



CHAPTER – 22

UNDERSTANDING GENDER

NOTES:

- **A patriarchal society:** A society ruled or controlled by men.
- **Stereotype:** A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
- In our society more importance is given to the work done by boys instead of the ones done by girls.
- Right from the outset of their growing phase, our society makes it a point to distinguish between boys and girls.
- From an early age, boys are taught to be tough and serious while girls are taught to be coy and soft. Toys like guns and cars are given for boys to play, while girls will be given dolls.
- A woman who stays at home does housework. A lot of it. They wash clothes, sweep, clean, cook food and pretty much keep the entire house in order.
- Despite the fact that Women do a lot of work, their work goes undervalued. Part of the reason why is that because there is no monetary value attached to it, there is social conditioning that household work comes naturally to women and that it is expected of them.
- **Work of a woman is Invisible:** It means the work does not happen in our immediate presence. The primary responsibility for housework and care-giving tasks such as taking care of children and the elderly lies with women. Due to the fact that they are not acknowledged as work, it remains invisible.
- **Domestic work are Physically demanding:** House work is very tough and difficult. Women do a lot of heavy-duty work like washing the clothes of the entire family, gathering and carrying heavy loads of firewood among others.

- **Domestic work are Time-consuming:** Household chores take up a lot of time. For example, women's routine begins from early morning and continues up to late at night. During this period they are seen busy fulfilling the tasks of their family members. At times, the time consumed in finishing the chores depends on the size of the family. The larger the family the longer it takes for completion
- **List of toys and games that boys play with:**
 1. Cars
 2. Guns
 3. Action figures
 4. Sports items like football, volleyball, cricket, basketball etc.
- **List of toys and games girls play with:**
 1. Dolls
 2. Cooking items
 3. Dollhouses
 4. Fashion Toy
- It is clear from the list above that society makes a distinction between boys and girls, right from their growing phase itself.
- Boys are taught to be tough and strong, which highlights their manly features but girls are expected to remain in the confines of their feminine virtues.
- In the end, it pushes home the message that they have specific roles to play when they grow up into adult men and women.
- Later in life, this may even have adverse effects when it comes to choosing careers.
- Rigorous social conditioning has enforced the stereotype that women are considered inferior to men.
- It is a prevalent belief that women do not have the technical mind to be engineers and scientists and that they are only fit for professions like teaching and nursing.
- This stereotype about which profession they can or cannot pursue hinders the fight for women's equality. It is also a reason why they are paid less than their male counterparts.

- The women's movement used several methods to raise issues. Some of them are:
1. **Campaigning:** It is an important part of the women's movement, as it fights discrimination and women-related violence. Campaigns have also led to new laws being passed. One notable example is a law being passed in 2006 that gives legal protection to women who are victims of domestic violence. A similar campaign in the late '90s gave birth to a law that protected women from sexual harassment at the workplace.
 2. **Protesting:** Public protests and demonstrations are powerful tools for drawing attention to injustices. Awareness alone can achieve what pressure cannot, as people themselves be convinced on their own that certain negative stereotypes are a hindrance to a progressive society
 3. **Boycott:** Boycotting the establishments that are discriminatory to women can be effective in ending discrimination and stereotypes. Some advertisements reinforce stereotypes that only women having fair skin will be successful in life. It will only lead to the development of inferiority complexes in women. Thus boycotting such products will send home the message that such ads are not accepted by the general public and that they must be scrapped.
- International Women's day is celebrated on 8th March.
- Nowadays, the social and economic status of women have been improved tremendously.
- Women and girls are seen occupying high positioned jobs.
- Women education has been promoted like anything.