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# UNIT 11 GENDER AND WORK LIFE: GOVERNMENT, CORPORATE, MILITARY AND POLITICS\*

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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After having read this Unit, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between gender equality and gender equity
- Explain important concepts related to gender inequality
- Summarize theoretical perspectives related to gender at the workplace, like, Marxist theory, Queer theory, gender pluralism, feminism and ecofeminism
- Identify gender issues at the workplace
- Discuss relationship between culture and gender

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## 11.0 INTRODUCTION

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“Gender is now one of the busiest and most restless terms in the English language, a word that crops up everywhere, yet whose uses seem to be forever changing, always on the move, producing new and often surprising inflections of meaning. We talk about gender roles, worry about gender gap, question whether our ideas are not gender-biased or gender-specific, and we might look for additional information

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on these and related topics in the rapidly expanding gender studies section of our local bookstore. This rich linguistic profusion is confusing enough, but all too frequently it is made worse by the discovery that many of these neologisms appear to be pointing in sharply opposed direction”(Grover & Kaplan, 2013).

Gender is often defined in versatile perspectives, in contrast to the term ‘sex’. Though sex and gender are interconnected, both convey two different meanings. Even though some form of our gender differentiations between men and women have existed and continue to exist in every human society. But such gender differences are so embedded in the social structure, it is very difficult to see and question their naturalness and inevitability of existence. Thus, Woodward has raised the right question – What is meant by the term gender and how is it used?

Gender is used to describe those characteristics of women and men, which are socially constructed, while sex refers to those which are biologically determined. People are born female or male but learn to be girls or boys who grow into women or men. This learned behaviour makes up gender identity and determines gender roles.

Sex was classically thought to be binary with male and female differences. But gender refers to the social and cultural differences with reference to biological ones. Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. They might refer to norms, behaviours and roles that are related to being a woman, girl, boy and man. Thus, gender is not about two sexes, that is male and female, but more on how they should behave and the role either sex should be performing socially. Society prescribes to women and men different roles in different social contexts. There are also differences in the opportunities and resources available to women and men, and in their ability to make decisions and exercise, moreover; gender roles and unequal gender relations interact with other social and economic variables resulting in different and sometimes inequitable patterns of exposure.

The sex-gender debate is ever continuing; the differences between these two terms can clear the cloud a bit. Gender is socio-cultural while sex is biological. Sex is determined much before the child’s birth. Gender is dynamic as it is based on the environment, society and culture of an individual. Sex determines the ‘maleness’ and ‘femaleness’ based on the physical determinants of an individual. Whereas, gender determines ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ on the basis of cultural differences and is not universal in nature. To sum up, sex is a biological phenomenon whereas, gender is a socio-cultural construct. Sex is universal, gender is dynamic and changes with the cultural and societal backdrop.

Gender analysis identifies, analyses and informs action to address inequalities that arise from the different roles of women and men, or the unequal power relationships between them, and the consequences of these inequalities on their lives. The way power is distributed, in most societies, disadvantages women as they are provided less access to and control over resources to protect themselves and are less likely to be involved in decision making.

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## **11.1 THEORIES RELATED TO GENDER**

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In the field of gender studies, a rethinking and reinterpretation has emerged as the need of the hour. The theoretical developments that have occurred in the field of gender are working towards what should and could be. “Gender theory is a more comprehensive feminism; one that includes man, woman and child. Gender theory investigates the social organization of sexual differences, constructed and

inherent. Bringing to bear the male condition thus leads to the linkage of gender and feminism” (Channa; 2006). Gender is usually structured on the concept of sex, a biological division extending towards social construction, shaping, informing and limiting ways of being, both feminine and masculine.

### 11.1.1 The Marxist Theory of Gender

This concept has different allies, but it focuses on the fundamental hypothesis that is very clear and coherent: gender is not an isolated piece of reality. According to this theory, the ideas of masculinity and femininity are neither normative nor do they exist as categorical imperatives. The roles of male and female cannot be considered as functional. They exist as aspects of a social and economic system. In the opinion of Marxists, human beings make their own lives and they do this through two material processes which are always interlinked. These are production and reproduction. Production consists of all those activities done by members of a society for meeting their basic physiological needs. On the other hand, reproduction comprises a specific activity which brings the next generation and raises them to face the society. Both production and reproduction are interwoven. Marxists believe that every society organizes production in particular ways. The mode of production is always dynamic, not static. Channels of reproduction are both cultural and biological. Women give birth to offspring who shift and capture their predetermined roles in the production system.

Marxists argued that this cycle of production and reproduction brings about change and generates new norms. This happens when the relationship of production reaches a point of depletion. Therefore, actions of both men and women make reality and that reality compels them to act in certain ways.

### 11.1.2 Queer Theory

Queer theory is a way of thinking that questions traditional thoughts about gender and sexual identities. The field evolved from sexuality studies and women's studies. Queer theorists analyse gender and sexuality as a socio-cultural construct concept. The goal of queer theory is to challenge traditional thoughts and approaches and fight against social inequality. Traditionally, the term queer has been used as a controversial term against members of the LGBT community. However, from 1960s onwards, in the wake of the LGBT rights movement, people in the community sought to reclaim the word queer as an umbrella term for all non-heterosexual, non-cisgender identities.

This theory is one of the most significant among all the theories of gender. It was popularized by a section of social thinkers those who associated the study of the intersections between lesbians and gay in the areas of cultural studies and literature. Queer theorists claimed sexuality as a degressive social construction, fluid, plural, and continually negotiated rather than a natural, fixed, core identity. “Much of the most exciting work in this new moment of Queer studies refuses to see sexuality as a singular mode of inquiry and instead makes it a central category of analysis in the study of racialism, transnationalism and globalization” (Habib; 1997). R. Dunphy (2000) has mentioned, “It also invites us to investigate the possibilities of a plurality of masculinities and femininities, of a range of ways of living our lives. In so far as this tends towards an implosion of gender as a useful category of analysis, disentangling sex, gender and desire, queer theory also encourages us to focus on the utopia of a gender free world”.

These theories explore the possibilities of masculinities and femininities, and also of gender and sexual diversity. Queer studies play a vital role in understanding

gender as well as sexual pluralism in our society. Therefore, queer theory is most important for better clearance of gender issues.

### 11.1.3 Gender Pluralism and Gender Pluralist Theory

Pluralism is an interpretation of social diversity. It can be rendered as a cultural, political, or philosophical stance. In any of these versions, pluralism offers an account of social interaction understood as an interplay of conflicting and competing positions that cannot be seamlessly reduced to one another, ranked in one single order permanently, or reduced to a single institutional arrangement (Yumatle; 2015).

Gender pluralism is a recent sociological theory that seeks to identify and understand all gender identities or expressions in addition to the binary male and female. Emerging in 2005, this theory aids in identifying different gender and sex identities. Information gathered by use of this theory helps society address the needs of marginalized gender identities.

“Expanding the gender binary categories involves theorizing femininities and masculinities as diverse, including people who have bodies or social roles that are different to those traditionally associated with women and men. The expansion of binary categories is conceptually concerned with masculinity studies. Therefore, the understanding of masculinities as plural is most useful and helpful to theorize gender and sexual diversity. There are limitations to the expanded gender binary model which can be illustrated by looking at the nation of female masculinities” (Allen B.; 1996).

### 11.1.4 Feminism

Oxford English Dictionary defines feminism as a state of being feminine or womanly. The Webster’s Dictionary defines feminism as the principle that women should have political rights equal to those of men and the movement to win such rights for women. Toril Moi says, the word ‘feminism’ or ‘feminist’ are political labels indicating support for the aim of the new women’s movement which emerged in the late 1960s (Moi; 1986).

Feminism is the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. Although largely originating in the West, feminism is manifested worldwide and is represented by various institutions committed to activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests. Throughout most of Western history, women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. In medieval Europe, women were denied the right to own property, to study, or to participate in public life. At the end of the 19th century in France, they were still compelled to cover their heads in public, and, in parts of Germany, a husband still had the right to sell his wife. Even as late as the early 20th century, women could neither vote nor hold elective office in Europe and in most of the United States (where several territories and states granted women’s right to vote long before the federal government did so). Women were prevented from conducting business without a male representative, be it father, brother, husband, legal agent, or even son. Married women could not exercise control over their own children without the permission of their husbands. Moreover, women had little or no access to education and were barred from most professions. In some parts of the world, such restrictions on women continue today (Brunell, 2021).

A feminist is one who recognizes the existence of sexism, male dominance and patriarchy, and takes active actions against it. Therefore, the feminist theories portray a new kind of knowledge which is constructed by rendering visible the

past invisible factors of gender produced by the humanities and social sciences. This particular concept tries to analyze and display the material conditions through which gender has been constructed within a specific body of literature. It is a movement that raises its voice against the misuse of power and claims equality and justice and its goal is to change the thoughts we have about men and women. Feminism has also stepped towards improving the condition of women. Thus, it can be considered as a political, socio-economic movement which is based on two objectives; firstly, women are disadvantaged in the society and secondly, this disadvantage should be rooted out from our society.

### 11.1. 5 Ecofeminism

The term 'Ecofeminism' was coined by Françoise d' Eaubonne in 1970 in Paris. Eaubonne was a famous French feminist born on March, 1920 and expired in 2005. Ecofeminism is a philosophy and movement as a result of the union of feminism and ecological thinking. It believes that the trend of the domination and oppression of women is directly connected to the trend of abuse of the natural environment. In gender discourse, a discussion regarding ecofeminism today is of utmost relevance. It brings together eco-anarchism and bio-regional democracy with a strong ideal of feminism (Saikia, 2017).

This particular concept focuses on the connection between women and nature which has been described in the history of oppression by a male dominated society. Feminist environmentalists study women's and men's differed interests in natural resources and processes caused by their gender roles. It is a socio-political movement which acknowledges the connection between women and nature or the environment as a whole. Ecofeminism uses the basic feminist tenets of equality between genders, a revaluating of non-patriarchal or nonlinear structures, and a view of the world that respects organic processes, holistic connections, and the merits of intuition and collaboration. To these notions ecofeminism adds both a commitment to the environment and an awareness of the associations made between women and nature (Miles, 2013)

#### Check Your Progress 1

1) Define pluralism. What is the basic premise of gender pluralist theory?

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2) Differentiate between feminism and ecofeminism theories.

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## 11.2 GENDER IDENTITY

Gender identity is defined as a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither). This concept is intimately related to the concept of gender role, which is defined as the outward manifestations of personality that reflect gender identity (Ghosh, 2020). Gender identity refers to an individual's sense of having a particular gender. It has a profound relationship with a person's

determined sex or can differ from it. Gender expression significantly reveals a person's gender identity, but may deviate from it.

Gender identity is self-determined, as a result of a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic or environmental factors; gender role, on the other hand, is inculcated from within the society by observable factors such as behaviour and appearance. For example, if a person considers himself a male and is comfortable referring to his personal gender in masculine terms, then his gender identity is male. However, his gender role is male only if he demonstrates typically male characteristics in behaviour, dress, and/or mannerisms.

External or extrinsic appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behaviour, clothing, haircut or voice, or other external characteristics which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviours and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine. A related term to the concept of gender identity is 'Transgender', an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from socio-cultural norms based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

As a whole it can be said that, a person's gender identity is not always the same as their biological sex, nor their assumed gender based on their assigned sex. It depends on how they identify as a person, and this can change over time. People can identify as more masculine, more feminine, a combination of both, or neither. How a person expresses or describes their gender is personal to them (Kuehnle, 2020).

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### 11.3 CULTURE AND GENDER

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“Culture is communication, and communication is culture” (Hall, 1984). Culture refers to the ideas, norms and social behaviours of a definite society. It is an umbrella term which includes social norms, existing in human societies, knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs and habits of individuals in this group – to sum up as a whole, it can be said that, it includes the entire life of an individual.

Culture influences thinking, language and human cognitive behaviour. Cultural dimensions reflect differences in gender roles and also acknowledges ethics of sexual differences. Cultural determinism influences attitudes, thoughts and perceptions of individuals. Cultural dominance differs with ethnicity, religion, social class, age and all other social constructs.

Cultural determinism is a reality developed by many theories explaining default assimilation of socio-cultural values of individuals and their behaviours. The levels of culture are multiple and each level has influence to some extent. In general, what comes from the national culture is considered to have the strongest influence, but there are cultural dominants with origin in ethnicity, religion, social class, age, gender, education, training etc. (Neculăesei, 2015).

The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that gender is a social construction that people typically describe in terms of femininity and masculinity. In Western cultures, people associate femininity with women and masculinity with men, but this social thought varies across cultures. Western studies distinguish between gender and sex. The terms are not similar to each other, they show anatomical and cultural differences: sex is a biological concept, gender is a social construct. Gender is influenced by genetics and biology. Gender is produced and reproduced

by society. Sex is rather permanent but gender varies over time and across culture. Sex is an individual ownership; gender is a social and relational quality (Neculăesei, 2015).

Cultures differ in nature and intensity of differentiation between the sexes, gender, gender roles, gender-role ideologies and gender stereotypes. Differences in sex roles is predominant throughout the world; Georgas et al. (2006) study on 27 countries found that women did most of housework. Fathers are mainly concerned with finances, expressive issues, childcare in all countries. Mothers are concerned with childcare only in lower socio-economic countries.

Williams and Best (1982) studied 30 countries and found high pan-cultural agreement on the adjectives used to describe males and females. In all countries, adjectives associated with men were rated as being stronger and more active. Participants from Japan and South African rated male characteristics as more favourable; Italy and Peru rated female characteristics more favourable. Follow up studies by Williams and colleagues show gender stereotypes around the world to be stable. Men are viewed as active, strong, critical, conscientious, extraverted, and open. Women are viewed as passive, weak, nurturing, adaptive, agreeable, and neurotic (Williams & Best, 1982).

Gibbons and colleagues (1990) studied adolescents and found that adolescents from wealthier and more individualistic countries were less traditional. Gender ideologies may be evolving as societies change.

Later studies, however, found considerable gender-related cultural differences. These findings suggest that gender stereotype differentiation tended to be higher in countries that were orthodox and hierarchical with low levels of socioeconomic development.

Organizations create gender meanings, pass through organizational cultures and practices. Social prescriptions embedded in personal identity, make individuals become of a certain type (Anghel, 2010; Onea, 2014).

Culture can often be restricted to certain social groups with woman and girls in particular facing complicated obstacles to participate in the cultural life of their communities, unequal opportunities for woman to display their creativity and ability at large creates within a cold glass ceiling for woman to reach management and leadership positions or to participate in decision making processes, persistence of dominant views on gender and negative stereotypes delimit freedom of expression and hinders accessibility to technical entrepreneurial training, as well as, financial resources.

UNESCO works closely with government, civil societies and communities to ensure that women's and men's roles in cultural life are equally encouraged, valued and visible. The equal participation, access and contribution to cultural life of women and men are human rights as well as cultural rights, and an important dimension for guaranteeing freedom of expression for all. A growing body of evidence from UNESCO programmes points to how gender relations come into play in the transmission of knowledge on heritage and the fostering of creativity. Indeed, ensuring that the spiritual, intellectual and creative expressions and interests of all members of the community are reflected has proven to be an important enabler of inclusive development and socio-economic empowerment.

Yet, access to culture can often be restricted to certain social groups, with women and girls in particular facing complex barriers to participate in the cultural life of their communities.

## 11.4 SOME SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED CONCEPTS

Gender is a range of characteristics used to distinguish between males and females, particularly in the cases of men and women and the masculine and feminine attributes assigned to them. Depending on the context, the discriminating characteristics vary from sex to social role to gender identity (Mehrotra, 2013).

Typical gender roles sources from the learnings an individual receives from childhood. The present-day psychology believes that by the age of three, children are aware of their gender. Both the genders are encouraged to prefer the games, clothing, hobbies, and partial way of speech, and other sides of culture attached with their sex. The bondage of the traditional family thus has been to mould the girls to be tender and submissive while boys are shaped as dominating and decision-makers. Thus, it is the societal norms which sow the seed of specific future roles and ensures that both the boys and girls will play their stereotyped gender roles in future.

Social identity refers to the generic identification with a collective or social category which creates a common culture among the participants concerned. Separating males and females into social roles generates a binary in which individuals feel they have to be at one end of a linear continuum and must acknowledge themselves as man or woman. Universally, communities interpret the physical differences between men and women to create a set of social norms that limits the behaviours that are 'perfect' for both and determines women's and men's different access to rights, resources, power in society and even health behaviours. The 'set' activities assigned to girls and boys do not end with the selection of toys for each. They even influence the selection of subjects in school and college. Later on, the value attached to the work of males and females also differs (Mehrotra, 2013).

**Gender equality** is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities, in the allocation of resources and benefits or access of services. Gender equity refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes. When these conditions are not met, it results in gender inequality.

Women remained subordinated and marginalized in decision-making processes, had lesser access to the resources and limited participation in social engagements in many societies over the years. Their secondary status has been further reinforced by certain governmental policies which fail to acknowledge women's rights and access to services and opportunities as compared to men (UNIFEM, 2005). This gender inequality is deemed as one of the leading factors of violence against women (UNFPA-AFPPD, 2003). Most women work much more than their male counterparts, yet their efforts remain unrecognized. The household chores and childcare are not considered as 'work'.

Gender inequality exists in almost all the aspects of our daily life:

**Mortality inequality:** Women mortality rates are comparatively higher than men all over the world.

**Nativity inequality:** Many male dominated societies destroy female foetuses while identified.



**Basic facility inequality:** Females are denied the basic livelihood facilities throughout the world, like education.

**Professional inequality:** In workplaces, women are often deprived of promotion and other advantages.

**Household inequality:** There are basic inequalities in gender that are reflected in sharing of housework and child care.

### Check Your Progress 2

1) Explain the relationship between culture and gender.

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2) State the difference between gender equality and equity.

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## 11.5 WORKPLACE AND GENDER ISSUES

“Men are dominant, women are subservient;” “Men are aggressive, women are passive;” “Men are agentic, women are communal;” “Men are power-centric, women are person-centric;” “Men are single-focused, women are multi-focused;” “Men are bread-winners, women are home-makers.” The list of differences identified by researchers is seamless. Questions gain higher significance when we attempt to understand and analyze them in the context of organizations. The battle often in organizations is not on what are the differences or similarities between men and women but on how to retain women employees despite differences/no differences.

Gender inequality in organizations is a complex phenomenon that can be seen in organizational structures, processes, and practices. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, it will take another 100 years to achieve gender equality based on the current rate of progress. This prediction has been widely used as a shock therapy to push governments, NGOs, associations, investors and companies into action. For women, some of the most harmful gender inequalities are enacted within human resources (HR) practices. This is because HR practices (i.e., policies, decision-making, and their enactment) affect the hiring, training, pay, and promotion of women (Stamarski & Hing, 2015).

Violence against women (VAW) is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” Thus, VAW refers to violent acts that are “primarily or exclusively committed against women” (United Nations 1993).

The workplace has sometimes been referred to as an inhospitable place for women due to the multiple forms of gender inequalities present (e.g., Abrams, 1991). Some examples of how workplace discrimination negatively affects women’s earnings and opportunities are the gender wage gap (Peterson and Morgan, 1995),

the dearth of women in leadership (Eagly and Carli, 2007), and the longer time required for women (vs. men) to advance in their careers (Blau and DeVaro, 2007). Both the objective disadvantages of lower pay, status, and opportunities at work, and the subjective experiences of being stigmatized, affect women's psychological and physical stress, mental and physical health (Goldenhar et al., 1998; Adler et al., 2000; Schmader et al., 2008; Borrel et al., 2010), job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hicks-Clarke and Iles, 2000), and ultimately, their performance (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001).

'Right to life means life with dignity'- this must be the primary concern for all the working environments. To ensure such safety and dignity in the working conditions- both private and public workplaces should take legal and supportive measures. Female employees not only go through the afore said issues but also faces other problems like misunderstanding, sexual harassment, inappropriate promise of rewards, bullying and actual sexual abuse and sexual assault. To mainstream gender into its activities, the organization concerned must review its mode of operation to acknowledge that its services to citizens, customers and users are provided on the same terms, i.e., that they should satisfy the demands and criteria of women and men, both. It is not just about dutifully formulating statements of objectives, but about analysing very specifically how the needs and conditions of women and men are affected by the organization's daily responses and behaviours. All public operations that directly address citizens need to be analysed from a gender equality perspective and this job must be done in a systematic manner. Otherwise, we may well fail to see that women and men are being treated differently, on the basis of different criteria.

Differentiation leads to inequality provided by stereotypes. Gender stereotypes devalue a woman who is claimed as inferior to a man. They associate her with passivity, renunciation, structural weakness/fragility or lack of virtues, as opposed to masculine traits seen as positive ones (Melchiorre, 2004). While the man says and does "meaningful" things, the woman is "fluid, ambiguous and open" (Pârnu, 2005) The reflection of these thoughts and discriminating behaviours are very prominent in the traditional work areas, both Government and private sector organizations has treated employees of these two genders separately.

Sexual harassment at the workplace or workplace harassment is being practiced as masculine social norm in every sector where women work. Due to this practice among the masses, most of the incidents of violence against women remain underreported (Andersson et al, 2010) especially workplace harassment incidents. According to Sigal (2006) sexual harassment at workplace is "Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment." Let us now explore gender issues in various workplace sectors.

### 11.5.1 GOVERNMENT

Equal representation of women in the Government sector represents a vital indicator of progress towards the construction of a more diverse and inclusive workforce. The public sector is expected to lead the way and set standards in implementing gender equality and promoting diversity in the public sector. In turn, encouraging a greater diversity of staff in public employment can contribute to organizational productivity and regulate policies and services that better reflect

citizens' demands. In OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries on average, women are over-represented in the Govt. sector workforce (59.6%), though there are broad variations. In 2017, only one-quarter of positions in the Turkish public sector were filled by women, whereas the corresponding figure for the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark) was between 69% and 71.3%. Some countries, such as Mexico (51.5%) and Greece (48%) approached parity between the sexes in the public sector workforce. The trend across OECD countries points to an increasing rate of participation of women in the public sector workforce from 2011 to 2017. Japan, for example, increased the share of women working in the public sector by almost three percent between 2011 and 2017. The share of women working in public sector workforces (60.1%) has usually been higher than in total employment in OECD countries (45.9%). One reason for explaining the relatively higher women participation in the public sector workforce is that some key public sector occupations, such as teachers and nurses, are traditionally considered "women's jobs". Discouraging such gender stereotyping and ensuring that women have access to varied public sector occupations is a key goal across OECD countries. Ensuring that women can access and compete on an equal footing for leadership and decision-making positions (traditionally dominated by men), is part of the move toward more diverse, inclusive – and effective – public sector workforces. (Government at a glance; 2019)

### 11.5.2 CORPORATE

Women, who constitute half of humanity, since the beginning of the era of patriarchy have faced discrimination, in social as well as economic and political aspects, and since then appeared barriers to their career development. This problem is present even today, in almost all countries of the world. This kind of inequality comes as a result of various factors: religious, social and cultural. In subsequent periods, especially during the last decade, women's participation in everyday life has begun to improve in all sectors of life, however it is still far from the desirable one. The private sector organizations are also practicing this behaviour for a long time throughout the world.

The gender inequality in the allocation of senior positions has also a theoretical explanation. According to the social dominance theory, there are institutional-level contributors that help in gender inequality. These contributors influence to further strengthen and maintain the existing inequality of groups. However, the theory explains that these contributors are so deeply rooted in the structures of society that they are no longer seen by society (Online-Theory of Social Domination, 2017). In sectors and institutions that are dominated by men, the latter compile vacancy announcements in order to attract the attention of the men only - that eventually helps to preserve gender inequality, keeping women outside areas which are led by men (the dominant group) (Gaucher, Friesen, and Kay, 2011, p. 111).

Throughout their lives, men and women are pressured to behave as required by the gender differences of social nature. Therefore, men are encouraged to be more active, more decision-makers, more leaders, whereas girls are asked to be more submissive, laconic and to serve others. These stereotyped thoughts are cultured in the organizations. Though in the past few decades, some improvements are occurring in terms of women safety, legalization of matters and better HR policies to take care of women employee rights in the concerns.

### 11.5.3 MILITARY

Times have evolved and today the English language has a dictionary term recorded, 'service women', which signifies the women who serve in the three basic services of any NATO military: the Land Forces, the Air Force and the Navy. Women are playing an increasingly diversified role in UN peace support operations than they did in the past. This role covers the police, military and civilian levels.

Another arena which has been devoid of the presence of women for decades is the military and paramilitary forces. The consideration of gender equality in this particular field required a lot of challenges. In the present conditions women are being actively employed in diversified roles in the armed forces throughout the world which has resulted into a better relationship with the civilians. Though the recruitment and participation of women in military services varies from one country to the other, access to diversified positions has started almost contemporarily.

The importance of a gender perspective in peace operations and military affairs has long been established by feminist activists and researchers, and recognized in a number of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) on women, peace, and security. Indeed, UNSCR 1325, as well as the subsequent resolutions within the area of women, peace, and security (most notably 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960), has created an international framework for the implementation of a gender perspective in the pursuit of international security and the conduct of peace operations. Whether military organizations are seen as hurdles or supporters in the pursuit of peace and security, they are impossible to overlook as key components in any strategy to promote women's rights or a gender perspective in security affairs (Egnell, 2016).

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council acknowledged the particular effect conflict had on women and also the need to involve them as active participants in conflict prevention and resolution. From that moment on, women have officially been acknowledged as active agents in peace and security processes. Therefore, on October 31st, 2000, the Security Council passed Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1325), which emphasizes the need to:

- Incorporate gender sensitivity and include women in approaches on security and peace-building especially those affected by the conflict;
- Sensitize peacekeepers, the police and judiciary on gender issues in conflict and adopt measures to ensure the protection and adherence to the human rights of women and girls;
- Ensure that the special needs of women and girls in conflicts are attended to;
- Support an increased role for women as military observers, civilian police, humanitarian and human rights observers;
- Have women represented from communities who have experienced armed conflict to have their voices heard in conflict resolution processes and be a part of all decision-making levels as an equal partner for conflict resolution, prevention and sustainable peace (Kraft & Negri, 2018)

India has been ranked the fourth most powerful military power in the world after the China, United States, and Russia (The Ultimate Military Strength Index, 2021) and no doubt has an unstoppable and highly capable military power. But

gender equality has always been a challenge in the armed forces. The Supreme Court of India has recently given the verdict that women could serve as army commanders, brushing aside the government's stance that male soldiers were not ready to accept orders from female officers as "disturbing". In a country like India, which aspires to be an emerging superpower in the future, discrimination on the basis of gender in the armed forces would certainly be a drawback for the country. Women should be considered equal to men in almost every aspect. Institutional and administrative policies such as transfers and maternity leave must be protected and given attention from time to time. There has to be a restructuring of India's attitude towards women, which would help in the overall economic growth, women empowerment and also showcase India in a positive light in the global arena(Amaresh, 2020)

Feminist viewpoints and traditional military ethics and norms are indeed often seen as confronting one another in a zero-sum game. Within this game, implementing a gender perspective or including women in combat units simultaneously means lowering military effectiveness and fighting power (Egnell, 2016). At the same time, efforts to increase military effectiveness are generally viewed as a step back for women's rights by supporting the existing patriarchal system in which the logic of war and violence prevails. This zero-sum view is both inaccurate and unhelpful for everyone seeking to improve international security and stability. The two viewpoints have much to learn from each other, and there are plenty of synergies to be explored(Egnell, 2016).

#### 11.5.4 POLITICS

Over the last two decades specially in the last ten years, research into sex, gender and politics has been established. Women are increasingly visible in politics at both senior and junior level. Research on gender and politics has evolved significantly over the years. In the first stage, the approach to gender and politics was critical of the biases of mainstream political science and women were virtually excluded from the category of political actor. In the second stage, studies sought to add women and fast-track the systematic analysis of under-representation of women in politics. In the third and current stage, feminist political scientists raise more fundamental questions about the approaches, methods and conceptualization of politics, gender and nature of political institutions. Contemporary research on gender and politics is extensive, diverse and rich.

The literature on politics and addressing gender inequality in political acts is diverse. It includes voting, campaigning and rigging as well as gender differences as political knowledge, socialization and attitudes and women's place in political theory.

The term 'political participation' has a diverse meaning. It not only refers to voting rights, but also relates to decision-making, political activism, political consciousness etc. Indian women participate in voting, are employed in public sector offices and are also part of political parties at a lower rate than men. Political activism and voting are the strongest areas of women's political participation. To reduce gender inequality in politics, the Indian Government has constructed reservations for seats in local governments.

Knowledge of women in politics is still expanding, indeed literature on women in politics is exploding. Although women have the legal right to vote and stand for elections in almost every country of the world, cultural barriers to women's use of their political rights, including family resistance and illiteracy, remain (Pintor&Gratschew, 2002; Moghadam, 2003). Gender issues based on social and

gender equity are interdisciplinary and cross-national in nature. India is the world's largest democratic country, where participation in politics of both the genders is a positive effort. In India, the political system of women is being able to make their decisions at the social level. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) report 2020, the number of women in the total parliamentary seats globally is only 24.5 percent, which is very low according to the female population. And women hold only 12.39 percent of the total parliamentary (both houses) seats in India (Kumar, 2020). A present study shows women turnout during India's parliamentary general elections was 65.63%, compared to 67.09% turnout for men. India ranks 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in Parliament. Indian voters have elected women to numerous state legislative assemblies and national parliament for many decades. The levels and structures of women's participation in politics is largely shaped by the socio-cultural barriers in the facet of violence, discrimination and illiteracy.

**Check Your Progress 3**

1) Identify gender issues in military and paramilitary forces.

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2) Compare the status of women representation in government sector in developed and developing countries.

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3) List some of the HR policies in organisations that can empower women at the workplace.

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**11.6 SUMMARY**

To sum up what we have learnt in this unit, here is a quick recap:

- Gender is often defined in versatile perspectives, in contrast to the term 'sex'. Though sex and gender are interconnected, both convey two different meanings. Even though some form of our gender differentiations between men and women have existed and continue to exist in every human society.
- Gender identity refers to an individual's sense of having a particular gender. It has a profound relationship with a person's determined sex or can differ from it. Gender expression significantly reveals a person's gender identity, but may deviate from it.
- Culture influences thinking, language and human cognitive behaviour. Cultural dimensions reflect differences in gender roles and also acknowledges ethics of sexual differences. Cultural determinism influences attitudes, thoughts and perceptions of individuals.

- Gender inequality in organizations is a complex phenomenon that can be seen in organizational structures, processes, and practices.
- Women do face a number of issues like violence, discrimination, hassles and hazards in workplaces regularly irrespective of Government and private sectors. Military and armed forces have also kept their doors closed for a long period to women. The current changing scenario is somewhat, women are being accommodated in several posts of armed forces. And lastly, politics is another field where women have always been a part of, though in the modern era, they have gained equal rights to their male counterparts.

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## 11.7 KEYWORDS

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**Gender:** Described as those characteristics of women and men, which are socially constructed.

**Sex:** Refers to those which are physically or biologically determined.

**Gender Identity:** Defined as a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither). This concept is intimately related to the concept of gender role, which is defined as the outward manifestations of personality that reflect gender identity.

**Gender Equality:** It is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities, in the allocation of resources and benefits or access of services.

**Gender Equity:** Refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men.

**Culture and Gender:** Culture influences thinking, language and human behaviour. Cultural dimensions reflect differences in gender roles and also highlights, ethics of sexual differences. The socio – cultural aspects are one of the vital factors which determines an individual's gender identity and concepts about it.

**Military and Gender:** This particular field (military & armed forces) was devoid of females for a long period throughout the world. In this modern era the armed forces are opening job opportunities for women in different ranks, even the highest ones.

**Politics & Gender:** The literature on politics and gender addressing gender inequality in political acts as diverse as voting, campaigning and rigging as well as gender differences as political knowledge, socialization and attitudes and women's place in political theory.

**Workplace and Gender:** The gender inequality and gender discrimination are practiced in the workplaces both private and Government for a century. Female employees are sexually harassed, underestimated and even are kept devoid of their basic rights. The new age HR policies are involving women safety measures and also advancements in both the sectors regarding this issue have been made.

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## 11.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS

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1. Define gender. Differentiate between Sex and Gender.
2. Discuss any two theories related to gender.
3. Discuss the role of culture in development of gender identity.
4. Discuss with illustration, gender discrimination in workplace.
5. Write short note on “Research in gender and politics”.

6. What are the barriers for women representation in politics?
7. State the exact percentage of women's representation in the Indian Parliament.
8. Briefly write on gender representation in military and armed forces.
9. What are the hindrances for woman's carrier advancement in armed forces?
10. Write short notes on the following: Gender equality, Gender and culture, Gender identity, Queer theory, Harassments in Workplace.

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## 11.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/67649>

<https://guides.libraries.indiana.edu/c.php?g=995240&p=8361766>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/types-of-gender-identity>



<https://diplomatist.com/2020/05/11/regendering-equality-women-in-the-indian-armed-forces/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324438137\\_GENDER\\_POLICIES\\_IN\\_THE\\_21ST\\_CENTURY\\_ARMED\\_FORCES](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324438137_GENDER_POLICIES_IN_THE_21ST_CENTURY_ARMED_FORCES)

<https://www.spglobal.com/esg/csa/yearbook/articles/gender-equality-workplace-going-beyond-women-on-the-board>

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## **11.10 ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES**

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<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/gender-equality>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

<https://theconversation.com/achieving-gender-equality-in-india-what-works-and-what-doesnt-67189>

<https://genderatwork.org/>

Men's Community for the 21st Century - ManKind Project



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