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Is Gender Equity Possible in Indian Society?

ABSTRACT. Gender differences are social ideals that develop within the matrix of compulsory heterosexuality. Gender differences in Indian society are deeply rooted. The movement and action for women's equity and justice are also miss-rooted. It pushes women into to more danger. Therefore, achievement of women's equity and justice in Indian society is far away. This paper focuses this argument and shows that matrix of gender education and gender practices should be changed and it should not be free from sexual lens. Otherwise, gender equity is far away or never be achieved to make gender balance in our society.

KEYWORDS: women, gender differences, gender equity, compulsory heterosexuality

According to Simone de Beauvoir (1953), 'women are not born but made'. The men's and women's behaviour is ingrained, reflecting innate and essential differences between the sexes. Sex signifies 'the anatomical and physiological characteristics as masculinity and femininity, which are defined by social, cultural and psychological attributes in a particular society at a particular time' (De Beauvoir, 1953). The 'gender system' underpins the patriarchy, 'a system of male dominance, legitimized within the family and society through superior rights, privileges, authority and power' (De Beauvoir, 1953).

The Marxist Theory of Gender tells that gender is an isolated piece of reality; it has to be seen in relation to the social whole (totality) (Geetha, 2002). As a social and economic system, the masculinity and femininity exist in our society. In the capitalist system, they are interlinked through two material processes—production and reproduction to make their own lives (Engels, 1948). This production and reproduction relations have been separated by the activities as performed by both genders in a family and society. 'The right to property and the emergence of the marriage institution transformed the women as men's property', by which female sex was defeated and patriarchy emerged. From that period, females are considered as 'the second sex' (De Beauvoir, 1953). Thus, the female lives are trapped within the realm of reproduction, and

male sex takes the place of superiority as 'first sex'. Fredrick Angels (1948) argued that the emancipation of women and their equality would be possible when they would take part in production on a large social scale and domestic duties would be minor. But according to social and historical contexts, production-reproduction relationship is being criticized because it does not fit in all contexts (Scott, 1986).

The critics also find that Engels' arguments about the origins of male power are problematic. They justify that male's control over production does not make their dominance rather their control over reproduction makes them powerful because the women are the exchange of 'gift' (Mcillassoux, 1981; Levi-Strauss, 1971). Through this process of exchange women become objects. They lose their accessibility to their bodies and sexuality. They are trapped within their reproductive growth. The critics also opine that the liberation of women can be achieved without the destruction of patriarchy, patriarchal attitudes and relationship. Thus, women's participation in the workforce is a battle against patriarchy (Scott, 1986).

According to Mitchell (1971), the liberation of women can be achieved if production, reproduction, socialization and sexuality are integrated and transformed in relation to overall production.

Freud and Freudians share that masculinity and femininity are differed by the individual psyche (Freud, 1953). Thus, a girl takes to mothering and child care while a boy assumes to take public roles and responsibilities. Further feminist historians argued that gender differences are not hereditary. It is a social norm where man manages to gain control over woman's reproduction power, rendering women powerless and dependent on their sexual lives (Dworkin, 1981; Lacan, 1981; Rich, 1981). So, gender differences are social ideals that develop within the matrix of compulsory heterosexuality. Gender differences in Indian society are deeply rooted. The movement and action for women's equity and justice are also miss-rooted. It pushes women into to more danger. Therefore, achievement of women's equity and justice in Indian society is far away. This discussion focuses the above argument.

Gender differences

The norms of gender difference reflect and express the complex economic and social relationships of power in society. In this sense, the human body becomes the locus of sexual identity, of familial and social

roles, as well as sexual self-awareness and expectation. Therefore, gender is referred to as practice of the body that mean the expression of femaleness or maleness or it is the bodily experience of sexual love, sport, religion, motion of discipline, restraint and control. Thus, human body is schooled into looking, acting, desiring, expressing and controlling its movements in certain ways through a range of institutions and agents as well as ideas and beliefs (Geetha, 2002).

Appearance that means beauty is a physical marker to distinguish women from men. Beauty is associated with women while men are virile (Geetha, 2002). It is a common notion that women would take care over their appearance, whereas men do not care about their beauty. But they care about their energy and ability. It significantly allows them to act as they wish. This notion of beauty is normal rule which women's body must adhere to. It is a cultural practice that has drawn from the historical epoch. Sometimes, in some cases women's images are considered as the mother of God or various queens and aristocratic women' (Geetha, 2002). The beauty calls attention to a woman's modesty, chastity and goodness of temper. Fundamentally, beauty is a product of ideas, opinions, entertained and expressed by men about women. It is framed by the male gaze which treats women as objects, and objectification of women is the notion of pleasure, gratification and desire. It cultivates a sense of bodily good-looking. Therefore, beauty does not promote power and independence to women. Beauty strengthens only the notion of an object. In the era of globalization, education and participation in work forces imprint the culture of beauty. But till date, a good family is one where the women of the family are honourable, and their chastity is protected by their counterpart in their everyday lives. 'The chastity of a wife, a concept which has not fierce determination is very essential to her family's stability' (Geetha, 2002).

Gender practice—myth & reality

In the present context, we find that gender competition is a very common cultural practice and gender violence is rampant. Women's education, employment and awareness as well as the movement towards women's liberation and equity are unable to bridge the gender gaps in the third world like India. Government of India has taken various policies i.e. reservation of seats for women from lower house to upper

houses, reservation of seats in education and so forth and different programmes including amendment and enforcement of laws and orders for women's justice and equity. This reservation and enactment of laws and orders are the process of undermining the privilege sections. Therefore, it is evident that women are considered still as 'second sex' and it is an impediment of ultimately women's equity and justice in our society. Practically, women imitate male like behavior and compete for gender equity. Their imitation includes their fashion, beauty care, employment in the male gazing profession (i.e. media, event management and advertisement, etc.). Their imitation of gender equity is making them arrogant against male. But they are dependent on male, and they have much more faith on their male partners. Majority of women, regardless of their education and economy have firm faith and belief in marriage because they think that it is the only path to liberty and their usual discourse is restricted within the realm of love and marriage partner. 'They involve in body show off including body revealing dress and other sex-related outlook to attract male partners who might be under her control'.

Conclusion

Are feminism and the movement for women's justice rightly teaching women for their justice and equity? Or is it separating female as special class rather it makes them second-class citizen? Does the emergence of women rights wing/organization indicate it? It reminds that women do not cover under human rights. Therefore, women's' movement for equity and justice is miss-rooted. It pushes them into a new world of male deprivation. The bad impact of gender rights is revealed in their daily lives. As consequence of this, their behavior is imitating and they are in illusion because of their tendency for self-love, level of poor satisfaction, suffering from an identity crisis and so forth. For this behavior, they are deprived of and they are also exploited when they are involved in conditional consent to sexual relation. The incidents of premarital sex, love victims, marital conflict, extra-marital relations and divorce are increasing day by day. Imitation of gender equity increases violence against women within family and outside. They are treated as sexual object. Therefore, matrix of gender education and gender practices should be changed and it should not be free from sexual lens. Otherwise, gender equity is far away or never be achieved to make gender balance in our society.

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