

Gender: the basics

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GENDER, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Gender = sex - *False*
- ‘gender = women’ - *False*
Gender is not only about women;
it is about women and men. - *True*
- “Biology is destiny” Sigmund Freud: - *False*
- “One is not born a woman, but made into a woman”,
Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949) – *True*
- Gender is fixed - *False*
- Gender is not a fixed state, but constantly and actively
under construction (‘becoming’); gender as performance
(Judith Butler). - *True*

Key Concepts

- Sex/ gender distinction
- Intersectionality
- Gender roles
- Gender relations
- Gender equality
- Gender mainstreaming
- Gender analysis
- Gender neutral language

Why gender?

KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

- **Sex and Gender**
- Sex and gender: what is the difference between these concepts?
- **Sex** is the biological difference between women and men. Sex differences are about the fact that men produce sperm, women bear and breastfeed children; men and women have different bodies, hormones and chromosomes.
- Sexual differences are the same across the world. But being a man or a woman is very different in various cultures. To distinguish these differences from the biological ones, the word **gender** is used. Sex is a fact of human biology: gender is not, it is established through socialisation.

Gender

- Gender refers to socially constructed and widely shared ideas and expectations, norms and values about women and men.
- The position of men and women in society is the result of differences that are socially and culturally determined. The word gender refers to those socially defined differences.
- Ideas about “typically” feminine and masculine characteristics and abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in various situations. People themselves define certain behaviours and qualities as being masculine or feminine and identify certain activities as being appropriate for men or women in a specific society.
- Gender interacts with other differences (diversity), such as class, ethnicity, race, age, religion and sexual preference, to create situations/relations of dominance and subordination.

Intersectionality

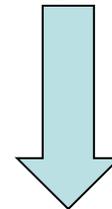
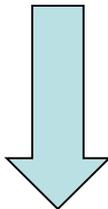
(Kimberlé Crenshaw)

- Woman/man
- Race
- Ethnicity (or cultural background)
- Religion
- Age (phase of life)
- Class
- Caste
- Sexual preference
- Physical or mental (dis)ability
- Educational attainment, knowledge and experience
- Work experience and attained competencies
- Family situation
- Etc.

Engendering Process

Social Construction of Gender

- Ascribing traits to female and male
- Traits defined as `feminine' and `masculine'
- Sexual division of labour, roles and responsibilities defined by culture
- Behavioural patterns between and among women and men determined by tradition
- Society compartmentalises women's and men's work and universe
- Capacitates women and men with different skills and knowledge
- Differential access to resources and privileges

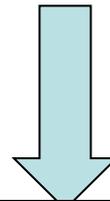
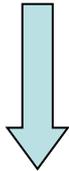


Internalisation

Deep rooted as “given”, “natural”, and
“sacred”

Affirmation of stereotypes and predispositions

Self-worth, image and identity



Women and men arrive with different images of self

Gender roles

- Gender roles are the roles men and women are expected to 'play' in society. Society has allocated different roles, responsibilities and activities to women and men according to what is considered 'appropriate'. Often (but not always) men are supposed to earn the income for the family, while women take care of the household and children.
- Gender roles, being socially, culturally and historically determined and constructed, do vary over cultures and (historical) time and **do** change and **can be** changed.

Gender behaviour

- Specific gender behaviour is based on and influenced by the cultural, legal, social, economic and political environment in which people are living.
- In family relationships gender behaviour is also deeply rooted and defined.
- As a result of gender differences, women and men have different experiences in life and their knowledge, perspective and priorities are not the same.

Gender relations

- These are intricately woven through the whole set of cultural, economic and political relations that define the context in which we operate.
- They are characterised by power relations which are generally inequitable, resulting in unequal allocation of resources and benefits.

Gender inequality

- This is caused by structural and institutional discrimination. Although varying in how this inequality manifests itself and in its extent, generally speaking in most cultures women are in a disadvantageous position as compared to men in the private domain as well as in the workplace and in the society at large.
- Besides being discriminatory against women unequal gender relations impoverish men's lives.

Gender needs (interests)

- As men and women have different tasks, they also have different needs. Childbearing requires natal care and access to specific health services. Being the head of the household requires the skills and means to provide sufficient income.
- Needs could be divided into ***practical*** and ***strategic*** ones.

Practical gender needs

- Practical gender needs could be water provision, health care, provision of agricultural tools or income earning for household purposes. These needs are mostly connected to the reproductive and productive work and to the specific tasks of women and men.
- Responding to these needs will solve practical problems but mostly will not change anything in power relations, control over resources or decision-making power.

Strategic gender needs

- Responding to strategic gender needs addresses power relations, access to and control over resources, and decision-making rights. For example strategic gender needs could be - access to credit and other resources; measures against violence; freedom of decision-making; and the right to own land or property.
- Responding to strategic gender needs will influence and hopefully change real issues about power, decision-making and access to and control over resources.

Gender Equality

- Gender equality means that men and women can develop their potential, have equal opportunities and rights, and can benefit more **equitably** from policies, programs, allocation of resources and benefits.
- It requires examining gendered divisions of labour in society at large and in science and (academic and research) institutions in particular, which disadvantage women's participation.
- This may require positive discrimination (special legal measures, quotas, etc.).

Gender Equity

- The exercise of equal rights and entitlements leading to outcomes which are fair and just, and which enable women to have the same power as men.
- Equitable gender relations benefit both women and men.

Gender blindness

- The inability to perceive the different gender roles and responsibilities, the status and power differentials based on gender divisions, and the differential impact policies and programmes may have on women and men within a community.
This is not to discount the fact that there are differences among women (or men) themselves.
- That institutions (religious, social, political, legal), policies and language are not gender-neutral.

Gender awareness

Put on gender lens (looking with new eyes) – a way of understanding people and society.

Recognise the differential impacts of gender issues and the need to address the inequalities that arise from them. This can be done by:

- Gender measurement (gender gap)
- Gender analysis
- Gender planning (including gender budgeting)
- Gender mainstreaming
- Gender monitoring (analysis and evaluation)
- Gender impact assessment
- Gender empowerment

Gender mainstreaming

- Gender mainstreaming entails the systematic integration of gender equality into all systems and structures, policies, programmes, processes and projects, into ways of seeing and doing (Rees 2002)
- The goal of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that the concerns and priorities of men and women in policies and programs are given adequate consideration; that men and women have equal opportunities to setting goals and priorities, to participate and benefit.
- At the basis of mainstreaming is the knowledge that gender issues have relevance for all areas of human existence and that gender must be included in all areas of analysis, legislation and policy development and planning.
- Gender should not be added to programs or projects (add gender and stir!) but should be incorporated, as an essential ingredient. This should be done from the very beginning and in all aspects of the organization, its programs and projects. Only then will the gender approach work and be effective.
- Gender mainstreaming needs to be expanded to include gender analysis in basic and applied research.
- Gender mainstreaming should contribute to **gender equality**.

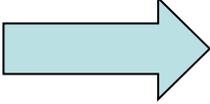
Gender analysis

- Gender analysis is a key instrument for gender mainstreaming. The question then is: what needs to be analyzed? It is usually the following:
 - The roles of men and women;
 - The responsibilities of women and men;
 - Access to and control over resources for men and women;
 - Decision-making and power of women and men;
 - The needs and potentials of both men and women;
 - The relationship between women and men;
 - And the impact on the situation and position of men and women.
- Gender analysis should be used at all levels and in all areas of society - at household level, community level, government level, but also at institutional level. Gender analysis within an institution or organization will provide a clear picture of the gender situation and will indicate what the next steps on the road to equality could be. If an organization is gender sensitive and gender equal, this will have its effects on its operations and will thus contribute to gender equality in the society in which it works.

“Gender disaggregated” data (separated out data)

- One needs to know what the tasks, roles, responsibilities and needs of men and women are; one needs to get information about the power relations, access and control over resources and decision-making processes. So one needs to separate out the data collected from the stakeholders, to separate data collected about men and women. The result is called gender-disaggregated data.
- Sometimes data also needs to be separated out for boys and girls, for elderly men and women and other age groups, even sometimes with different ethnic groups in one community.

Gender-neutral language

- Avoid generic terms that are also used exclusively for males.
- Man  Human/ person
- He  She/he

Why gender?

- How do aspects of social identity, like gender (also ethnicity and social status), influence the way people see the world?
 - situated knowledges
 - the view from ‘below’
 - what does it mean for their relations with science and technology?
- What is the added value of a gender approach?

Including gender analysis in science and medicine and bioethics can offer new perspectives, pose new questions and open new areas to research.

“Gender equality is good for scientific quality” (Elizabeth Pollitzer, 2011)