Essay on the basic concepts of gender and sex

When we consider how males and females differ, the first thing that usually comes to mind is sex, the biological characteristics that distinguish males and females. Sex refers to the biological characteristics by which we identify males and females.

The Biological Sex continuum, shown on the top scale, includes external genitalia, internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, voice, and body shape.

Everyone is born female or male. Biological and physiological conditions such as chromosomes, hormones, secondary sex characteristics and external and internal genitalia help us in calling 'a frying' as belonging to female sex or to a male sex. Only the sexual and reproductive organs are different to female sex or to a male sex. Only the sexual and reproductive organs are different and all other organs are the same.

Other than these few biological differences, girls and boys are not different. In fact, the bodies of girls and boys have more similarities than differences.

Because of their physical construction, girls belong to the female sex and boys belong to the male sex. These biological or physiological differences are created by nature, and these deference are same in every family, every community and in every country. However, even sex may not be wholly dichotomous as it made evident by inter-sexed individuals. Biology is influenced by environmental, social, economic and cultural factors which are understood as gender.

People often use the word "Gender" as a synonym for "Sex". Sex, however, refers to a biological characteristic that makes someone female or someone male. We also misuse the word Gender as a synonym for women" or "female". People also commonly accept that women and men perform different functions in the society.
Some of these are biological roles and others are socially, culturally and historically given roles. However, women and men identify social and cultural realities differently due to their own personal experiences to these given roles.

Sex is something one is born with, whereas gender is imbibed and learnt through a process of socialization. Sex does not change and is constant, whereas gender and gender roles and norms change and vary within and between cultures.

Social constructions of gender determine attitudes about what men and women are capable of, how they should be have, what kinds of role models and images are presented for women and men, and who will occupy positions of power.

Gender affects almost all aspects of women's and men's lives, their needs, opportunities and access to resources. While sex and its associated biological functions are programmed genetically, gender roles and power relations vary across cultures and through time, and thus are amenable to change.

In nearly all societies, men and women, boys and girls, have a different status and play different roles. Men and women behave differently, dress differently, have different attitudes and interests, and have different leisure activities. Gender usually refers to the differences that are socially defined, that are created by cultural norms. These differences are not fixed; they vary between cultures and change over time and may highlight inequalities social conditions and processes. Gender roles for men and women vary greatly from one culture to another and from one social group to another within the same culture. Race, class, economic circumstances, age etc., influence what is considered appropriate for men and women.

As culture is dynamic, and socio-economic conditions change over time, so gender patterns change with them. Sudden crisis, like war or famine, can radically and rapidly change what men and women do. Sometimes, however, the old attitudes return after the crisis (as women ex-combatants in liberation struggles have found.) Sometimes, the changes have a permanent impact.
Gender means the state of being male or female, what it means to be a man or a woman, and in a social context it refers to the social differences between men and women. Girls and boys learn these differences while they are growing up in society, in different ways in different cultures.

The identities of women and men are formed differently because social surroundings impose different expectations on girls and boys from the moment they are born. Gender roles thus start to take shape already at a very early age. Every culture has different ways of evaluating men and women and assigning roles and responsibilities.

Gender refers to the socio-cultural definition of men and women, the language society uses to distinguish between them. It encompasses socially defined roles, attitudes and values, which the society ascribes, appropriate for one sex or the other - for males and females. Gender is a social construct that binds people in rigid definitions of masculine and feminine and it influences how we think, how we feel, and what we believe.

Whether you are a male or a female, it also influences how people see you and the social expectations of how you should behave. Gender is not equal - it is a social construct, often also shaped by other factors such as class, ethnicity, age and religion. The definition of what is "masculine" and what is "feminine" can and does change over time and across cultures.

Gender can be seen as the full range of personality traits, attitudes, feelings, values, behaviours and activities that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential bases. It is a social construct, which varies from society to society and over time.

A fuller understanding of gender includes recognition of gender as a social construct, as a system of social stratification and an institution that structures every aspect of our lives because of its embeddedness in the family, the workplace, the healthcare system and the state as well as in sexuality, language, and culture. It is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. Each culture is deeply Wasted in its construction of gender roles and those who benefit from the listing system may strongly resist efforts to change,
or even Gender has many components, both as a social institution and as individual perception.

From a social perspective gender is seen in terms of social status, distribution of labour, kinship, (family rights and responsibilities) sexual scripts, personalities (how one is to feel and behave) social control, ideology and imagery. Gender ideas are translated into behaviours and values, good and bad, that in turn translate into how we carry out everyday life.

These behaviours and values are then passed on from generation to generation In this way, gender and the way we behave and think about gender become a deep part of who we are, and become taken for granted ideas of gender roles - how girls and boys, men and women should behave - affect all our relationships, including our sexual relationship.

Gender roles affect if and when young people have sex, whom they have sex with and it they protect themselves against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV. but most young people (and older people too!) are not aware of the effect of the gender on their lives, or, that because gender roles are created by society, they can be changed.

Sexual identity means the way one views him or herself as a male or female is inner conviction of identification usually mirrors one's outward Physical appearance and the typically sex-linked role one, develops and prefers on the society attempts to impose. Gender identity is recognition of the perceived social gender attributed to a person.

Typically, a male is perceived as a boy or a man, where boy and man are social terms with associated cultural expectations attached. Similarly, a female is perceived as a girl or woman. The distinctions made between boy and girl and men and woman are of age and usually represent differences in societal expectations that go along with and increase in maturity.

**Gender Roles**

1. WY differ from society to society.
2. Can change with history.

3. Can be performed by both sexes.

4. They are socially, culturally determined.

**Sex Roles**

1. Same in all societies they are universal, e.g., it is only women who give birth to children all over the world.

2. Never change with history.

3. Can be performed by only one of the sexes.

4. They are biologically determined.