

## B.A. (ALL HONOURS)

<b>Paper No.</b>	<b>GE 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> Semester</b>
<b>Paper Title</b>	<b>WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA</b>
<b>Marks</b>	75% + 25%
<b>Contact Hours (L+T)</b>	5+2 Per Week

### MODEL ANSWER

#### **1. Sex and Gender work as interconnected forms of oppression. Give suitable answers to support your arguments.**

**A:** Sex refers to the anatomical and other biological differences between females and males that are determined at the moment of conception and develop in the womb and throughout childhood and adolescence. These basic biological differences between the sexes affect many people's perceptions of what it means to be female or male

Gender is a social concept. It refers to the social and cultural differences a society assigns to people based on their (biological) sex. Gender roles, refers to a society's expectations of people's behavior and attitudes based on whether they are females or males. Understood in this way, gender, like race, is a *social construction*. How we think and behave as females and males is not etched in stone by our biology but rather is a result of how society expects us to think and behave based on what sex we are. As we grow up, we learn these expectations as we develop our gender identity, or our beliefs about ourselves as females or males.

The pressure of gender conformity can be very strongly felt by both girls and boys. In the case of girls, the pressures on some in relation to body image lead to anorexia and death. In addition, girls are faced with a maze of decisions about whether to be like a girl in this situation, or like a boy in that situation-and are often damned in either. In the case of boys, the key aspects of dominant masculinity are clearly in evidence in any classroom in which there are boys. It is based on being strong and rough, on learning to take it, on being first or the best, on disassociating from girls or boys whose identity does not 'pass the test' of macho maleness, on not showing affection, and on defying authority, especially female authority. All these things serve to prove acceptable masculinity. Boys create and preserve this masculinity through fear of whatever might be constructed as female, since whatever.

The terms employed most frequently to describe the differences between men and women are 'sex' and 'gender'. Sex refers to the differing physical attributes of women and men (Lee, Shaw). The categories of sex are male and female. In every society sex difference are given social meanings. Social identity, which is confessed on the basis of assumed sexual differences, is called "gender" (Lee, Shaw). People are born female or male, but learn to be girls and boys, who grow into men and women. Males are supposed to be masculine, strong, and macho, while females are attributed to be feminine, fragile. Gender differences, in spite of being constructed in complex ways, are not unchangeable. In reality masculinity and femininity are not fixed categories acquired in childhood but are constantly being tested, challenged and reworked. To this, one could add that most aspects related to gender differences over time vary and have changed across cultures. (Culled from the net)

The term “sex” refers to the genetic makeup, internal reproductive organs and the organization of the brain of individuals that distinguish them as male or female. On the contrary, the social roles and behaviour associated with both males and females are due to their cultural awareness and the way they were brought up (Lippa, 2005). Thus one can claim that the gender of an individual is nurtured by social, environmental and cultural factors whereas sex is a biological trait and, while it can be altered in the course of advanced surgery, it is normally believed to be fixed and determined by natural forces.