



Gender Bias

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Abstract

In order to fight patriarchy, feminism and feminist theory was born. By general definition, feminism is a philosophy in which women and their contributions are valued. Feminists can be any one in the population, men, women, girl or boys. Feminism can also be described as a movement or a revolution that includes women and men who wish the world to be equal without boundaries. Feminism can not deny female characteristics but which feminist say is that, female should grow up according her own will, or her own freedom, not according to others will or male will. Generally feminist can not deny sex difference of male and female, which they deny is that gender difference of male and female, which is created by society. So we can conclude human's differs as individuals, not as sexes.

Key Words: *Feminism, discrimination, socialization, aggressive, emotional.*

The gender system has been identified by feminists as a social variable present in every society. In our society, the word 'gender' and 'sex' are often used interchangeable. Sex can be understood as biological concept. Gender can be understood psychological or behavioral concept. The word 'bias' or 'discrimination' connotes different meanings. In general 'discrimination' means the act of differentiating one person from another or recognition of the difference one thing and another. In primary sense 'discrimination' means "making an unjust distinction of the people on the grounds of caste, colour, creed, race and sex and treating them differently".

Gender bias or discrimination may be defined as differentiating people as male and female on the basis of gender or gender-based functions and treating them uniquely in the matter of social function, or treating them unjustly in the distribution or burdens and benefits in society.

Throughout history, Women have always struggled to gain equality, respect and the same rights as men. This has been difficult because of patriarchy, an ideology in which men are superior to women and have the right to rule women. In order to fight patriarchy, feminism and feminist theory was born.

By general definition, feminism is a philosophy in which women and their contributions are valued. It is based on social, political and economical equality for women. Feminists can be any one in the population, men, women, girls or boys.

Feminism can also be described as a movement or a revolution that includes women and men who wish the world to be equal without boundaries. This revolution is not the revolution against individual male person or a group of male person, it is against patriarchy society.

Feminism cannot deny female characteristics but which feminist say is that, female should grow up according her own will or her own freedom, not according to others will or male person will.

Generally feminist cannot deny sex difference of male and female, which they deny is that gender difference of male-female; which is created by society. The source of gender difference depend on such a idea that "Males are self dependent and females are male dependent." In patriarchy society children are growing up according to there their own sex on different environment, so from their childhood they are conscious about their gender differences. Thus according to social way male characteristics grow up in male child and female characteristics grow up in female child. So this difference is not sex difference, it is gender difference. Any one who has had any thing to do with children will know that in all sorts of ways children learn that sexes have different roles? Boys get cars or guns for their birthday presents; girls get dolls or cosmetic sets. Girls are put into dresses and told how nice they look; boys are dressed in jeans and praised for their strength and daring. Children's book almost invariably used to portray fathers going out to work while mothers clean the house and cook the dinner.

Thus, through the process of socialization gender differences are established and human being accepted different social attitude about male and female. According to Peter Singer, the source of this socialization is that in earlier, simpler societies, the sexes had different roles because woman had to breast feed their children during the long period. This meant that the woman stayed closer to home while the men went out to hunt. As a result females evolved a more social and emotional character, while males became tougher and more aggressive. Because physical strength and aggression were the ultimate forms of power in these simple societies, male became dominant and female admits their domination power. The sex roles that exist today are, on this view, an inheritance from these simpler circumstances an inheritance that became absolute once technology made it possible for the weakest person to operate a crane that lifts fifty tons, or fire a missile that kills millions. Nor do women have to be tied to home and children in the way they used to be, since women can now combine motherhood and a career.

The alternative view is that while social conditioning plays some role in determining psychological differences between the sexes, biological factors are also at work.

The differences in the intellectual strengths and weakness of the sexes cannot example more than a minute proportion of the difference in positions that males and females hold in our society. It might explain, for example, there should be more males than females in professions like architecture and engineering, professions that may require visual-spatial ability, but even in these professions, the magnitude of the differences in numbers cannot be explained by the genetic theory-spatial ability. This theory suggests that half as many females are as genetically advantaged in this area as males, which would account for the lower average scores of females in tests of visual-spatial ability, but cannot account for the fact that in most countries there are not merely twice as many males as females in architecture one engineering, but at least ten times as many. Moreover, if superior visual-spatial ability explains the male dominance of architecture and engineering, why isn't there a corresponding female advantage in professions requiring high verbal ability? It is true that there are mere women journalist than engineers, and probably more women have achieved lasting fame as novelists than in any other area of life; yet female journalists and television commentators continue to be outnumbered by males, outside specifically 'women's subjects' such as cookery and child care. So even if one accepts biological explanations for the patterning of these abilities, one can still argue that women do not have the same opportunities as men to make the most of the abilities they have.

Whatever the origin of psychological difference between the sexes, they exist only when averages are taken and some females are more aggressive and have better visual-spatial ability than some males. We have seen that the genetic hypothesis offered in explanation of male visual-spatial superiority itself suggests that a quarter of all females will have greater natural visual-spatial ability than half of all males. Our own observation should convince us that there are females who are also more aggressive than some males. So biological explanations are not, we are never in a position to say 'you are a women, so you cannot become an engineer', or 'Because you are female, you will not have the drive and ambition needed to succeed in politics', nor should we assure that no male can possibly have sufficient gentleness and warmth to stay at home with the children while their mother goes at to work. We must assess people as individuals, not merely lump them into 'female' and 'male', if we are to find out what they are really like; and we must keep the roles occupied by females and males flexible if people are to be able to do what they are best suited for.

Thus sex differences have existed in all the human society which is not really sex difference, which is gender difference.

Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) categorized three levels of sex-linked differences:

- i) Primary differences characterized by differences in sex organs.
- ii) Secondary differences characterized by differences associated with reproductive function.
- iii) Tertiary differences characterized by differences in behavior, e.g. aggression, care, assertion, submission.

Ellis is not the only one to speak of sex linked differences among men and women. Such differences have been serialized by others. Sigmund Freud identified three levels of sex linked differences namely, the primary biological level characterized by masculine and feminine attributes. 2nd autonomy and relatedness-mature men are autonomous and women remain related. The third level referred to by him is the psychological or grammatical manifested as active and passive traits.

It is customary among biologists to refer to primary, secondary and tertiary sex-linked characteristics. Chromosomes mark the primary sex-linked human traits while hormones characterize the secondary sexual characteristics. There is no qualitative difference between the hormones possessed by males and those possessed by females. Yet their body chemistries differ due to the difference in chromosome structures. The hormone secretion of all males are not identical, nor is the hormone secretion of all females the same, that is the secondary sexual characteristics differ from individual to individual cutting across the primary male/female divide. The tertiary sex-linked characteristics like male/female impulses are greatly molded by the environment.

In the context of feminist literature the genesis of tertiary sex-linked characteristics is a matter of great debate. Tertiary sexual traits overlap with gender. Gender is a cultural construct. Each culture imposes certain norms on the behavior of men and women. These are prescriptions for appropriate behavior. Like in most cultures ideally men are expected to be aggressive, assertive and brave among many other things and women are expected to be passive, receptive and caring. Arguably these role-prescriptions were initially formulated for the smooth functioning of society. A sexual division of labour provides the underpinning for a gender divided culture. Gender divisions are present in all cultures. The line of division, however, varies from culture to culture.

Feminist have been systematically pointing out that all human societies till date are not only divided on the lines of gender roles, these roles have always been discriminatory-the attributes associated with male-gender roles have been valorized were as the female gender roles have been pejorative.

Therefore gender does not simply symbolize difference, it also symbolizes discrimination. Not only that the discrimination has always disadvantaged women. Now since sexual differences are biological, they are often referred to as natural differences, where as gender differences being constructs are refer to as cultural differences. In order to keep these two sets of differences apart certain linguistic conventions have been formulated-the sex differences have been denoted by the male/female binaries whereas the gender difference has been referred to by the masculine/feminine binaries.

When we say that all humans are equal, irrespective of sex what exactly are we claiming? We can admit that human differ as individuals, and yet insist that there are no morally significant difference as between sexes . The differences between individuals in these respects are not captured by sexual boundaries. It is true of the sexist stereotype-that sees women as emotionally deeper and more caring, but also less rational, less aggressive, and less enterprising than men. Obviously this is not true of women as a whole. In our practical life we see that some women are deeply emotional, some women are less rational. On the other hand some men are more aggressive and less emotional. But in logical sense we cannot conclude for a 'same' to 'all', that means 'some women are emotional but less aggressive' from this sentence we cannot say that all women are emotional or all men and aggressive. Instead of that we can say that some women are emotionally shallower, less caring and more rational, more aggressive and more enterprising than some men. So we can conclude that humans differ as individuals, not as sexes. In this context Rabindronath Tagore says --

Nariki apan Bhagya joy koribar
Keno nahi dibe adhikar
He Bidhata.

(নারী কে আপন ভাগ্য জয় করিবার / কেন নাহি দিবে অধিকার / হে বিধাতা)

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