

Gender (In) equity-Myth & Reality: A Commentary

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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 family and society through superior rights, privileges, authority and power’ (de Beauvoir, 1953).

The Marxist Theory of Gender tells that it 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 capital system, they are interlinked through two material processes – production and reproduction to make their own lives (Engles, 1948). This production and reproduction relations have been separated the activities as performed by both gender in a family as well as society. ‘The right to property and the emergence of marriage institution transform the women as men’s property’ (Engles, 1948). It is the historic defeat of the female sex and the emergence of patriarchy. From then, 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 Angles (1948) argues 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.

The critics also find that Engles' arguments about the origins of male power are problematic. They justify that male's control over production does not make for their dominance rather their control over reproduction makes them powerful because the women are the exchange of 'gift' (Mcillassoux, 1981 and Levi-Strauss, 1969). Through this process of exchange women become objects. They lose their accessibility to their bodies and sexuality. And they are trapped with their reproductive growth. The critics also opine that the liberation of women can be achieved without destruction of patriarchy, patriarchal attitudes and relationship. Thus, women's participation in workforce is a battle against patriarchy.

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 individualpsyche (Freud, 1953). Thus a girl takes to mothering and child care while a boy assumes to take public roles and responsibilities. Further Feminist historians criticize it because gender differences are not eternal. 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 and Rich, 1981). So, gender difference is a social ideals developed withinthe matrix of compulsory heterosexuality.

Gender differences:

The norms of gender differences reflect and express the complex economic and social relationships of power in the 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. Gender is referred to as practices of the body that means 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 a 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 care chiefly because energy and ability are their significant aspects to act as they wish. This notion of beauty is normal rule which women's

body must adhere. It is a cultural practice that has drawn from historical epoch. Sometimes in some cases women's images are considered as 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 male gaze which treats women as objects, and objectification of women is notions of pleasure, gratification and desire. It cultivates a sense of bodily good looking. It does not promote power and independence to women. It strengthens only the notion of an object. In the era of globalization, education and participation in workforces imprint the culture of beauty where illicit beauty dominants. But till date, a good family is one where the women of the family are honorable and they guard their chastity with their very lives. 'The chastity of wife, a concept which has not fierce determination is very essential to her family's stability' (Geetha, 2002).

Gender practice –myth & reality:

In present contexts, we find that gender competition is very common cultural practice and gender violence is rampant. Women's education, employment and awareness as well as movement for 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 law and order for women's justice and equity. This reservation and enactment of laws and orders is the process of undermining the privilege sections. Therefore, it is evident that women are considered till as "second sex" and it impedes ultimately women's equity and justice in our society. Practically, women use to imitate overall systems of gender equity. Their imitation includes their fashion, beauty care, employment in male gazing profession (i.e. media, event management and advertisement, etc.). Women use to compete male in some habits and intellectual competition is little or evident. 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 partner. Majority of women regardless of their education and economy has firmed faith and belief on marriage because they think that it is the only path of liberty and their usual gossip is restricted with realm of love and marriage partner. 'They involve in body show off including body revealing dress and other sex-related outlook to attract male partner who might be under her control'.

Conclusion:

Do feminism and movement for women's justice separate female as special class/second class citizen? Because emergence of separate wing of women's right tells it and they do not fall under the platform of human rights. It reminds that they are not to be considered as human being. The women are entering into a new world of deprivation via wrong root of gender equity. The bad impact of gender's rights reveal in their daily lives. As consequence of this imitating behaviour, they are in illusion because of their tendency for self-love, level of poor satisfaction, suffering in identity crisis and so forth. For this behaviour, they are deprived and exploited when they are involved in conditional consent to sexual relation. The incident of pre-marital sex, love victims, marital conflict, extra-marital relations and divorce is increasing day by day. So, a wrong pathway of gender equity is the principal cause of daily violence (within family and outside). Therefore, matrix of gender education and gender practices should be free from sexual lenses. Otherwise, gender equity is far way or never being achieved for gender balance in our society.

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