

# Study of Gender: Collaboration between Men and Women in Life

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## Study of Gender: Collaboration between Men and Women in Life

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**Abstract.** Gender refers to differences in behavior between men and women who are socially constructed. These differences refer to the roles, behaviors, responsibilities that define the meaning of being a man and woman in the existing culture. Men are often seen as strong individual, leader, and at the front whereas women are seen as a gentle person, doing domestic activities, and surrender. The division of roles sometimes brings the problem in life. Each sex sometimes assumes that between men and women there must be a partition, be a stronger one, and leading. Men and women should help each other, collaborate, and work together to achieve their respective roles, without toppling or feeling the most powerful. They are a unity in a society which cannot be separated.

**Keywords:** gender, men, women, social

## 1 Introduction

The term of gender is often heard in society, but many of them do not understand the meaning itself. Gender is considered as nature that comes from God and cannot be changed. This often creates problem in social regulation. Gender is the difference in role, function and responsibility carried out by men and women, which is socially constructed. It is sometimes confused with the meaning of sex. Sex is a biological sex division. This is in line with Allana, Asad, & Sherali (2010) state that gender is used to describe the characteristics of women and men which are socially constructed, while sex refers to those who are biologically determined.

Along with the times, the social regulation has also changed. These changes occur in all fields, one of which is the relationship between men and women. However, culture often makes interpretations about the measure of the appropriateness of the behavior of men and women. There are things that both men and women deem appropriate and inappropriate to do. As patriarchal culture considers that men are taboo doing domestic work, taking care of children, or cooking in the kitchen. Meanwhile, women are considered taboo when working and doing activities in the outside. Actually, gender differences are not a problem as long as they do not create gender injustice (Rokhmansyah, 2016).

The relationship between men and women must be built on the foundation of equality and justice. Equality is not meant to get the same treatment for each individual, but equality that is fair according to their respective needs. As stated by Megawangi (1999), equality is not sameness which often demands mathematical equations, but it rather that is fair in accordance with the context of each individual.

The most visible form of relationship is in the family environment. The family is the smallest unit in the community system, where roles, responsibilities, and functions can run for a stable social order. Those roles such as father as breadwinner, mother has a role in the domestic sector. However along with the development and culture adopted by each family, the roles played by each family change. Nowadays, many men also like things in domestic, as well as women who also have careers outside the home and sometimes help the family economy. This can run harmoniously if each family realizes that must help each other, collaborate in order to build healthy relationships, physically, and psychologically.

## 2 Discussion

### 2.1 Concepts of Gender

Gender is a socio-cultural construction that distinguishes feminine and masculine characteristics referring to differences and social relations between girls and boys which are based on certain beliefs (Arofah 2016). In addition, according to Puspitawati (2012) gender is also defined as differences between men and women in roles, functions, rights, responsibilities, and behaviors that are shaped by the social, cultural and customary values of community groups that can change according to time and local conditions. These roles can be found in various fields, such as in family, education and society.

It can be interpreted that gender is related to the rules for certain genders, both male and female. It is often equated with sex even though it is different. According to Baron & Byrne (2003: 187) sex is defined as a biological term based on anatomical and physical differences between men and women. Men have genitals in the form of a penis, while women have a vagina. Women have a uterus so they can get pregnant while men don't have it. It can be said that gender cannot be exchanged between men and women. Meanwhile, gender can be exchanged according to each culture. The following table of differences between gender and sex is quoted from Puspitarini & Femilia (2018):

**Table 1.** Gender and Sex Differences

Gender	Sex
The differences in the roles, functions and responsibilities of men and women are the result of social construction	The differences in male and female biological organs, especially in the reproductive section
Man-made	Creation of God
Not natural	Cannot change
Can change	Cannot be exchanged
Can be exchanged	Valid throughout the ages and everywhere
Depends on the local time and culture	Female: pregnant, giving birth, breastfeeding, menstruating Men: fertilizing (spermatozoa)

## 2.2 Gender in the Family

The family is the smallest unit in a system. In general, the family consists of father, mother, and child. However, there are also families who live with their parents or grandparents. Everything is taught for the first time by a family to its children, both boys and girls. One of the things that were introduced since childhood was the gender roles. By taking the right role, the child will have a clear gender identity. Gender identity according to Matsumoto & Juang (2013) refers to the degree to which a person has awareness or recognition that he is adopting a certain gender role. So, to clarify one's gender identity, what needs to be improved is gender awareness. It is awareness of the different roles and relationships between women and men. To have gender awareness, they must be given an understanding of their gender identity since they are children.

Understanding gender is certainly different from one family to another. Moreover, there are some families that still adhere to a structural-functional system, where is a clear division of roles between men and women in the family. Families that adhere to this system often consider men the most powerful so that the decision maker is in the hands of the head of the family (father), while other family members must submit. Men are considered to be the strongest, so the activity of earning a living is the responsibility of the father. The mother is a part of the family who plays a role in taking care, kitchen and other household matters. This often creates problems. This happens because the family is seen as a system consisting of subsystems, so that if family members do not carry out their roles, problems will arise. As Puspitarini & Familia (2018) points out, a family is like a living organization, if one part or substructure cannot carry out its function, then the family will not function properly.

Relations of family can be built in harmony with the principles of justice and equality. It is explained on the book of Megawangi (1999) that a family can run harmoniously if it adopts a companionship system, where the relationship is horizontal (not hierarchical). Its relations are based on democratic principles. Families with this system think about how each member will continue to develop, help each other, and give the best. Each family member has their own needs and different abilities so that it must also be based on the understanding of them. If they understand of their respective needs, the goal of a harmonious family will be realized.

## 2.3 Gender in Education

Education is an important factor in the survival of everyone. As explained in the National Education System Law (2003), education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that students actively develop their

potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills they need for society, nation and state. So great is the purpose of education that it is appropriate for every individual to get a proper education, without any differences in treatment between male and female students. This shows that gender justice will be realized. Men and women have the same opportunity to develop their potential.

The problems that frequently arise in families related to gender inequality in education. There are families that prioritize boys with higher education than their daughters, when in fact these girls are more cognitively capable. This culture causes women to be second in education, even though men and women have the same rights to get a proper education. As described in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 34 of 1999 concerning Human Rights in Article 48 states that women have the right to receive education and teaching in accordance with the requirements stipulated by Article 60 paragraph (10), which states that every child has the right to receive education and teaching in the context of personal development according to their interests, talent and level of intelligence.

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that men and women have the same rights to get the opportunity to develop their potential. One way is through education. Currently, a lot of women also held certain positions. Therefore, it can be seen that even though they are women, they also have the competence. Harmonious partnership must also be built within the scope of education. Men and women work together to give the best achievement and self-development.

### 3. Conclusion

Gender is a socio-cultural construction that differentiates on the roles, responsibilities, functions between men and women. These roles can be exchanged. Men and women are partners who help each other to create a harmonious relationship. They must build it without dropping and cooperate in all fields, both in family, education, and in a wider scope.

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