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The Functions of Gender in Our Society

**Introduction**

Our planet Earth is full of various kinds of species. Some are insects, some are reptiles, some are animals, but the most significant and superior among them is Human. Humans or Homo sapiens are the most powerful and wisest creation ever created by God. It is the only species blessed with the power of wisdom and intellect. Humans have been divided into further various categories, but the most obvious is gender or sex.

Mostly, humans are categorized into three main types of gender categories; Male, Female, and Transgender. Every individual belonging to any one of these genders has a special and unique role assigned to them which they play throughout their lives, till the time of their death. There is another term that is often confused with gender is "Sex." Although there is a clear difference between both, the terms are sometimes used interchangeably (Lorber). The upcoming details will discuss the various roles of functions of different genders in society and how this function adds value to community.

**Discussion**

The term Gender and Sex are often confused although both have a different meaning and are used in a separate context. Gender is a socially constructed characteristic or a feature that decides what kind of a role a specific individual will play in a society, whereas Sex determines the sexual characteristics of an individual.

Gender refers to the set of cultural and social characteristics that distinguish men from women. On the other hand, sex refers to those biological characteristics that distinguish a man from a woman, like sex chromosome, sex-specific hormones, reproductive organs, and physical characteristics. Gender can also be taken as a set of actions or behaviors that are considered suitable or appropriate for men or women exclusively.

Gender plays a very important role in assigning the roles to the individuals in a specific society. These roles have not been decided today but have been assigned to both the types of individuals in a society since the very beginning of times. Functions of gender or gender roles decide how a person should act, behave, dress, speak, walk and even sit in a certain society. Gender roles are usually the measures of masculinity and femininity in an individual. Although variations and exceptions are there in every society but, the basic or fundamental roles remain same.

The function or role of any gender in a society is mostly determined by the culture. The culture, religion, demographics, climate and many other factors decide the way a specific gender will lead their lives in a certain society. These factors also govern the type of activities in which the individuals belonging to a specific sex can participate and perform their duties.

There are many diverse examples that are spread all across the world that clarify the functions or different roles performed or expected by a specific gender in a particular society or culture. For example, a female is supposed to wear bright colors, jewelry, frilly dresses, and high heels. It is an expected and acceptable feature or trait, but it is not compulsory. If a female fails to adopt these values, she is considered an odd one out in the society.

If the examples if males are to be seen, males are expected to wear light or dull colors. They are not likely to wear jewelry items and definitely not heels or frilly dresses. There are certain types of dresses like pants and dress shirts or t-shirts whereas the dresses specifically designated for females like frocks and maxis.

Similarly, in the case of professions, there are certain professions that are set for males and others have been fixed for males. Mostly, the jobs that require tough, physical exertion are expected to be carried on by males, whereas the positions that do not require much physical burden are designed for females like teaching and running a beauty salon. Male jobs that are designated to them are mining and driving a trailer or truck and engineering.

Although these values have been set and understood by the societies, these are often defied by the members of those societies. There are always rebels present in every place and setting that refuse to accept the established norms and culture. Sometimes these rebels even try to change and implement their own system according to their preferred concepts (Budgeon). For example, as it has already been established that in the area of dressing, men are not expected to wear jewelry, but some men wear it, and wear it proudly. They ensemble themselves with chains, lockets, earings, and even nose ring. Then there are some males who like to wear bright colors instead of the same light and dull tones. In the same way, there are some females who do not like to wear the traditional dresses designated to them by the society and try to follow their own heart in this case.

The change and alteration in the areas of dressing, professions, activities and other factors also depends on the development of that specific region or society. The development or progression in a region is directly proportional to the flexibility in various gender roles and functions. For example, in a metropolitan, society has accepted that females and males wear the same kind of dresses like jeans and suits. It is a normal thing for females to wear suits especially those working in the corporate sector (Bamman). It is considered fine for women to work in offices at similar positions with males which is why many females are seen performing the same roles in the society just like males, whether they involve a lot of physical activity or not.

Moreover, one of the most important factors that alter the perceptions of functions and roles performed by the individuals belonging to certain sex in society is time with the passage of time. The concepts and perceptions of people change considerably with time, and many functions that were considered a taboo to be performed by a certain sex in the society are then accepted by the same society and are allowed to be performed by both the genders. Examples of this can be taken in the form of sports (Young). In the previous times, it was not possible for females to participate in many sports and their participation was limited to only some sports, But now they females can be seen taking part in almost every sport and even excelling them. A perfect example is present in the case of a female cricket team. Similar case can be seen in many other sports.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that gender and sex are two different concepts but often confused and used interchangeably. There are certain functions that have been designated to the members of the society, and society expects them to fit into those roles. There are certain standards that have been set by the society that how an individual belonging to a certain sex or gender should act, behave, dress and even sit in a certain situation. If any individual tries to deviate from that set of pre-defined standards, it is totally unacceptable by society, and he or she is considered a rebel.

Works Cited

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