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Psychological Perspectives of Gender Parity

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Abstract: Gender difference is a prominent feature not only in human beings but also in every living species. Personality is an added facet and also one of the most important psychological dimensions that contribute to what make an individual unique as well as classify him/her under a common class. India has one of the fastest growing educated youth populations in the world. Girls below age of 19 years of age comprise one-quarter of India's rapidly growing population. In spite of India's tradition and culture of respecting women, to an extent to treat her as a goddess, the moment a baby is born, the first thing comes to mind is “boy or girl”? The differences are beyond just being biological but more cultural and social. This paper evaluates and examines the implication of various psychological issues and constructs that are important in the life of a baby “girl” born in our country.

I. INTRODUCTION

Savitribai Phule Modern India's first woman teacher, a champion of women's rights, a radical advocator of female and untouchable's education, a milestone of trail blazing poetry, a courageous mass leader, stood strongly against the contemporary social forces of caste and patriarchy, had her independent identity for her contribution. Today whether an Indian school girl reading English, an Indian woman who reads, an Indian woman who is educated, or an educated internationally, her education as an Indian female grows from the garden planted by Savitribai Phule. Indian women owe her.

Women empowerment is often peripheral to historical and sociological interests, because they are defined as inessentials and insignificant aspects of the society, such as class, political, military or cultural affairs and institutions. Arguably major reason for this neglect is that they mainly involve the lives of women and children, already defined as subordinate in the hierarchy of power, resource and scholarly attention. Attempt to draw such issues into the focus means swimming against mainstream intellectual and scholarly convention, including much of the radical traditions.

During the first half of the twentieth century, an increasing proportion of the working population was employed as factory labour. Factories and workshops were growing larger. At the same time the nature of farm labour changed as the yearly hiring was gradually replaced by a more casual monthly contract and young unmarried farm servants no longer lived in their employer's household. Important to this fundamental change to a more limited contract, was the long and sometimes savage conflict over the abolition of the law of master and servant and its replacement by the labour act.

About the same time there began a very gradual shift in the conception of the married woman's relationship to society (a process that is by no means complete even now). Despite all the political and social uproar these changes generated, the passionate debate. Under the patriarchal domination the legitimacy of the master's order is guaranteed by his personal subjection and only the fact and the limits of his power of control are resulting from the 'norms' yet these norms are not enacted but consecrated by tradition.

It is also important to understand and review in brief a overview of the history of the psychology of women. There are number of different parameters through which one can examine the history of women and Psychology.

Gender seems to be one of the most governing variables that influence human development from birth to death, particularly in Indian society. In addition to class, race, age, religion, and background, gender is another fundamental dimension of social stratification, putting the female at a level of disadvantage. The scenario is changing in urban areas and some sections of the society. The Government of India's legislative measures relating to issues of female foeticide, practice of child marriage, widow re-marriage, women's right to property etc., which have impacted the Indian family system and society in many ways. The digitization of the society has witnessed huge changes in the Indian way of life. The instance a baby is born the first thing that comes to mind is “boy or girl”? The issue is beyond just the natural one, but social.

India have a long history of culture and tradition of respecting women, to an extent to treating woman as a goddess, history tells us that women were ill-treated or neglected in various field of life across religions, regions, and communities. Barring a few revolutionary movements, the situation remained more or less the same in the ancient, medieval, and early modern times. Women are usually seen as nurturers and the providers of emotional caretaking, while men are considered providers of economic support. As a girl grows, “as a young girl, as a young woman, or even as an aged one, she is not independent, even in her own house,” is essentially incorporated in her mind. Girls in our society inherit their mother's domestic chores and adopt stereotypical gender roles.

Low self-esteem and low self-worth are common. Post marriage, women's husband and in-laws control her life, as a result, the girls enter a state of silence. The widow immolation or sati and young widowhood were rudimentary customs, are vanished gradually because of the constant efforts and movements by a few pro female leaders. Prejudice of a girl child, child marriage, dowry system, etc., continued to exist even after independence, The Government of India has been intervening and introducing laws to combat these issues.

India is a country of demographic diversity with differences in the lifestyles of people of different regions, communities, cultural backgrounds, urban-rural habitats, etc. The psychological development of a child depends on various contexts. The male: female ratio as per census 2011 is 933:1000 is alarming. The census of 100 newborn girls to every 103 newborn boys, millions more women should be living among us. If the figure varies or if they are "missing," it means either they have been killed or have died through neglect and neglect. In India, the birth of a boy is an event for celebration, while the birth of a girl child - especially a second or subsequent daughter - is often perceived as a crisis. 75% of India's population still resides in rural areas where the problems related to girl child are predominant. Female foeticide seems to be more common in urban areas due to the technical advances in medical sciences. Despite the hue and cry about women liberation, the 2011 census gives the shocking sex ratio of 900:1000 among urban population showing the ground reality of gender parity.

The unfortunate rural population, where fetal sex determination is still not popular, brutal acts of infanticide take place. Authentic data on the same is not available as they happen in the dark illegally. Sacrificing a girl child in the name of cultural belief, religion and hidden property is also reported frequently. Practice of female infanticide in the post independence era has been reported from Rajasthan, Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The fact is that the right to be born and right to live is being denied to the girl child in "female infanticide belt" that starts from Madurai, extends transversely the districts of Dindigul, Karur, Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri to North Arcot districts of Tamil Nadu state.

The baby girl starts growing; she gradually gets open to the elements of rules, defining appropriate feminine behavior in a given culture, which is known as "gender norm." She likes dolls rather than cars and trucks, and starts mimicking the role of a mother. Girl's understanding of gender is limited and based on very simple rules like girls have long hair or wearing frocks/skirts. As the girl grows, gender constancy brings an understanding that even changing the outward physical appearance of a person does not change their essential sex category.

The process of gender recognition begins when children develop a gender identity, at the age of 2½-3 years, actual gender-classification does not begin until children achieve gender constancy at age seven. At that point, children begin to actively select from their environment the behavior that they see as unswerving with their gender. The girl perceives herself and others as gendered, she gets self-motivated to engage in feminine behavior, and to mold herself on other people she identifies as women in her environment. As the girl enters the school age, she becomes more aware of herself as an individual. The age between 5 and 12 years has been explained by psychologist and socialist as the stage of "industry versus inferiority." It is the stage in which she works hard to attain competence. This age is critical for the development of self-confidence. Prejudice at this stage by parents, teachers, or society mostly develop feelings of inferiority in the girl child.

A gender representation is a cognitive structure that segregates qualities and behavior into masculine and feminine categories and associations between the categories. Children learn the content of their particular society's gender representation. Growing children starts understanding that they fall into one or other of those categories based on their own sex. When children begin to think of themselves as masculine or feminine, that particular gender schema is also associated with their sense of identity, they also learn that when they pick behaviour and ways of thinking to assimilate into their own sense of selves. In India, girls start acquiring household chores and skills like cooking, knitting, applying rangoli, singing, etc., as all these are perceived as representing feminine characteristics. Girls are culturally socialized to accept male domination and ignore their own needs, especially in rural areas.

Marriage of girls at an early age has received religious and social sanctions. Regardless of the laws increasing the legal age of marriage for girls, there are still conventional cultural pressures on parents to marry daughters early. Investing in girl's education is perceived as a waste of resources since families believe that a girl's education will only benefit her husband's household, and not the family of origin. The condition of girls is even more critical in rural areas, where less than a third of the girls in the same age group attend school. Immature brides are frequently compelled into early motherhood and social isolation. This further exposes girls to a higher risk of domestic violence and abuse, increased economic dependence, denial of decision-making power, inequality at home, which further perpetuates discrimination, and low status of girls.

Marriage at young age usually translates into repeated pregnancies at a tender age when the body is not fully prepared for childbearing. In house violence is universal across cultures, religion, class, and ethnicity. At home girls face violence at the hands of their husbands, fathers, brothers. The household abuse is generally overlooked by social custom and considered a part and parcel of

marital life. It may also include rape and sexual abuse. Non-physical violence includes verbal abuse, harassment, confinement, and deprivation of physical, financial, and personal resources. Girls are often caught in a vicious circle of economic dependence, fear for their children's future as well as their own, ignorance of their legal rights, lack of confidence in themselves, and social pressures. Such behavioral factors effectively force women to a life of recurrent mistreatment from which they often do not have the means to escape. The privacy within the family also makes authorities reluctant to intervene, often leading women to deny that they are being abused. This is common in the higher as well as in the lower segments of the society. Domestic violence has devastating repercussions on the family. Often the girls transmit to their own feelings of low self-esteem, helplessness, and inadequacy.

A search for fundamental rights for Indian Women starts from the belly of the great religious and social reform movements of the nineteenth-century. All parts of India women were in purdah, or widows, or housewives without much of a voice. We see recorded stories of female agency as these same women “asserted their rights, addressed social inequalities, and rejected or adapted tradition in an engagement with the world around them is what amounted to Indian feminism.” We have seen individuals as institutions, such as those of Savitribai to improve the lives of women through education. There are stories written by widows, like Rassundari Devi, which helped to improve the lives of widows. Vernacular plays, poems, folk literature of Jogeshwari also assisted the improvement of lives. “A significant body of literates can be amassed to present a case for the emergence of feminism” and the growth of education for the women of India. Despite the “education” of the respectable Indian woman, they were able to defy their stance by rebelling in various ways through writing and through movement between family and non-family created by Indian patriarchal and British colonial structures. Although at times, her struggle was a lonesome, there was hope for her to regain a respectability that was independent from her male perpetrators.

All developments of gender theory in psychology, including the theoretical challenges of queer theory and intersection, one aspect that seems to persist is – if not a belief in, then at least a continued operational of - binary thinking. Binary thinking is well-entrenched in the ways that psychologists have measured gender and how they have deployed it in research studies. The existence of well-recognized yet separate subfields of the psychology of women, and the psychology of men and masculinities, seems itself to mirror the persistence of the binary. There are, some indications that psychologists are beginning to think “beyond Female and Male”. In survey and questionnaire research, a first small step involves reformulating the sex/gender categories to which respondents may subscribe.

A promising development is the increased awareness of how gender assumptions including binary thinking influence each stage of the research process. Many feminist psychologists have critiqued gender bias in psychological research, or how to think critically about research on gender, acquiring a set of analytic tools to design more gender-sensitive and gender-transformative psychological research that includes the rigorous incorporation of non-binary gender assumptions remains of key importance.

There is one psychological theory that is central, also most controversially, associated with sex, gender, and sexuality, it is psychoanalysis. In addition to its explicit focus on gender parity, which was a break from culturally accepted and acceptable beliefs about child development, Sigmund Freud postulated that girls and boys proceed through different developmental stages in terms of their separation and individuation from their same-sex and opposite-sex parents, which he termed the Oedipus Complex, thereby explaining the complex psychological concepts for eternal social problems associated with the gender parity.

II. CONCLUSION

Psychologist also led to conceptualize gender as the self-understanding and awareness of oneself as male or female, whereas gender role was the awareness of the behavioral and social expectations associated with belonging to a gender. This allows one to separate the psychological (gender identity) from the cultural (gender role). They concluded from this widespread review that there existed four dependably empirical supported differences:

- A. females have better verbal ability than males;
- B. males have better visuo-spatial ability than females;
- C. males have better mathematical ability starting in adolescence; and
- D. males are physically and verbally more aggressive than females.

Concluding that the ground for the gender parity a more complex and difficult phenomenon to handle socially in the future.

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