INTRODUCTION

Gender is not just a word but a system that is imparted to people before they are even born. Associating roles and colors and behavior of the individuals and even justification of certain acts all comes under the system that has evolved with influence of the age old practices. If time is changing by every second and minute and we are evolving with the rise in technology and education then the concept of gender and its roles should have been abolished many years ago. But unlike many practices that are considered a thing of the past gender has accompanied people across the world into the modern age. It has however modified in the past few decades. According to society, the role of a woman is to stay at home and take care of the children and her husband. An ideal woman should know how to cook and clean and she should be soft-spoken. To them education is not an important aspect of a woman’s life. An ideal male for them is someone who would go out and work to provide for his family. A barren woman and an unemployed man is of no value. Coming straight to today’s generation the roles are quite similar in terms of women with having to take care of children and cooking whereas for men the roles and the power they hold in the family still remains the same. Has the society changed or are we still the same or even worse? Are we using the fact that now women can work and earn money or has it changed at least the dependency that once women had on their husband and their sons? In the context of Indian society I see a lot of women around me who cook and clean in the morning and then leave for the job and they are solely responsible for the household chores. They come at night and do the laundry while their husband are sitting ideally. Wouldn’t it be good if this woman had help? Why doesn’t she ever asks her husband to help her? These questions aroused in my mind as I tried to interpret these roles. Does education only means accumulating degrees and not becoming a better version of yourself? Are men insensitive because of their gender or are they a product of the stereotypes? Does money ensures freedom of choice?

Women and Gender

Gender roles and stereotypes related to women The status of women has undergone many changes that have been influenced by the changing values and beliefs through decades. Although women are allowed to get education and work they aren’t considered as the authority figure in a household. The ever-growing society has added additional roles for women outside the household. Stereotypes following females in Indian society are enough to confuse anyone. The birth of a female is still not considered as a good thing in the family as only male heirs are given supremacy. The birth of a girl is still a subject of debate and following this the sex determination before birth is banned in India. This step was taken to ensure that there were enough girls to maintain the sex ratio in some of the states which was dangerously getting low. This shows that we are still not into the modern age where we can accept and respect both the sexes. To this date females are pressurized to give birth to a male child irrespective of their own wish and risks to health. On the other hand females are worshipped all over the country as they are considered as goddesses. People search for children to feed them and to give them gifts in the Navratri but they do not want a goddess in their own home. The intent of this favoritism for men differs in households but the common fondness towards the boys remains the same.

Women stereotyping their own selves

In a lot of households the elder generation of women are not particularly fond of the younger generation. Some of them even want to make their daughter inlaws go through the exact same thing as they have endured when they were young justifying the actions as right. A lot of children learn to differentiate between man and women by the way they are treated by their grandparents. The affection that is showed towards one gender...
and the rules that the other gender is forced to follow creates a image for the young minds to follow. A lot of women are pressured and tortured by the female authoritative figure in their home claiming that whatever actions they and their male counterparts do is always right, telling the woman to step down and worship their husbands. There are plenty of women who are forced to make choices that are not their own and a lot of the decisions of their personal and professional lives depends upon their age and factors like marriage.

**Education for women**

It is still a common belief that it is better to send the sons in a good school rather than sending the girls as their ultimate role is to get married and have kids. They are not even the ones who would continue the name of the family. Getting good education for girls is still a matter of struggle and compromise. Most of the girls are still forced to skip school for helping their mother in household chores or for looking after their siblings. Even in so called educated and rich families girls are married off in the middle of their education as the parents fear they might want to take their own decisions in their life. The education for women is still not given importance and for them to have a career after marriage is a challenge in itself.

**Marriage**

Marrying a daughter off is probably the biggest concern of parents in Indian families. The stereotypes that defines the role of women in the society requires them to be married off in a family which is considered suitable by the parents. Marriage is one of the biggest hindrances in the education of a girl. There is far more amount of pressure on a girl to get married as compared to a boy. As a human being every girl has the right to choose their own partner and to choose the time appropriate for a milestone like marriage. It’s very common to see a huge age gap between a husbands and a wife with the wife being the younger in the relationship, but the opposite is rare and considered bad by the society. Women are still linked to their function of birthing children and raising them. A young wife is always considered ideal for the job.

**Housewives and Working women**

A woman who stays at home is wife of the house. Her world revolves around the house and the responsibilities of its members. Raising children, cooking and cleaning are all done by these women. But these roles are also performed by those who are working these days. The only factor that is different between the two is money and the financial freedom that comes for the male members of the family. The decisions made by them should be focused on creating an environment which shows equality and respect for both the genders. It’s rare for a boy to say that he wants to be like his mother and do what she is doing. Children are conditioned in such a way that they associate their idols with their gender and not the things they want to achieve. The portrayal of a perfect home where girls look upon their mothers as they grow up. The behavior of a man is what he has observed as he grows up. Well that depends upon the type of men a boy has seen while growing up. The behavior of a man is what he has observed for many years of his childhood. Stereotyping men to be what is thought as strong and a typical starts from birth by associating them with blue color. How many times have you seen a boy rocking an all pink outfit? Little things like the toys and the bedroom color creates an image inside the mind of the children.

**Expectations**

Just like women, men also go through a series of phases where they are expected to perform certain roles and duties in the household. The major acts and rituals in the family are all expected to be done by the male members of the family. Getting involved is often not a choice for the young children.

**No Female Role Models At Home**

Instead of treating women as things to worship or as property the female figures of a home should have a stronghold in the family. The decisions made by them should be focused on creating an environment which shows equality and respect for both the genders. It’s rare for a boy to say that he wants to be like his mother and do what she is doing. Children are conditioned in such a way that they associate their idols with their gender and not the things they want to achieve. The portrayal of a perfect home where girls look upon their mothers to be pretty and delicate like a flower and for boys to be tough and play football is never going to resolve these ideas but only sow them deep in their hearts.

**Masculinity**

Masculinity is a concept, influenced by the stereotypes running in the society for years. The concept of being a MAN is not based on human values rather it only shows the authoritative patriarchical view of the society. Men who do not fine themselves falling along with everything that being a MAN stand for often find themselves in criticism and scrutiny by the society.

**Insensitive of Men**

Are men insensitive? Why do we always have to categorize human beings on the basis of their gender? Just like any other human being men are also raised to become what they become as they grow up. It is not inherent of any man to be insensitive of women in his life. It is sowed deeply as they grow up in a patriarchical household. Children always see and repeat things that happen in their house. If a young boy sees his mother and his sister in the kitchen working and he is even prohibited to enter, then as a young adult he would assume his wife and daughter to do the same. Nobody has to tell the child about the gender roles in the society, they learn it as they grow up depending on their surroundings. Involvement of a child in household chores equally with his siblings is a subtle change that can go a long way to make them realize that there is
nothing wrong with cooking and cleaning and that these processes are important to learn and to do as a human to survive. Gender discrimination and stereotyping starts at home and home is the first school of a child. Children are blank slates and the environment that they are raised in acts as a base for their principles and values in life. It’s high time that we evaluate what we want to pass on to the future generations. We read a lot of cases everyday which involves a women suffering at the hands of her husband or by the male figures in her life. But the opposite of it also exists and is very much true. Just because men are considered to be rough and tough does not change the fact that men are also humans and they often go through the similar issues. These cases are fewer as compared to the vast number of cases that are reported by women. These cases are not given as much importance as the cases related to women. Sometimes men are also prohibited by the society to tell others about what they are going through to protect their masculinity and the image of a MAN. The world has all kinds of men and women and both could be either victims or the torturers.

**Tran genders**

Gender roles effect not only effect men and women but they have been built for the transgender pupils too. Acceptance of this pillar of the society is just as important as accepting the other two. The struggles that they face in day to day life is based on an image created in years which has proved hard to get rid of. Acknowledging transgender as the third gender is a big step in the process of making of a society that values every human being irrespective of their gender and their choices in life. Every human being should have the right to not just work and to earn but to also feel valued and accepted in the society. They should be free to make their own choices in their life and they should have equal opportunities in every field.

**CONCLUSION**

Gender and its concept is deeply rooted in the society and is blindly followed by the people. Small changes in our household can make long lasting effects on this system. Treating children equally at home can bring about the changes in the ways future generation will think about gender. A society is made and developed by all of its members and fairness is essential in building a society that is at least free of the challenges that come along with gender discrimination and the roles related to it. Male, Female and Transgender are the pillars of the society and without acknowledgement of one the others cannot sustain on their own.

**References**

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