

The Lecture Contains:

- ☰ Understanding gender and gender identity
- ☰ Development of gender identity
- ☰ Gender stereotypes
- ☰ Bases of gender discrimination against working women
- ☰ The 'Glass Ceiling Effect'

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Understanding gender and gender identity

- Gender is essentially a culture-based concept. It is defined as a the attributes such as roles, behaviours, attitudes etc. that a culture assigns to being a male or a female in that culture.
- Gender identity is the sex (that is biologically given) a person identifies with. Usually, but not always, a person identifies with one's own sex.

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Development of gender identity

- As per Carter & McCloskey (1984), following the pattern of development of gender identity across the life span of the persons :
 - Conception : Sex chromosomes' configuration determines the sex of the conceived child.
 - Between 2 and 4 years : With an inadequate understanding of male and female gender, the child begins to label oneself and others as male or female.
 - Later childhood : Gender identity begins to grow with a realization of culturally appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and roles for each gender. Child also begins to acquire gender stereotypes roughly around 5 years of age.
 - Adolescence and adulthood : Gender identity gets fully established. The person, however, may or may not identify with gender stereotypes associated with one's own sex. But, the cultural norms about gender may create pressure for conformity.

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Gender stereotypes

- Stereotypes are the beliefs (often unfounded) about all the members of a particular group. Stereotypes about females are more negative than about males.
- Are these stereotypes really true?
 - Some differences in social behaviour are the following :
- Ability to send and read non-verbal cues
- Aggression
- Nature of same-sex friendship

However, the magnitude and scope of these difference are smaller than what stereotypes suggest. This leaves several harmful effects, including discrimination.

Bases of gender discrimination against working women

- Role of expectation (own lower expectation)
 - Expect to take more time out of work
 - Place less importance on job outcomes
 - Realization that women earn less than men
 - Perceive low levels of pay as more fair than males
 - Comparison with women rather than men
- Role of self-confidence
 - Perhaps due to socialization, generally, in achievement-related situation, women are found not as aggressive or determined to succeed as men
- Negative reactions to female leaders

The 'Glass Ceiling Effect'

- To test the hypothesis that women receive fewer developmental opportunities, Van Velsor and Hughes (1990) conducted a survey on 600 men and women. The development opportunities that were examined included :
 - Job transition
 - Creating change
 - Dealing with external pressure
 - Being given tasks involving high levels of visibility and responsibilityObstacles in the jobs were also examined.
- Outcomes of the study :
 - Women reported fewer developmental opportunities that increased visibility or responsibility
 - Not given key assignments that would enable them to learn new skills or enhance their competence
 - It was hard for them to find support
 - Felt left out of important networks