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Gender Equality Awareness
Sample Material
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1. INTRODUCTION TO GENDER EQUALITY

Gender is a social construct that impacts attitudes, roles, responsibilities and behavior patterns of boys and girls, men and women in all societies. Increasing attention has been given to the importance of achieving gender equality. To date, however, most efforts have focused on addressing gender parity i.e., an equal number or proportion of girls and boys accessing equal opportunities. Although simple gender parity may be easier to measure, gender equality encompasses a wider concept, of which gender parity is only a part. Gender equality moves beyond access and requires that girls and boys also experience the same levels of quality and outcomes. The chapter focuses on topics like gender issues, gender dynamics and gender roles.

Definition of Gender

Gender is defined by FAO as 'the relations between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies, and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution' (FAO, 1997).

In general, gender has been defined as, the commonly shared expectations and norms within a society about appropriate male and female behavior, characteristics and roles. Gender can be considered a social and cultural construct that differentiates females from males and thus defines the ways in which females and males interact with each other. These roles and expectations are learned and they can change over time as well as vary within and between cultures."

1.1. Gender Concept and Terminology

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 behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because, applied to social analysis, it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever.

The concept of gender needs to be understood clearly as a cross-cutting sociocultural variable. It is an overarching variable in the sense that gender can also be applied to all other cross-cutting variables such as race, class, age, ethnic group, etc. Gender systems are established in different socio-cultural contexts which determine what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman/man and girl/boy in these specific contexts. Gender roles are learned through socialization processes; they are not fixed but are changeable. Gender systems are institutionalized through education systems, political and economic systems, legislation, and culture and traditions. In utilizing a gender approach the focus is not on individual women and men but on the system which determines gender roles / responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and decision-making potentials.

Gender Concept

The gender concept implies,
- ✓ A rejection of the underlying biological distinction in the word "sex" and in the expression "sexual inequality", which appears as "an ideological alibi for maintaining domination, the alibi of nature". Women are no more part of nature and no less part of culture than men
- ✓ Grouping together all the differences identified between men and women, be they individual differences, differences in social roles or cultural representations, i.e., the grouping together of all that is variable and socially determined
- ✓ The non-homogenous nature of the category of women, which is transcended by differences of class, ethnicity and age
- ✓ The basic asymmetry and hierarchy between both groups, sexes and genders – one of them dominating and the other dominated - which is the basis of male power

Gender Concepts and Related terminology

- ✓ **Gender roles:** The particular economic, political and social roles and responsibilities that are considered appropriate for men and women in a culture.
- ✓ **Gender equality:** The absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in authority, opportunities, allocation of resources or benefits, and access to services.
- ✓ **Gender equity:** The process of being fair to women and men. Sometimes this involves measures to redress historical disadvantages that have prevented men and women from having equal access to rights and privileges. Equity leads to equality. Gender equity also implies that health needs, which are specific to each gender, receive appropriate resources.
- ✓ **Gender awareness:** Understanding that there are socially determined differences between men and women, and that these influence access to and control of resources.
- ✓ **Gender Sensitivity:** The ability to perceive existing gender differences and issues, and to incorporate these into strategies and actions. Contrast with gender blindness.
- ✓ **Gender analysis:** Identifies the inequalities that arise from the different roles of men and women, and analyzes the consequences of these inequalities for their lives, health and well-being.
- ✓ **Gender Mainstreaming:** The process used to ensure that women's and men's concerns and experiences are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all legislation, policies and programmes.
- ✓ **Gender Parity:** A numerical concept concerned with the relative equality in terms of numbers and proportions of women, men, girls and boys.

1.2. Gender and Sex

The terms 'sex' and 'gender' are closely linked, yet they are not synonyms. Robert Stoller, in the 1960s, has drawn the distinction between them. He suggested that the word 'sex" be used to refer to the physical differences between men and women, while the term 'gender' be used in connection to the behaviour and cultural practices of men and women.

Sex: *'Sex'* refers to the biological characteristics or natural biological differences between men and women, for example, the differences in the organs related to reproduction. A person's sex is biologically determined as female or male according to certain identifiable physical features which are fixed. Women's marginalisation has often been seen as 'natural' and a fact of their biology.

Gender: *Gender* refers to the cultural, socially constructed differences between the two sexes. It refers to the way society encourages and teaches the two sexes to behave in different through socialization. 'Gender' and the hierarchical power relations between women and men based on this are socially constructed, and not derived directly from biology. Gender identities and associated expectations of roles and responsibilities are therefore changeable between and within cultures. Gendered power relations permeate social institutions so that gender is never absent. The following are difference between sex and gender with respects to some attributes.

Difference between Sex and Gender

Attributes	Sex (Biological Difference)	Gender (Social Difference)
Definition	Biological or cosmological difference	Social not natural difference
Meaning	Refers to physiological characteristics	Refers social, cultural expectations and actions.
Aspect of Change	Difficult to change the sex when born as male or female	Can be changed since gender identity is determined by society
Aspect of role	Throughout history and across cultures, sex differences exist.	At different times in history and in different societies, gender roles are different.
Aspect of policy	Policies respond to sex differences in areas to do with the physical body.	Policies can respond to gender stereotype and traditional gender roles.

Concept of Gender, Sexuality and Development

Gender is a culture-specific construct - there are significant differences in what women and men can or cannot do in one culture as compared to another. But what is fairly consistent across cultures is that there is always a distinct difference between women's and men's roles, access to productive resources, and decision-making authority. Typically, men are seen as being responsible for the productive activities outside the home while women are seen to manage the household chores.

Sexuality is distinct from gender yet intimately linked to it. It is the social construction of a biological drive. An individual's sexuality is defined by whom one has sex with, in what ways, why, under what circumstances, and with what outcomes. It is more than sexual behavior; it is a multidimensional and dynamic concept."

Historically, four main gender narratives can be identified in the development discourse - (1) The Women in Development (WID) approach, (2) The Gender in Development (GAD) approach, (3) Post- structuralism theory, and (4) The human rights-based approach (HRBA). It must be noted that elements of all narratives coexist and each narrative builds on the next, rather than replacing it.

(1) **Women in Development Approach:** In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the WID approach became popular in the development field as a result of the concern that women were being left out of economic development processes. The approach focused on the inclusion of women in development as a tool to increase the economic and social efficiency of development processes. For instance, WID advocates for investments in girls' education, citing increased societal benefits such as reduced child mortality rates, reduced fertility rates and increased gross domestic product per capita. The WID approach is prominently featured in the concept of gender parity, the notion that an equal proportion of girls and boys should be enrolled in and complete schooling.

(2) **Gender in Development Approach:** By the late 1980s, the GAD approach came to the forefront. This approach sought to challenge root causes of gender inequality and increase women's access to resources and decision-making (DFID, 2002). The GAD approach focused on 'empowerment', or increasing the agency of women and giving them the power to take control of their own lives (UNESCO, 2009), often through targeted trainings and workshops. This approach also emphasizes gender equity as an objective, which refers to the process of being fair to women and men and challenging policies that unfairly bias men or women.

(3) **Post-structuralism and Development:** Post-structuralism theories critique a number of development practices and methodologies, particularly the power relations perpetuated by concepts such as 'development', 'development- assistance' and 'women' in the developing world. These theories draw from post-colonial literary and cultural studies and assess the influence of colonialism on the development and conceptions of gender. Post-structuralist theories are concerned with questions of identity and view gender as a malleable form of identification rather than a fixed definition present in conventional development discourse. While post-structuralist theory is influential within academia and in various political movements that focus on the rights of marginalized populations, it has not greatly influenced government and non-governmental organization (NGO) policies or practices.

(4) **Human rights-based approach:** An overarching development approach that has been applied to education is the HRBA. It is based on the belief that education is a universal, inalienable human right that is interdependent with other basic human rights. This approach aims to ensure that all traditionally marginalized groups, including but not limited to girls and women, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and linguistic and/or cultural minorities, have access to education (UNICEF, 2007). After the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action at the 1995 United Nations International Conference on Women, the concept of gender mainstreaming was also widely adopted by the development community. Gender mainstreaming is a "commitment to ensure that women's as well as men's concerns and experiences are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all legislation, policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated".

1.3. Gender Dynamics

Gender dynamics include the relationships and interactions between and among boys, girls, women, and men. Gender dynamics are informed by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Depending upon how they are manifested, gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms. Gender dynamics is nothing but the way in which men and women are treated or behave differently in society, either with their own gender or with each

other. The changes in gender dynamics and roles in society for an individual or group can be changed by either economic standing, age or other factors.

A handful of behaviors are sometimes considered negative by a portion of society whom believes it makes men and women unequal. Feminist being the most popular example of this, though most feminists tend to ignore how gender dynamics tend to treat men unfairly as well or how they're ultimately inescapable but can be reversed or changed in a way to become different from their original form. Other than that gender dynamics are an important part in the human experience and have been found in every society throughout history. Including our own, and will continue to be relevant in the societies our future descendants make.

Gender dynamics can impact on the ability of learners to access and fully participate in quality education. Barriers to learning will often be different for male and female learners, who face different risks and have different needs. Sometimes the gender dynamics are clearly visible, but at other times they might be less obvious, or even hidden. Using a gender lens to analyze access to and full participation in education is critical.

Social Construction of Gender

The idea that gender difference is socially constructed is a view present in many philosophical and sociological theories about gender. According to this view, society and culture create gender roles, and these roles are prescribed as ideal or appropriate behavior for a person of that specific gender. Some argue that the differences in behavior between men and women are entirely social conventions, whereas others believe that behavior is influenced by biological universal factors to some extent, with social conventions having a major effect on gendered behavior.

Some of the social constructions of gender are,
- **Gender-based harassment:** Girls are expected to conform to stereotypical gendered appearances, as are boys. Both male and female students regularly take part in policing gender boundaries through bullying. For instance, male students frequently harass male and female students, while female students generally only harass other female students. The practice of male students bullying other male students is explicitly linked to machismo that boys are expected to subscribe to in order to be constructed and related to as 'normal' boys. Many females report that men tease and ridicule them on the basis of their appearance, which is linked to men asserting masculine power through sexist practices of denigrating females. This also serves to perpetuate the idea that appearance is a female's most important asset. The way in which girls harass other girls is through gossiping, instead of confronting the other girls directly. This type of female on female bullying sets the standard for appearance norms and the importance of appearance for females.

- **Adolescent view of adulthood:** Gender is a cultural construction which creates an environment where an adolescent's performance in high school is related to their life goals and expectations. Because most young women know they want to be mothers and wives, the choice of professions and future goals can be inherently flawed by the gender constraints. Because a girl may want to be a mother later, her academics in high school can create clear gender differences because "higher occupational expectations, educational expectations, and academic grades were more strongly associated with the expected age of parenthood for girls than for boys".

- ✓ **Depression:** In today's higher-pressure environment, the academic and social trigger causes an increase in the expectations of young people. One has to go through a lot of transitional periods causing them to cope with these various transitions in different ways; some negotiate the passages easily whereas others develop serious behavioral and psychological problems. One of these psychological problems is depression. While the environment around you can be stressful biological functions also play a large role is psychological well-being. Depression can be isolating, and without proper societal support, survival can be challenging. Along with higher rates of self-esteem issues, this can adversely affect the social life of an individual.

- ✓ **Body image:** There are many different factors that affect body image, "including sex, media, parental relationship, and puberty as well as weight and popularity". The intersectionality of these factors causes unique experiences for females within their lives. As their body changes, so does the environment in which they live in. Body image is closely linked to psychological factors that can cause harmful effects when a child has body dissatisfaction.

- ✓ **Education:** Due to the amount of time that children spend in school and colleges, "teachers are influential role models for many aspects of children's educational experiences, including gender socialization". For instance, teachers who endorse the culturally dominant gender-role stereotype regarding the distribution of talent between males and females distort their perception of their students' mathematical abilities and effort resources in mathematics, in a manner that is consistent with their gender-role stereotype and to a greater extent than teachers who do not endorse the stereotype.

1.4. Gender Roles

A gender role is a set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviors which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality. Gender roles are usually centered on conceptions of femininity and masculinity, although there are exceptions and variations. The specifics regarding these gendered expectations may vary substantially among cultures, while other characteristics may be common throughout a range of cultures.

The term gender role was first coined by John Money in 1955, during the course of his study of intersex individuals, to describe the manners in which these individuals expressed their status as a male or female in a situation where no clear biological assignment existed. The term gender role refers to society's concept of how men and women are expected to act and how they should behave. These roles are based on norms, or standards, created by society.

Types of Gender Roles

Gender roles are a specific set of social and behavioral actions which are considered to be appropriate for the given gender. The concept of gender roles has been developed from the work of Caroline Moser where she explains this concept as follows,

Gender planning recognises that in most societies low-income women have a triple role – women undertake reproductive, productive, and community managing activities, while men primarily undertake productive and community politics activities.

Reproductive Role	Childbearing/rearing responsibilities, and domestic tasks done by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the work force (male partner and working children) and the future work force (infants and school-going children).
Productive Role	Work done by both men and women for pay in cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange-value, and subsistence/home production with actual use-value, and also potential exchange-value. For women in agricultural production, this includes work as independent farmers, peasant wives and wage workers.
Community Managing Role	Activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role, to ensure the provision and

	maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. This is voluntary unpaid work, undertaken in 'free' time.
Community Politics Role	Activities undertaken primarily by men at the community level, organising at the formal political level, often within the framework of national politics. This is usually paid work, either directly or indirectly, through status or power.
Multiple Roles	Both men and women play multiple roles. The major difference, however, is that • Men: typically play their roles sequentially, focusing on a single productive role • Women: must usually play their roles simultaneously, balancing the demands of each within their limited time constraints

The gender-based division of labour ascribed in a given socio-economic setting determines the roles that men and women actually perform. Since men and women play different roles, they often face very different cultural, institutional, physical and economic constraints, many of which are rooted in systematic biases and discrimination.

Gender Roles and Relationships Matrix

The Gender Relationship Matrix is an analytical tool that uses participatory methodology to facilitate the definition and analysis of gender issues by the communities that are affected by them. Using the Gender Relationship Matrix will provide a unique articulation of issues as well as develop gender analysis capacity from the grassroots level up. The primary aims of the Gender Relationship Matrix are,
✓ Helps determine the differing impacts of development interventions on women and men.

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