital rape as a ground of divorce. As stated about rape is a heinous crime against an individual which includes- assault, violence,

morality deterioration. Further keeping in mind, the punishment for rape, seven years is the minimum punishment given to the convicted person thus separation of husband from wife for more than 4 years, also if the husband is punished with 7 years if imprisonment it is a decree of divorce under §2 clause iii of the dissolution of Muslim marriage act, 1939.

Check Your Progress:

4. What are the grounds for divorce in India?

11.6 SUMMARY

For the better part of the last century, the concept of marital rape has been missing in narratives of most nations. Some commentators in India try to pin the blame for the lack of marital rape law in India on the usual “Indian regressive culture”, however most nations criminalized Marital Rape only after the UN’s “Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women” in 1993.

India, having borrowed heavily from British Era laws, of course, also inherits the flaws; one of them being the case of Marital Rape law. Section 375 of the IPC deals with rape and it criminalizes the act, but it makes an “exception”. The exception says “Sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.”

Many argue that such issues related to married couples are covered in the “Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005” and thus there is no need for a special law to cover marital rapes or to delete that exception part in the IPC section 375.

The Domestic Violence Act can be argued to cover the offense of marital rape because “sexual abuse” is defined as one of the acts or conducts that constitutes “domestic violence”.

However, there are two problems with this act, due to which it is considered inadequate to deal with cases of marital rapes:

1. While the term “sexual abuse” is mentioned, the act doesn’t explicitly define “rape” as is defined in the section 375 of the IPC.
2. The Domestic Violence act has been deemed as a “civil law” by the courts and thus the accused can get away without any jail term.

Therefore, there is certainly a void where husbands who rape their wives can get away with it without any jail term.

11.7 QUESTIONS

- How is sexual violence against women majorly understood in India?

- What is the current legal situation with marital rape in India?
- What are the rights of women during divorce in India?

11.8 REFERENCES

- Bachar, K., & Koss, M.P. (2001). From prevalence to prevention: Closing the gap between what we know about rape and what we do. In: C.M. Renzetti, J.L. Edleson, & R.K. Bergen (Eds.), *Sourcebook on violence against women* (pp. 117 – 142). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bergen, R.K. (1996). *Wife rape: Understanding the response of survivors and service providers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bograd, M. (1988). Feminist perspectives on wife abuse: An introduction. In K. Yllo, & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse* (pp. 11 – 26). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Campbell, J.C. (1989). Women's response to sexual abuse in intimate relationships. *Health Care for Women International*, 10, 335 – 346.
- Campbell, J.C., & Dienemann, J.D. (2001). Ethical issues in research on violence against women. In C.M. Renzetti, J.L. Edleson, & R.K. Bergen (Eds.), *Sourcebook on violence against women* (pp. 57 – 72). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- DeKeseredy, W.S. (2000). Current controversies on defining nonlethal violence against women in intimate heterosexual relationships: Empirical implications. *Violence Against Women*, 6, 728 – 746.
- Ellis, D. (1992). Woman abuse among separated and divorced women: The relevance of social support. In E.C. Viano (Ed.), *Intimate violence: Interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 177 – 188). Bristol: Taylor & Francis.
- Hardesty, J.L. (2002). Separation assault in the context of postdivorce parenting: An integrative review of the literature. *Violence Against Women*, 8, 597 – 621.
- Mahoney, P., & Williams, L.M. (1998). Sexual assault in marriage: Prevalence, consequences, and treatment of wife rape. In J.L. Jasinski, & L.M. Williams (Eds.), *Partner violence: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research* (pp. 113 – 162). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Russell, D.E.H. (1990). *Rape in marriage*. New York: Macmillan Press.
- Tanish Gupta , Marital Rape as a Ground of Divorce, 4 (2) *IJLMH* Page 793 - 800 (2021), DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1732/IJLMH.26205>
