

Concept and definition of Sex

Sex refers to biological differences; chromosomes, hormonal profiles, internal and external sex organs. Sex is a more scientific term that explains physical traits and sexual preferences. Sex describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth.

Sex is biologically founded as

- A human female has 2 X chromosomes
- A human male has 1 X and 1 Y chromosome

All embryos are identical for the first 8 weeks of conception. Prenatal production of male hormones produces the male pattern. Absence of these male hormones produces the female pattern.

At birth, male and female infants are distinguished by primary sex characteristics: the genitalia used in the reproductive process. At puberty, an increased production of hormones results in the development of secondary sex characteristics: the physical traits (other than reproductive organs) that identify an individual's sex. For women, these include larger breasts, wider hips, narrower shoulders, a layer of fatty tissues covering the body, and menstruation. For men, they include development of enlarge genitals, a deeper voice, greater height, a more muscular build, and more body and facial hairs.

These changes produce an acute awareness of sexuality. During this time, many young people become aware of their sexual orientation – a preference for emotional – sexual relationships with the members of the opposite sex, same sex or both sexes.

Sexuality: It can be defined as sexual attraction towards and activity with other human beings.

Homosexuality: attraction toward members of the same sex (gays, lesbians)

Heterosexuality: attraction toward members of the other sex

Bisexuality: attraction toward members of both sexes

Sex, gender, and sexuality are 3 independent dimensions.

Hijras: Hijras or berdaches, a group in northern India, consider themselves intersexed males who have become women. Hijras are required to dress as women, but they do not imitate or try to pass as ordinary women; rather, they are as deviant as women as they are as men.

Transsexual is a person who believes that he or she was born with the body of wrong sex. Some transsexuals take hormone treatments or have a sex change operation to change their genitalia in order to achieve a body congruent with their own sense of sexual identity.

Concept and definition of Gender

The word *gender* comes from the Middle English **gendre**. This, in turn, came from Latin word **la:genus**. Both words mean 'kind', 'type', or 'sort'. The historical meaning of gender is something like "things we treat differently because of their inherent differences".

that is a basic or permanent part of oneself and that cannot be changed.

Gender describes the characteristics that a society or culture defines as masculine or feminine. **Gender** refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender carries a more social tone. Meaning that it refers to the different clothing, activities, career choices, and positions people hold in society.

Gender identifies the social relationship between men and women, shaped by different social, historical and cultural values. These values determine the roles that women and men play in all fields of life. It identifies socially learned behavior and expectations associated with the two sexes attributed by a given culture. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Just a few examples: Chances and opportunities, the access to jobs or decisions, the way of thinking or behaving are not the same for men and women and it is this way because of social and cultural reasons.

The sex as male or female is a biological fact that it is the same in any culture, but the terms of gender role as a 'man' or a 'woman' in any society can be quite different cross culturally. These 'gender roles' have an impact on the health of the individual.

In sociological terms '**gender role**' refers to the characteristics and behaviors that different cultures attribute to the sexes or the particular economic and social roles which a society considers appropriate for women and men. Men are mainly identified with productive roles which tend to be sequential, while women have a triple role: domestic responsibilities, productive work and community activities which often have to be carried out simultaneously.

What it means to be a 'real man' in any culture requires male sex plus what our various cultures define as masculine characteristics and behaviors, likewise a 'real woman' needs female sex and feminine characteristics. Gender is a continuous category: a person can be more or less feminine or masculine. To summarize:

'Man' = male sex + masculine social role

(A 'real man', 'masculine' or 'manly', e.g. head and breadwinner of the family, responsible for contacts outward, strong, rational, sexually active)

'Woman' = female sex + feminine social role

(A 'real woman', 'feminine' or 'womanly', e.g. dependent on and subject to a male commander (father, husband etc...), responsible for the social connections within the family weak, emotional and irrational, compensatory sexually passive or uninterested)

Gender Related Terms

✓ **Gender identity:**

Encyclopaedia Britannica notes that gender identity is "an individual's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex."

Gender Awareness:

It means that both women and men are working together in a harmonious way, possessing the same rights, duties, positions, roles and opportunities, and paying careful attention to the specific needs and strengths of both.

Gender role stereotyping

It is the constant portrayal, such as in the media or in books, of women and men occupying social roles according to the traditional gender division of labor in a particular society. Such gender role stereotyping works to support and reinforce the traditional gender division of labor by portraying it as "normal" and "natural".

✓ **Gender Equity:**

The principle and practices of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, resources and responsibilities between men and women is known as gender equity. The concept recognizes that

women and men have different needs and that these differences should be identified in a manner that reduces the imbalance between the sexes.

✓ **Gender Equality:** ✓

Absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities and the allocation of resources and benefits or in excess to services is known as "Gender Equality".

Or

Gender equality means that women should have the same rights and privileges as men to human, social economic and cultural development, and an equal voice in civil and political life.

Gender Mainstreaming:

Integration of gender concerns into the analysis, formulation and monitoring of policies, programs and projects with the objective of ensuring that these reduce inequalities between women and men.

Or

The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in population and development activities.

Gender sensitivity:

It is the ability to recognize gender issues, and especially the ability to recognize women's different perceptions and interests arising from their different social location and different gender roles. Gender sensitivity is often used to mean the same as gender awareness, although gender awareness can also mean the extra ability to recognize gender issues which remain "hidden" from those with a more conventional point of view.

✓ **Gender Gap:**

Gender gap is the observable (an often measurable) gap between women and men on some important socio economic indicator (e.g. ownership of property, access to land, enrollment at school), which is seen to be unjust, and therefore presents the clear empirical evidence of the existence of the gender issue.

Gender analysis:

It is the study of the differences in women's and men's roles and access to and control over resources. It is a tool for improving and understanding of how differences between men and women influence their opportunities and problems, and can include the identification of challenges to participation in development.

Empowerment:

It means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society.

Feminism:

A social theory or political movement supporting the equality of both sexes in all aspects of public and private life; specifically, a theory or movement that argues that legal and social restrictions on females must be removed in order to bring about such equality.

Sexism

Sexism is the subordination of one sex (usually female) based on the assumed superiority of the other sex. It is commonly considered to be discrimination and/or hatred against people based on their sex rather than their individual merits, but can also refer to any and all systemic differentiations based on the sex of the individuals.

Sexism can refer to subtly different beliefs or attitudes:

- The belief that one gender or sex is inferior to or more valuable than the other;
- Female or male chauvinism
- The attitude of misogyny (hatred of females) or misandry (hatred of males); as well as
- The attitude of imposing a limited and/or false notion of masculinity on males and a limited and/or false notion of femininity on females, or vice versa.
- A feeling of distrust towards the opposite or same sex, most frequently operating at unconscious level.