

Inequality gender stereotyping in hong kong



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According to the Women's Commission (Woc) Survey on Community Perception of Gender Issues (2009), it finds that gender stereotyping is still prevalent in Hong Kong and gender inequality still persists in society. Moreover, the Chairperson Ms Sophia Kao also said " The survey findings reflect that the concept that ' women are to take care of the family while men are to work outside' is still deep rooted in society, leading the majority of the respondents to believe that women's contribution was confined to the family setting and understate their contributions to society in other areas. This affects women's development opportunities in different aspects such as employment and community participation. And under the long-term influence of traditional values, women themselves might also endorse some of these gender stereotypes." Besides, the survey also found that the public generally consider that women should focus more on family than their careers, while taking care of the family is the most important among the contributions of women. More women than men consider that women play a more important role in the family than men do. And educating and taking care of children was perceived by most women as the most significant aspect that undermines the development of their potential to the full.

Above this survey, the conscious of gender perception about the different aspect had seemed to increase than the before. But I find it very interest point that female seems trend to accept and identify the role which contribute the family work and child care work. These stereotyping limit the development of the female. So the survey reflects interviewed female recognize housework limit their development. I feel that the reason why the female accept these stereotyping is due to the long term socialization and

culture construction. These guide and control the female how to do the right expectation in society under invisible.

Chinese traditional culture and value how to construct inequality of female

Before five thousands year age in China, the period of patriarchy had begun to budded, the status of females were decrease. Moreover, since slavery society prevailed, the females become no autonomy and status. They lost their freedom and controlled by male. They become slave for man property. They also accepted the system of polygyny. When feudal system was formed, more regulation oppressed to the female and advantages to male. Then, Confucian though become social mainstream for discipline people how to do the right things especially control female behavior. Such as female, some discourse is “starve to death is small things but virginity is very important(饿死是大节, 贞操是小事), it emphasize pure virginity is very important. If female can keep pure their virginity, they will be respected and appreciate. Besides, cripple feet (缠足) was constructed a beautiful model and standard, it control female to go a step further. These regulation and discourse construct inequality but female are willing to follow because of moral standard. Chinese female tasted no end of bitterness in their short, mostly poverty ridden lives.

In fact Chinese family life was marked by a shocking degree of brutality. The Confucian emphasis on filial piety and loyalty was a euphemistic prescription for absolute subordination of young to old and, more important for our purposes, female to male. Indeed, the structure of the Chinese family looks very different depending on which gender's perspective you choose to view

it from. The dominant male perspective conjures an unbroken lineage with power, property, and esteem passing in orderly and gradual fashion from generation to generation. From the female perspective, family life appears dramatically opposite. During her lifetime a Chinese female lived in two distinctly different families respectively her natal and marital homes. Instead of an unbroken lineage, the woman was never in her lifetime fully a member of any family. Her name was not even recorded in her father's genealogy, and when she died only her family name surname was entered in the genealogy charts of her husband's family. In this system and discourse characterized by filial piety, woman's life was described by the three obediences (三从) respectively "to her father during childhood, to her husband during marriage and to her son during widowhood". Above these traditional cultures, systems and discourse, they construct people how to do the right things related to the gender role. These constructions have oppression of the female.

Some post-modernism scholar's theory explain why people accept discourse and moral standard under invisible

According to West and Zimmerman (1987), most people find it hard to believe that gender is constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and are the texture and order of that social life. Yet gender, like culture, is a human production that depends on everyone constantly "doing gender".

Based on these assumptions, we also find more discourses are recognizing man has power of domination, female should believe in her role as the subordinated being in the process of socialization. Then, Horrocks (1997)

states ideological and cannot be neutral as it claims. In other words, there is no objective truth since science is still constructed within political parameter. However, we still have not discussed why these discourses work so effectively that most of us do not attempt to challenge them. That would be answered by Michel Foucault's explanation about the reign of power. According to Madan Sarup (1993) quotes from Foucault that power produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth, so it is not possible for power to be examined without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to produce power because the exercise of power constructs the new object of knowledge too.

Moreover, according to Foucault (Foucault, 1995), power is not as centralized, authoritarian and organized as the sovereign one. However, it regulates the most intimate and minute element through multiple processes from different locations. It formulates the production of docile bodies through discipline which made possible the meticulous control of the operation of body including its movement, gesture and attitude. It also assumes the constant subjection of the force of the body and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility. In addition, it produces subject and practiced bodies, docile bodies that may operate as one wishes with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determined.

The above disciplinary practice of power is epitomized in Foucault's description of an architectural device called the Panopticon by Jeremy Bentham. According Foucault " In Discipline and Punish" (Foucault, 1977), he makes the following explanation about Panopticon. " Each Individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by

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the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companion. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication". Thus, as Foucault (Foucault, 1977) remarks in detail, the whole design has the effect to induce an innate state of consciousness and prevent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. The power is visible but unverifiable because the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. However, he/she never knows whether he/she is being looked at in any particular moment. From this one side effect, he/she must assume that he is always under surveillance. Thus, surveillance is everywhere wherever inside or outside the panopticon thereby a homogenous effect is produced for inmates to discipline them.

Besides, a poststructuralist Judith Butler (Butler, 1990) applies Foucault's emphasis into the field of gender representations. She illustrates from Foucault that the juridical system produces the subject that are represented and constituted through discourses. As we have remarked that discourses are naturalized as a belief through the practice of power which cannot be challenged, it will be concretized as a foundational promise to exclude those who fail to conform within the normative requirements.

Then, Butler (Butler, 1990) also argues that gender is a cultural means by which the biologically determined sex is produced and established as pre-discursive, prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which the culturally constructed gender acts. Butler (Butler, 1990) also says in the later part of her book *Gender Trouble* that the notion of identity and coherence is not a logical and analytical feature, but rather it is a socially instituted norm of

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intelligibility. Thus, we believe that our identity is a core that sustains through temporal change. Illusion of being and substance cultivated by that the grammatical formulation of subject and predicate reflects the prior ontological reality of substance and attribute. The metaphor of substance leads people to believe that one can be a sex or gender.

Furthermore, Butler (Butler, 1990) explains that there is no gender identity that underlies the expressions of gender. The apparent identity is performativity constituted by the very expression that is said to be its result. Thus, Butler (Butler, 1990) said, there is no being behind doing, effecting, becoming; the doer is merely a fiction added to the deed - the deed is everything.

Hence, the idea of gender is relational and contextual since it is a repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being that the acts, gestures, enactments in gender performance are performativity in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express be fabrications manufactures and sustained. So, it becomes what one puts on his or her body, how one behaves and presents in front of people are only the gestures based upon the regulations under gender division in a particular cultural context with regardless to any ontological truth.

From the Foucault theory, we know that the complex differential power relationships extend to every aspect of our social, cultural and political lives. In the analysis of gender identity of Butler, we also see that power also

extends to the aspect about the construction of our gender identity. The whole process of power relationship involves the manner of subject-position, and securing our asset not only by the threat of punitive sanctions, but also persuading us to internalize the norms and values that prevail within the social, or in the theories of Butler, the patriarchal order.

How to increase gender sensitivity of social work practitioners in Hong Kong

Firstly, according to Foucault (1991), he said that Panopticon like as a metaphor for social control. Discipline's success is due to its simplicity, hierarchical observation, normalizing of judgments, and their combination such as prison, penitentiary, rehabilitation center, hospital, social worker, school, etc. It was combining punitive system with normalizing practices. It forces people fulfill the social expectation and make the right things through punishment, surveillance and reinforcement under invisible. So, we need to understand us may be one of the surveillance institutions causing this phenomenon. So, we need to aware of gender sensitivity of social work practitioners. As a gender sensitivity of social work practitioners, the worker need to become aware of and take an objective look at the belief system, reflect the gender biases and judgmental convictions. Moreover, the worker realizes how the culture has influenced the belief system and recognizes that gender and sexual definition do not have to conform to societal norms. Besides, the worker facilitates self-actualizing behaviors for clients rather than socially prescribed conduct.

In the counseling aspect, we need to be aware of the dangers inherent in conforming to social stereotypes and to recognize our own, possibly

unhealthy, rigid, gender beliefs and behaviors. If gender biased by cultural definitions of male and female roles, counselors may facilitate social conformity, rather than individual growth and self-expression, with their clients. Moreover, Gender stereotyped intervention negatively impact clients. As a result, the counseling process may turn into oppression imposed on the actual client. Most unfortunately, those who deviate from the cultural norm tend to be denigrated and discriminated against. So the counselors may employ different clinical techniques and make disparate diagnoses and treatment plans based on assumptions about gender. The clients may disclose certain information based on the therapist's gender. Counselors who also ascribe to rigid definitions of " appropriate" gender roles and sexual conduct may tend to help clients conform to culturally acceptable behaviors and practices rather than helping them to define individually appropriate roles. Besides, the goal of gender-sensitive psychotherapy is helping clients to become aware of and confront limiting gender-role stereotypes and creating a more equalitarian and empathetic society by expanding choices for both sexes.

In the advocacy, based on the Women's Commission (Woc) Survey on Community Perception of Gender Issues (2009), the stereotyping of gender is still serious. The social worker still educates public through community work for deconstruct the role of gender and spread both equality of gender. Moreover, the social worker also organizes some groups for man and women. They are educated to become leadership and increase their gender awareness. As a result, they similar the seeds continuous spread to others even though to participate social affairs about the both equality of gender. I

believe that through the different aspect to increase people gender's awareness, the both equality of gender will achieved in future.

Conclusion

Several thousand Chinese culture and system is the deeply socialization construct the gender role. It makes the inequality of gender till today.

Although many research reflects the equality of man and women had improved. But the gender awareness is not still enough. If we are thoroughgoing to change this inequality, we will make more and more effort in gender affairs.