

# **Actual gender roles and responsibilities assigned in school and classroom actual gender roles and responsibilities assigned in school and classroom**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Gender stereotypes are perpetual in every social institution and school are no exceptions. It is generally believed in our society that this is the proper way to act in classroom situation for both boys and girls. This is known as gender roles in schools and classrooms.

## **GENDER ROLE**

The term “gender role” was first coined by **John Money** in **1955**. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender roles as “**Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women**”. A gender role is a set of social norms dictating the types of behaviors which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality. Gender roles are usually centered on conceptions of femininity and masculinity, although there are exceptions and variations. The specifics regarding these gendered expectations may vary substantially among cultures, while other characteristics may be common throughout a range of cultures.

## **SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM**

According to S. Balakrishna Joshi, “**School is a dynamic community center which stimulates life and power all around.**” According to T.P. Nunn, “**School of nation is those parts of its life whose particular work is to make firm of its spiritual power, to keep its future**”. Schools socialize children into their gender roles. Much of the gender constructions in schools create a distinct notions of what it means to be a man and a women. Classroom is a room or place the students are taught. Classroom also plays an important role in gender stereotype.

## **GENDER ROLES IN SCHOOLS**

Schools play a large part in creating our gender roles. It is at school that we are exposed to peers of both sexes. There, we learn what our peers see as the proper ways for us to act based on what sex we are. Psychologists sometimes distinguish gender differences, which are related to gender roles, from sex differences, which are related only to physiology and anatomy. On average, girls are more motivated than boys to perform well in schools, at least during elementary school. By the time girls reach high school, however some may try to downplay their own academic ability in order to make themselves more likeable by both sexes. This is according to **Davis** (2005). Even if this occurs, though it does not affect their grades:

from kindergarten through twelfth grade, girls can earn slightly higher average grade than boys (**Freeman, 2004**). There is a role of gender even in the selection of course they make, that is, maths and science for boys and arts for girls. Bernstein states that recreation for boys and girls are strongly differentiated. That is, boys are given balls and bats to play with and girls are expected to play their sex-approved plays such as jacks and jumping rope.

## **GENDER ROLES IN CLASSROOM**

Classrooms play a major role in gender roles. In classroom, the differences between boys and girls are sometimes celebrated and sometimes laminated. Boys and girls have differences which may lead to inequality. Even though the number of female children is majority in the classroom, the classrooms are maximum male dominated. Even it is very difficult for teachers to treat them equally and overcome the gender stereotypes they have already been taught. In classrooms, boys simply tend to demand more attention, while girls tend to be quieter and more reticent. This may arise to gender stereotype in classrooms. Even praises were given to boys in the classroom. Bernstein has explained that **“Sexism starts with kindergarten activities in which little girls are directed to the house keeping corner, while boys are steered towards blocks and trucks. Thus schools provide a shrinking of alternatives instead of expansion”**.

## **ROLE OF TEACHERS IN CLASSROOM TODAY**

Teachers often intend to interact with both sexes equally, and frequently succeed at doing so. Research has found, though, that they do sometimes respond to boys and girls differently, perhaps without realizing it. Three kinds of differences have been noticed. The first is the overall amount of attention paid to each sex; the second is the visibility or “publicity” of conversations; and third is the type of behaviour that prompts teachers to support or criticize the students. Few teachers would admit to bring gender bias in the classroom. Teachers may also reinforce gender bias by drawing distinction between boys and girls. Research says that teachers are more likely to respond to boys with praise or encouragement and respond girls by simply accepting and acknowledging a response without evaluating it. As girls are typically socialized to be quiet and active, teachers may need to actively encourage their participation in the class in order to avoid boy-dominated discussion, or a situation in which boys receive more feedback from teachers.

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL OR CLASSROOM**

In the classroom boys and girls should be treated equally to avoid gender bias. Studies in classroom behaviour have shown that boys are far more active than girls in classroom, while girls remain shy and hesitant. Teachers may have to call on the girls to consciously participate and take leadership roles in classroom discussion. In group discussion, there must be a mix of genders rather than segregating them. Tasks can be given by the teacher that cooking for boys and gardening for girls. This may erase out the gender stereotype. Teachers can shatter the gender stereotype by giving equal sports to both boys and girls. It is

common that peer criticizing a girl who wants to become a pilot and a boy who is inclined towards craft. But teachers can guide them towards positive direction without gender stereotype. Best way to crush gender stereotype is boys were given knitting and sewing and girls were given tasks to dig mud for planting.

## CONCLUSION

It is generally believed in our society that there is a proper way to act in classroom situation for both boys and girls. And they assume that boys have right and females don't have to do anything and women are portrayed as less confidential. This gender stereotype can be crushed by the teachers by treating both boys and girls equally and to make a situation and environment without having the essence of gender stereotype.

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