

Gender identity

Sociology



28 April Gender Identity “ Gender identity is defined as a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither)” (“ Definitions: Gender Identity”). Gender identity fundamentally emerges from the individualistic traits of the two genders i. e. male and female which have been inculcated in them naturally. Traits associated with the female gender include but are not limited to delicacy, beauty, sensitivity, and verbosity in many cases whereas the qualities in the male gender include physical strength, bravery, boldness, and a will to dominate. If the influence of factors particularly religion and education is restrained, the roles and responsibilities associated with genders fundamentally emerge from these traits. Gender identity originates in the feelings, thoughts and nature commonly shared by individuals of a particular gender. It is not just the physical appearance of an individual that convinces him/her to associate with a particular gender, though physical appearance is the prime factor that influences an individual’s decision to identify himself/herself with either of the two genders. Factors like what gender one makes friends from, what gender one feels sexually attracted to, what gender one shares feelings with, and what gender one’s nature resembles also play a very important role in identifying the gender of an individual, though the strength of physical appearance dominates all of these factors. Girls like to play with dolls when they are at very small age while boys tend to play with footballs, balls, guns and such other toys that in reality require the physical and emotional strength. The common likes and dislikes of children help them identify themselves with specific genders. Nevertheless, there can be exceptions. For instance, a boy may like to play with dolls or a girl might want to have a gun as her toy, but they still remain what they are naturally irrespective of their likes or dislikes.

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There are certain roles and responsibilities associated with the gender identity in every society. Various factors play a role in depicting the roles and responsibilities of genders in a culture that include but are not limited to history, religion, and education. Generally, the more conservative societies tend to restrain the women in the homes and assign them such domestic roles as cooking, washing, and taking care of the household while men are assigned the responsibility of earning bread for the family. On the other hand, advanced and modernistic societies tend to underestimate or overlook the significance of physical power and overemphasize upon the intellectual ability, thus reducing barriers in the women's way towards working outside their homes and stand shoulder to shoulder with men in all fields. The most important factor that causes such a revolutionary change in the society's perceptions is education. As people gain more education, they realize the intellectual power of women which generates a social acceptability for women as part of the workforce. Some people are doubtful of their gender identity even though they are physically fit to be classified as males or females. Although they know whether they are males or females by physique or sex, yet they tend to be skeptical about their gender identity because of their feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes that are conventionally held by people from the opposite gender. This particularly holds true for homosexual and bisexual people who can make love to people from their own gender. There are certain other cases in which people tend to suspect their gender identity like a girl having a grave voice, a boy having a girl's gait, or a male teenager having gynecomastia. There is a third category of people who are neither complete males nor complete females. Neither they are physically fit to be classified as either of the two genders, nor they feel like having all of

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their traits in common with a specific gender. These people are eunuchs. Eunuchs tend to identify themselves with either of the two genders of male and female and play the roles of a particular gender depending upon how they feel. Some eunuchs are more girlish in nature while others are more boyish in nature. However, irrespective of how they feel like, they are not accepted as members of either of the two genders by the society at large, which ultimately convinces all eunuchs to identify themselves with the third gender. Concluding, gender identity is an outcome of a whole range of factors, the most important of which is the physical features of an individual. Such factors include an individual's nature, feelings, thoughts, likes and dislikes. Roles and responsibilities associated with genders vary from one culture to another. People having some qualities in common with the opposite gender tend to be skeptical about their gender identity. Eunuchs identify themselves with the third gender because they are not physically fit to be identified with either of the two genders. Works Cited: " Definitions: Gender identity and gender role." 2012. Web. 28 April 2012. .