Block 3
Gender and Identity

BLOCK 3   INTRODUCTION

Block 3 - Gender and Identity elaborates gender as an important indicator of identity. Gender as a social construction affects the youth identity in many ways. *Block 3 consists of two Units*.

Unit 6 Gender, Youth Identity and Sexuality talks about gender socialization and changing gender roles in the society. It also discusses sexuality in the adolescents and youth, and highlights healthy sexuality.

Unit 7 Youth, Identity and Globalization emphasizes the influence of globalization on aspects like work and culture; and thereby impacting the identity development in youth.

UNIT 6   GENDER, YOUTH IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY*

Structure

6.1   OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- Know the concept of gender identity and its link with gender socialization;

- Critically examine gender roles, changing gender roles, and the gender stereotypes prevalent in our social and cultural contexts; and

- Elucidate the importance social and cultural change in reference to gender equity and national developments.

6.2   INTRODUCTION

Gender is central to our experience of living, our dreams, aspirations and the quality of our lives. What is gender? How do we learn who we are in terms of gender? In this Unit we will discuss how gender is about understanding personal and social power and not just about being born a woman or a man. Socialization process plays a crucial role in what we can do/cannot do in our lives by influencing our perception and expectation of us. However, with changing times, gender roles are changing. Sexuality and gender are closely related, yet different ideas. Adolescents usually have misconceptions about sexuality which results in unhealthy relationships and many a mishaps also. Hence it is important to discuss about healthy sexuality in adolescents.

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6.3   GENDER AND IDENTITY

The first question perhaps, every person asks, when a child is born – Is it a boy or a girl? Then, the question is asked – Is the child and the mother alright? Thus, we see that being a boy or a girl is central to who we are – in the eyes of the others around us. However, identity keeps getting larger, always including gender within it. When we grow up, we keep asking the question –Who am I? and we keep getting different answers –all correct through our life time.

We are told – you belong to India, you are an Indian; you belong to Punjabi/ Assamese/Marathi/Odia, this is your rich linguistic heritage etc. So your language, literature, poetry and songs are who you are, part of your identity. When you go to school, you are a student of a particular class of a school/ college or institution. In all these identities, gender remains the central identity.

So, let us first understand 'Identity' a little more. Among Psychologists, three overlapping terms are used – Personality, Self and Identity. Personality is understood as certain fixed, 'trait' like qualities and characteristics, which make us unique and different from each other. If you are a BA Hons. Psychology learner, you must have learned about personality in BPCC-103:Psychology of Individual Differences. It includes our openness to experience, our basic approach towards people – whether we are extraverted or introverted, our capacity to adapt and cope or be neurotic. Personality traits remain more or less constant throughout life span, but there is a scope to develop and enhance our personality.

Self is a term mostly used, when we ourselves recognize who we are and articulate it. We develop a sense of self as we grow and become self-aware. We start understanding our self-worth and develop our self-confidence. We regulate our self in expressing emotions and thoughts etc. Thus, self is centered on our awareness and articulation of our personality characteristics on one side and its interaction with society, socialization, norms and our interpersonal and social experiences on the other.

Identity is the most outward form of that articulation, where our self 'gets identified' with certain characteristics and has most impact on interpersonal and social behaviors. We get identity as Hindu or Muslim or Christian or atheist. We may say, I am born in a traditional family but I 'identify' myself with modern values and so I am a modernist. We may also feel, I was born as a girl, but I feel, I am a boy, or vice versa. Thus, our identity is what we fully accept and own. It deeply impacts our interpersonal and social relationships. We get an identity as a woman or a man or a transgender. We may change our identity, when we grow up. Of course, changing one's identity will be extremely difficult and traumatic in many cases such as gender identity, but it is possible. It is easier to change in some cases-say your political identity. You may shift from being a non-interested citizen to an interested voter or even further to a deeply committed member of a party. You may change/shift political thought as well.

So, the point is – Identity is the most externalized of the three concepts that we discussed earlier. Now, here issues get very interesting! Because, identity is most externalized and social, we may have several identities that are either socialized in us or those that we have chosen. For example, what it represents to be a man or a woman is an identity that impacts our future, right at our birth or

even before we are born. Similarly, we have our regional, linguistic, community and national identities. Accordingly, our normative behaviour, our social and interpersonal interactions and our decisions change. Secondly, because our identities relate to social structures, it's norms and rules, our identity puts constraints and enables/facilitates certain process of growing up, developing of certain thoughts, emotions, actions and behaviour. The interesting question is, when certain identities and socialization processes contradict each other or create dissonance, how does the person react or respond?

Now, what is gender and how is it an identity? Gender is a social construction. Social constructions are groups of related ideas that the societies create to describe, understand and regulate behaviour and changes in societies. To illustrate, the idea of adolescence and its related concepts such as identity crisis, did not exist about 150 years back in India, because, Indians got married as small children and social structures were so strong and rigid that changes in adolescence, even as they happened, were never studied separately. Adolescence wasn't discussed in western psychology till the 1960's. When changes in the society in the western world created the social reality of adolescence, the term-adolescence was examined, studied, discussed in greater detail to understand this new social reality. To give another example, now, as you are aware, the modern society is going through a demographic transition and is an aging society. Therefore, much research and scholarship is focusing on ageing, positive ageing, death, identity in old age etc.

Therefore, in order to understand gender as an identity, we distinguish between our biological given sex and gender as a social construction. We are assigned a biological given sex based on the primary sexual characteristics we are born with. If we are born with a penis and testicles, then we are assigned a biological sex of a man/boy. If we are born with a vagina and a womb, we are assigned a sex of a girl/woman. However, it is the social construction of 'Gender' that defines, describes, makes us understand and regulates our interpersonal and social performance as a boy or a girl.

You can revisit Unit 1 where you have learned about gender as one of the indicators of youth identity.

6.3.1   Gender Socialization and Gender Roles

The process of growing up, during which we learn from our parents, family and the larger community and society around us -what it means to be a woman or a man is called gender socialization. Society and the process of growing up creates significant rules of do's and don'ts. For example, women in India, didn't go out for work, because the society felt that women shouldn't go out for work and that it's the man's role. Even now, in Indian villages, there are rules about when, where and how women can go out in public places.

Depending on the societies and communities that we are born in, we are socialized into gender performance or specific roles assigned for men and/or women. In some societies, we are taught that boys are bold and independent; they don't cry. We are socialized that girl are not bold, they always want others approval and cry often. In other societies, it's ok for men to cry and women can be strong and bold. In some societies, the gender socialization is very strict and not

following these norms creates immediate mockery, dismissal and social rejection. In some societies, these gender norms can be slightly fluid and variations would not be punished.

Traditionally, societies assigned certain work and ways of being specifically to men and women. When work and ways of being are assigned simply by the virtue of being born a male or a female, it is called a gender role. Men have traditionally, been the 'bread winners' the 'karta' or the doers, whose role was to go out and earn livelihoods and money. Women have been assigned the role of the nurturer – the person who cooks, keeps the house clean, washes clothes, bears and rears children. This assigning of specific gender roles meant that the socialization of girls is different from that of the boys. Because, girls are expected to grow up and take care of homes, their childhood is marked by an emphasis on the activities they are supposed to do as grown up women- for example, taking care of younger siblings, helping the mother in cooking, cleaning, washing and other household chores, bringing water and serving others, especially their elders. Boy's childhood is marked by experiences that emphasize their independence, boldness, courage and capacity to have their way, because, it is a social expectation that they need to be independent in their adult role as a 'bread winner'.

As boys and girls grow up to be men and women, they become, for most of the time, adults who fit in the rules and the expectations from the society. What they have grown up learning from their elders, becomes the truth for them. It becomes 'internalized' part of their self and identity. However, we must also wonder- what happens to those attributes of the personality and self that don't fit this role assignment? Some boys are dreamy and would like to be poets and feel emotional; when they cry, people mock them. Some girls are bold in their personality, they want to jump and climb trees and don't like to cook; they get constant shoutings from their elders that they will suffer after marriage! In reality, all of us have 'personality' attributes that don't fit the rules of gender roles. Can you think of some aspects within yourself that don't fit in your gender socialization?

6.3.2 Changing Gender Roles

With changing times and changing societies, gender socialization has also changed bit by bit. During the time of freedom struggle, women have taken an active part. Our leaders such as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule fought for several social reforms such as social reform against Sati (live burning of widows) or, against child marriage. Religious leaders such as Swami Vivekananda and Dayananda fought for education of women. Our Constituent Assembly, under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, gave women of India, the right to vote as equal to men, even before the many mature democracies of the western world.

After India became a free nation, more women started getting educated, educating their children at home and also started entering the work force. They started speaking for change. So, even though basic parameters of literacy and sex ratio, still after 70 years of Indian independence show poor numbers in some states such as Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh, slowly the gender roles, especially in reference to girls and women have started changing.

Census data (2011) shows that overall, the sex ratio is healthy in many states. A few states such as Haryana have abysmal sex ratio. What does sex ratio mean?

Sex ratio shows the proportion of men and women in a region, state or the country. If the women are very low in proportion to men, it indicates several disturbing trends such as female feticide and infanticide as well as increased crimes against women. So, we need to be aware of and work towards strengthening this indicator. As a society, we need to be aware of efforts that protect the unborn girl child, ensure better nutrition and health of growing girls and protection of women against crimes such as molestation, rape and violence.

Women's literacy rate has also shown improvement after independence and in most southern states, women's literacy rates are high in the present times. In Northern states, women's literacy rates are lower and need improvements. This is influenced by various factors such as social and cultural practices, regional variation etc. Why is women's literacy important? A girl or a woman, who can read and write is more aware and informed in this fast changing world. She can be independent and is less likely to get exploited. So, you can see the irony that, in spite of a bold personality, or sharp intelligence, the region where you are born and the society and administration around you, will determine, whether you will be able to use your intelligence and personality to get educated and change your destiny. For example, you may want to be an IAS officer, have the personality and intelligence for it, yet, if you are born in a region, where girls are not send to school, beyond 10th; what would you do?

All across the country, there is an increased focus on girl's education and even though, there have been improvements, so much more needs to be done still. Girls work at home, help their mother in bringing water, washing and keeping the house clean, take care of their siblings and then – study as well. Despite challenges, educated women are entering into the workforce and many women, nowadays continue to study even after they get married or secure a job. This is a change from traditional thinking, where girl were not allowed to study, were not sent out of the house for further studies or were not allowed to study or secure a job after marriage.

Let us take a look at women's health, age of marriage and age at which the woman becomes a mother. These are key indicators for woman's health and also show changing gender roles. Across the country, census data shows that societies are changing and marriages are getting delayed till the legal age of marriage at 18 years. Marriage after 18 years, prepares the woman better in physiological, emotional and psychological terms to shoulder the responsibilities of starting a family and taking care of her children and the household. However, we still have a long way to go in terms of decision making by women. Many women, postpone to go to hospitals, even when they are sick or ill, because they feel that their health is not important, they can manage, and their health should not cause financial burden! This is ironic, considering that they work, all the time for the well-being of the family, even if they don't earn money for it. Many women have no choice, about when to get pregnant, where to go for delivery of the child etc. Thus, we need to create more awareness and action on women's health, because of this imbalance in the gender socialization process.

Just as gender roles for women are changing, ever so slowly, gender roles for men also need to change. If boy's and men's socialization, remains the same, and girls gender socialization changes, then it creates an imbalance in social functioning. Some change in men's gender roles has been seen. For example,

men, especially in urban areas are more open to help their spouses in household work or take care of young children, but much more needs to be done for changing gender roles for men, where they accept and respect equal contribution and leadership by women in their households and workspaces, without viewing it as a threat to their identity. For example, if the woman is educated and would like to work, should she not have the freedom to choose?

6.3.3 Gender Stereotyping and Social Change

One observed aspect of gender socialization is the phenomena of gender stereotyping. Gender stereotyping is to assume negative characteristics and prejudices in a person that you are interacting with, simply because, the person belongs to that identity category. Let us understand this a little more. We meet a person from a rural context in India and are happily surprised, when this person speaks with us in English and that too about a technical subject-say nutrition from green, leafy vegetables. The question is why are we surprised? We are surprised, because we never thought that a person from rural context in India can, (a) speak English and (b) talk authoritatively about the nutritional components from green leafy vegetables? So, further question is, why did we assume such impressions about a person, even before meeting the person?

The answer is given by psychologists. Psychology says, that human psyche develops a 'stereotype', say about what a rural person from India is like. We have formed an impression or an assumption that rural persons are not only illiterate, cannot speak English but also do not have knowledge on nutrition or other subjects. Thus, this stereotyping or assumptions pre-determine our approach and interaction with a rural person, even before we meet him or her. Our looking glass is colored and that is an injustice to that rural person.

Similarly, we routinely interact with people, without examining our stereotypes about caste, class, religion and race. We assume wrongly, for example, that certain people are unclean, because they belong to certain communities. This is a grave injustice. We assume that certain people are violent, because they belong to certain communities. This again, is grave injustice.

Similarly, we have several unexamined gender stereotypes in the society. For example, there is an assumption that women cannot read or understand sciences and mathematics. There is an assumption that all women, by the virtue of them being born a woman, love to cook and be a mother. So, we are shocked, when we meet a woman and she says, 'I am better than all the boys in math or I don't want to be a mother/or I don't like to get into the kitchen'. We think that it surely must be a fault in the upbringing (which is a general term for socialization). We assume that women are shy and cannot speak in public assemblies. When a woman, gets up and speaks up in a village assembly, we are surprised. We assume that, women who work late till night are asking for sexual attention or that women, who are bold/ who smoke and/or work late till night are 'loose'. We assume that when a woman says 'no' to sexual and romantic attention, she means 'yes'. All these wrong ideas, impressions and assumptions color our interactions with women within households and in public spaces, even before we get to know them better as individual human beings. With these presumptions and prejudices, not only crimes against women are increasing, but our day to day interaction with women is unjust to them and to ourselves as human beings. For instance,

beating a woman, physical torture, devaluing her, and dismissing her as a human is bad enough .

Similarly, we assume that all men are strong and bold and never feel fear. So, when a man says, I am scared, everybody laughs at and mocks that man. Psychologists will say, fear is a universal emotion, 'even' men will feel so. We assume that men cannot cook or are clumsy in the kitchen. But, in hotels and catering, kitchens are run by men and many famous cooks have been/are men. We assume that nursing is a domain of women, but experience shows that male nurses are equally or more caring towards the ill and the infirm.

This gender stereotyping therefore, needs to be examined, discussed and changed, if we want social change to happen. Men and women, boys and girls need to ask this question - What are the assumptions and ideas that are coloring my view, my approach and my interactions with the others who may be men or women. Am I, unconsciously, through my unexamined assumptions being insensitive or unjust to the other person? Think about it.

Self Assessment Questions I

1) We have one identity or several identities? Explain.

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2) Gender is a social construction. (Write True or False)

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3) What is gender stereotyping?

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6.4 SEXUALITY – SELF AND BODY AWARENESS

Sexuality is understood in various aspects primarily arising out of a desire for self-validation by the chosen and accepted other, intimacy and romantic

attachment as well as desire for pleasure and fulfilment. As mentioned, children are assigned their gender based on the primary sexual characteristics at birth. Primary sexual characteristics are the presence of penis and testicles among boys and the presence of a vaginal passage, the uterus and the ovaries (womb), the major and minor labia that fold the urethra and the clitoris as well as the vulva among girls. Most often, the presentation of the primary sexual characteristics is un-ambiguous and therefore, based on these visible characteristics, sex is assigned. Thereafter, a decision is taken to nurture the child as a girl or a boy based on the assigned sex.

Sexuality is closely linked to our self-awareness and self-validation. Sexuality is an important yet rarely discussed topic in social discussions. Psychologists and scientists, religious and social leaders as well as reformers have acknowledged the importance of healthy sexuality based on mutual respect and honor for both men and women. Yet, note the contradiction that, there is a great hesitation to discuss healthy sexuality in public and private spaces.

Some psychologists have stated that sexuality is at the core of human personality, whereas others have said that it is certainly an important drive but may not be at the core. Humanistic psychologists in general have stated that self is the organizing center of personality traits –that which says – "I am" and therefore, concerns and motivation of this self includes themes such as mastery, esteem, self-actualization, transcendence, self-awareness and self-worth. Clearly, human experience is complex and layered, where sexuality and self are deeply interlinked and yet self cannot be reduced to sexuality alone.

Sexuality and body awareness gains prominence as puberty approaches. Puberty is marked by the emergence of secondary sexual characteristics such as increase in body hair, including pubic hair, emergence of body hair on face (as beards and moustache) in men, the growth of breasts in women and the onset of menstruation (called as menarche) in girls, sperm production in boys and the changes in the voice, increase in height/weight for both girls and boys.

Therefore, physiologically, several bodily changes take place during puberty and awareness of one's own body increases due to these. Hormones, specifically the growth hormone and the sex hormones production increases manifold and continues its increased circulation in the body till the onset of menopause and andro-pause in women and men respectively.

Socially and emotionally too, the adolescent girls and boys become aware of the presence of others around, the awareness of one's self as unique and separate. Increased self-awareness means a reflective subjectivity and a desire for appreciation, approval and validation by the others, especially the opposite sex.

Complex feeling and emotions develop among adolescents about interpersonal, social and community relationships, politics, ideology and religion. Thoughts and ideas about love, friendship, loyalty, enmity, hatred, dislikes and likes, confusion, fear, adequacy, guilt etc. are tested and resolved by most adolescents, by the time they navigate through their adolescent years.

6.4.1 Sexuality, Adolescence and Body Image

Thus, we see that, body awareness, sexuality and self-awareness, develop in a deeply interlinked fashion during puberty and adolescence. Most adolescents

spend more time grooming themselves, appreciating themselves and expecting appreciation from significant others. Many adolescents also go through phases where they focus on one body part, characteristic or function and feel it is not perfect and needs some correction. For example, someone may secretly feel that their height (which is a body characteristic) is not good enough; someone may feel that they sweat a lot or their body odour (which is a bodily function) is disturbingly strong and unpleasant for themselves and others. Some adolescent may feel that their nose (which is a body part) is too crooked or the forehead too high or arms too dangly. These phases may go off on their own, in most cases and most adolescents will accept and learn to appreciate their bodies and be comfortable about them, as they grow into youth and adulthood.

In a simplest way, the positive or negative impressions that we form about our bodies, when we see ourselves in the mirror, when we groom ourselves and take care of ourselves is the 'body image' that we have formed. A positive body image means that when we see ourselves in the mirror or think about ourselves, or health or our interpersonal relationships, especially our romantic attractions, we think good, positive and comfortable about our self.

This comfort translates into self-confidence and esteem, healthier interpersonal relations and psychological and physical health. Adolescents and youth with positive body image are more likely to be responsible for their health, eating, sleeping and daily schedules. They are likely to be more comfortable in their relationships with their families and friends. Some adolescents however, develop a negative body image which negatively affects their self- esteem. They may look at the mirror and think that they are too fat and just not right. This seems to happen, mostly in case of girls, because, the society socializes the women to believe that thinness and low body weight is attractive for the men. In order to address this continuing discomfort, the girl continues to eat less and less or in some cases, eats and then self induces vomiting to continue on these eat and vomit cycles. Thus, we must clearly distinguish that while going through the phases of questioning perfection in one's body parts, functions or characteristics usually fade and is a healthy part of growing up, a consistent negative body image and a negative self-esteem has serious negative impact on physical health, eating, sleeping and other daily schedules, as well as psychological and emotional health of the adolescent. This needs to be addressed by the friends, family and community around, through better awareness.

Changing societal norms, increasing influence of media that projects a certain idea of feminine beauty and emphasizes on an ideal and attractive body shape and weight, through its advertising are some of the contributory factors for this dysfunction among growing adolescents and youth.

As part of our conversations with young adolescents, we must also engage in questions such as- are we not attracted towards somebody who is cheerful, has a great sense of humor or has good general knowledge or is strong and determined, or courageous and brave? Is it that we always look at the others body shape and size to find them attractive? Are other qualities-ethical, socio-psychological and intellectual – not important?

6.4.2 Healthy Sexuality

Healthy sexuality is more than self and body image. Healthy sexuality means to respect, understand and appreciate oneself in totality. It means to respect oneself and one's view of aesthetics, sophistication and beauty that doesn't subscribe to violation and harm. Thus, healthy sexuality doesn't subscribe to self-harm or harming others. When a man proposes his romantic interest to a woman and if the woman rejects his proposal, then healthy sexuality in the man means to graciously accept that rejection and not think of violence, revenge, self-harm or such unhealthy ideas. Similarly, if a man rejects a woman, healthy sexuality means that the woman accepts that decision with maturity and doesn't indulge in self harm. Thus, healthy sexuality implies mutual respect between men and women, in their romantic and sexual interactions. For example, if a boyfriend, fiancé or the husband approaches the woman with a desire for sexual intercourse and the woman says no, then healthy sexuality would make that boyfriend/fiancé or the husband accept that 'No' as 'No' and not force oneself on the woman.

Healthy Sexuality also accepts that people might have different sexual preferences. Thus, there is no space for violence against people who are considered as 'sexual minorities' – people who are transgender, people who think they are trapped in wrong bodies or people who experience same sex attraction.

Finally, healthy sexuality implies the appreciation of the principles of life itself. It includes engaging with life and appreciation of beauty and harmony in the process of life – of poetry, music, dance and paintings, the play of the senses of the body. Healthy sexuality is thus a healthy, fully developed and functioning self. We had mentioned earlier that the self cannot be reduced to sexuality alone; that it is certainly more than sexuality. We end with the thought that a healthy sexuality expands into a healthy self and a fully functioning person - validating the body as well as the mind and nourishing the experience of life. Thus, healthy sexuality is the expansion and transformation of emotions to include the emotions that arise from empathy, respect, beauty and harmony.

6.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed the concepts of gender, self and identity. We learned how gender is different from biological sex. Our socialization process creates and perpetuates gender roles – what men and women can do or cannot do according to social norms. Many of the social representations of gender imply that we create pre-determined and biased expectations about men and women. Such pre-determined expectations and judgements are called as gender stereotypes and these affect our interpersonal and social relationships. We examined gender stereotypes and how social change needs to be brought about. We also discussed sexuality and its impact on our body awareness, body image and self-awareness. Further, we discussed about healthy sexuality.

6.6 KEY WORDS

Gender socialization : refers to the process of learning from our parents, family and the larger community and society around us – what it means to be a woman or a man.

Gender roles	:	refer to specific roles assigned to males and females by the society simply by the virtue of being born a male or female.
Gender stereotyping	:	is to assume negative characteristics and prejudices in a person that you are interacting with, simply because, the person belongs to that identity category.
Healthy sexuality	:	means to respect, understand and appreciate oneself in totality. It means to respect oneself and one's view of aesthetics, sophistication and beauty that doesn't subscribe to violation and harm. Thus, healthy sexuality doesn't subscribe to self-harm or harming others.

6.7 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions I

1) We have several identities. Gender is our central identity. But we have other aspects like our country, language, college, institution or work etc. that form part of our identity.

2) True

3) Gender stereotyping is to assume negative characteristics and prejudices in a person that we interact, simply because, the person belongs to that identity category.

6.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) Reflect on the learning module and write a 1000 word essay on your gendered identity (as a man, woman or a trans-person) focusing on the challenges in terms of work, family life and self awareness.

2) Differentiate between personality, self and identity.

3) Discuss the impact of globalization and gender identity in your region, village/town/city/district or state in about 1000 words. What are the special challenges faced by girls/women in your culture and region; how is globalization changing it?

4) Discuss three best ways in which technology can be used to help your family, neighbourhood and culture to fight gender discrimination.

6.9 REFERENCES

Baron, R. (2012). *Social psychology*. New Delhi: Pearson Education.

Giddens, A. (2000). *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives.* New York : Routledge.

Tomlinson, J. B. (1999). *Globalization and Culture.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

6.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

http://www.bdu.ac.in/cde/docs/ebooks/B-Ed/II/GENDER,%20SCHOOL,% 20SOCIETY% 20AND%20INCLUSIVE%20SCHOOL.pdf

http://persmin.gov.in/otraining/UNDPProject/undp_modules/Gender%20 Issues%20(Reading%20material).pdf

http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dse/activities/advisory_board/PDF/ Genderconcerns.pdf

http://gendermatters.in/

UNIT 7 YOUTH, IDENTITY AND GLOBALISATION*

Structure

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand youth identity and its unique location in life span development;

- Critically examine the role of youth, their aspirations and capacity of the youth to transform the socio-economic context; and

- Understand the phenomenon of globalization and its bi-directional impact on youth identity.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Youth is an important stage in the life span development marked by development of self-awareness and identity which shapes our lives as adults. It can be categorised as a demographic category in India playing a critical role in transformation of the society. Globalization as a phenomenon has fundamentally changed our self and identity formation, especially in reference to youth. It has entailed changes in the aspirations, career explorations, education, especially higher education, work and migration patterns. Implications of globalization in the context of technology, culture and gender identity have far reachig significance.

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7.3   YOUTH AND IDENTITY

In Unit 6, we discussed about gender identity as a social construction and a way of being. Gender is distinguished from biological sex and gender identity remains with us much of our lives, unless, we decide to change it. Youth on the other hand is also related to the biological change, but again remains very much a social construction.

Let us see how is it. Consider the India of about a 150 or 100 years back, when children would get married early and human life span longevity was low. Even the age of onset of puberty, driven by many factors such as nutrition and poverty was higher. So, consequently, men and women who came of age were treated as adults in the society. As adults in the society, men and women, about 100-150 years back, became parents at 15 and 19, worked in the traditional systems and the production and reproduction of the society was almost seamless and stable. Now, visualise a youth of today – they are most likely to be studying and/or trying to find work. A few of them might hold jobs and study 'side by side'. The youth would not be so sure about various things in their life. They would be asking a lot of critical questions. Even today, in rural areas and certain communities, early marriage and closure of education by 20 years is common, but there is always a flexibility and internal aspiration to study more. So, as the society has changed, our construction of youth and the roles expected of them have also changed.

In some societies of the West, social scientists have advanced the notion of emerging adults.

7.3.1   Youth as a Developmental Period

Youth as a stage in life span development is a critical period according to psychologists and sociologists. Youth is generally understood as an intervening period between childhood and adulthood or as UNESCO says – a transition period between childhood and adulthood. As different societies have different expectations the world over, there is a great variation in the definition of youth. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. However, what is the definition of youth in terms of the chronological age? In relation to education and employment, age is the easiest way to define youth. 'The UN, for statistical consistency across regions, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.' (UNESCO, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/)

So, we see that youth at the lower end includes adolescents, especially mid and later adolescents. At the upper end, the definition is broad, perhaps, too broad to include fully grown and responsible adults according to the definition by the UN.

This broad definition has its difficulties as well. For youth intervention programs, this broad definition is not very helpful as the psychological, socio-emotional and education needs and concerns are different. For our purpose, we will broadly discuss three age groups- from 15 to 19 years of age, 20-28 years of age and 29 to 35 years of age. This is a classification that is relevant for Indian context.

Early Youth – Adolescents in 15 to 19 years of age

The period from 15 to 19 years is an age of transition where the physiological changes due to puberty have multidirectional impact on psychological, emotional, social and educational changes, choices and decisions of the youth. Achieving identity is one of the key developmental tasks of youthhood.

Erikson (1902-1994) was a well-known psychologist who conceptualised human development in terms of psychosocial stages. At every psychosocial stage, Erikson conceptualised a human being at the crossroads of psychological development. He felt that, every time a crisis was evoked and resolved, personality developed in a positive direction, whereas, unresolved crises arrested the development of personality. The unresolved stages of development earlier, continued to play on the current context of development.

The key task of development in adolescence according to Erikson is the 'achievement of Identity'. Erikson felt that achieving a 'sense' of identity includes undergoing a crisis, where the adolescents questioned the given values, norms, rules and situations in and around them. The adolescents questioned their sense of self, their world around them. In the process of exploring, questioning and the arguments, the adolescents come to a sense of their political views (political identity), their sexuality and romantic attraction/dislikes, their concepts about friendship and love as well as their ideas and plans about work and career aspirations. Thus, they gain political, social, career and sexual identities as they become aware about their self.

For example, as you have grown up, you might have wondered and questioned about the beliefs of your parents, you might have rebelled against the religious practices in your community or you might have questioned certain practices that constrain women in terms of their decisions or actions.

The purpose of this exploration and questioning is not just crises resolution in the mind of the adolescent/youth but also the transformation of society. As youth question the given values, norms and the practices of the society around them, they also help change and transform the society around them. Thus, the youth power in the continuation –what sociologists call as 'production and reproduction' of society, is as critical as the power of youth in change-what sociologists call as the 'transformation' of society. Radiating out from personal to social, youth identity is thus a site of continuity and change.

The key concerns might change according to age and other context features. What might be the key concerns of the youth from 15-19 years of age? Changes in the body due to puberty, the feeling of awkwardness in social setting, body image, academic concerns and questions relating to work and career, increased family and social responsibilities and a desire to be treated as a grown up respected adult of the family are some of the issues that early youth mull and ruminate over. What are the other issues and concerns that you think the early youth might have?

Mid Youth – 20 -28 years of age

Youth in this age group are considered as youth in most societies. Even as the questions raised in adolescence, may take several years to resolve fully, they have mostly been stabilised. In several parts of the country, youth at this age, are

predominantly concerned about their future life in education, work, career and livelihoods. The youth and their families discuss the available opportunities in their regions and the feasibility of continuing or dropping out of studies.

The dropout rate of students increases alarmingly from the primary levels to the higher education. NSSO data (National Sample Survey Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, MoSPI, Govt. of India) shows that every third person in the age of 10-14 drops out citing 'lack of relevance'. At a higher age level, that is 15-19 years students who continue with schooling, the percentage of drop outs is about 17% . Overall, the dropout rate from primary to higher secondary is substantial.

Experts feel that lack of good educational infrastructure, availability of courses and faculty, adequate library and books and the opportunities of jobs in the courses taken are key factors that cause impediments in the educational choices of youth in the age group of 20-28 years of age.

In terms of gender, girls and young women cite increasing domestic chores, stricter social norms that inhibit free movement within and outside of their villages and pressure to marry as key obstacles towards completing higher education.

Education is linked to employment, more so in the public imagination in India; the need to secure income and the responsibility to help the family is one of the key reasons of getting educated as cited by the youth. However, youth face serious challenges in linking their secured education with jobs. There are increasing cases of unemployment and under-employment in India. Youth are unable to find jobs due to multiple factors on both supply and demand side. On the supply side, the number of jobs are almost nil in rural areas. Most of the jobs in urbanising and urban areas are in the informal sector, which accounts for about 7% of the economy. Increasingly, government is unable to be a job provider, thus, it is mostly the private sector, which needs to be the employment provider. On the demand side, the employers feel that candidates are unable to negotiate the skill requirements of the job. This is called as employability. Research states that the fit between supply and demand of skilled workforce is one of the key concerns for tapping the demographic dividend in the Indian economy. We will discuss this further in the next section.

The second key concern of mid-youth is the lifestyle and health of the mid-youth. An increasing autonomy and confidence of the youth is reflected in the demands for cars, motorbikes and bicycles; Data shows that road accidents are a key mortality cause among youth and mid youth when they are not the drivers but victims (http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/2.12.India_.pdf).

Lifestyle of mid-youth may also reflect malnutrition/dietary concerns. Youth may make several changes in their dietary patterns and schedules of eating and these deficits in nutrition due to diets deficient in micro-nutrients might accumulate later as lifestyle disorders. The current burden of non-communicable lifestyle disease (NCD) on the economy are significant and an unhealthy population cannot be a productive population.

In specific, the health and nutrition issues of young women are of specific concern. Gender inequalities in intake of food, lack of dietary diversity and intake of key food components such as green leafy vegetables, micro-vitamins, proteins and

frequent reproductive and menstrual hygiene challenges require greater social awareness and change.

Across the country, one of the greatest concerns is the early marriage and early and unplanned pregnancies for young women. Access to quality public health services varies across states and this is reflected in an indicator known as Maternal Mortality rate (MMR).

Thus, youth identity in mid-youth focuses more on the stability and consolidation of work and relationships.

Late Youth – 29-35 years of age

Theoretically in psychology, between 29 to 35 years of age, the adult identity is realized and issues of stability and consolidation in work, careers and livelihoods are complete. In the Indian context, most youth from 29-35 years of age are expected to not only help in their family responsibilities but have also started their own families. The median age of marriage has been rising in India. Yet 61 percent of all women (69 percent in rural regions and 31 percent in urban areas) are married before the age of 16. The median age at first pregnancy is 19.2 years. In general the AEM is two years higher in urban areas than in rural areas. (Source: WHO and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in India- 2011 report.)

Late youth thus, is more about an adult identity, with increased family responsibilities and a desire to grow in terms of socio-economic status. So, the key concerns of late youth are work aspirations, jobs, employment and entrepreneurship, work stress and achievements. Health and nutrition of self and family, educational needs of growing children and a better social and economic status are some of the other equally critical concerns.

Erikson, a well-known psychologist, delineated intimacy vs. isolation as one of the developmental crises during youth hood /early adulthood. In Indian context, it is normative that youth get married and very few adults decide to remain unmarried. If the youth decide to remain unmarried, the social and family concerns and pressures are very high. Isolation and loneliness experienced by the adults who choose to be unmarried is one of the fears that families frequently express. However, several families and societies accept the decisions of the adults to remain unmarried as well.

Thus, in the present section, we have tried to understand youth and their identity processes as relevant to the Indian context. In the next section, we will try to understand why youth identity has suddenly gained prominence. This is due to two major changes- the first discussed in the following section is on the demographic bulge that India is transitioning through. Second key change is due to larger macro level changes due to globalisation and new media technologies.

7.3.2 Youth as a Demographic Dividend

As is well-known, India is going through a phase of a 'demographic bulge', where 65% of the population is working population from the age of 15-65 years. Youth comprise a major chunk of the working population and therefore, youth as a category has suddenly become important at the political and policy level.

As the National Youth Policy of 2014 states, 'Youth in the age group of 15-29 years comprise 27.5% of the population. At present, about 34% of India's Gross National Income (GNI) is contributed by the youth, aged 15-29 years. However, there exists a huge potential to increase the contribution of this class of the nation's citizenry by increasing their labour force participation and their productivity. (National Youth Policy, 2014, http://www.rgniyd.gov.in/sites/default/files/pdfs/scheme/nyp_2014.pdf)

The population of India will peak around 2030 and then would become a rapidly ageing population. It is important to note that different States are passing through a different transition and some States such as Kerala might be peaking earlier than other states.

Demographic bulge provides the country an opportunity to utilize the energy and the drive of the youth and accelerate the economic activity. For accelerating the economic activity in India , there is a need to provide opportunities for high quality education, adequate and appropriate jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurship. This productive population also needs to be healthy, without frequent infections and experience a sense of well-being. Thus, time is of essence, in creating these enabling condition and systems such that the youth population, realising its potential and a healthy and a productive society, takes India forward to the next century.

In sub-section 7.3.1, we categorized youth into three age wise groups. It is important to note that the needs and concerns of the three groups are different. Hence, different interventions need to be planned for them if we want the youth to become a real dividend for the nation. Some of these are presented in the Table below:

Table 7aT: Key Intervention Points in Different Youth Phases

Youth Category	Key Intervention Points- Issues and Concerns
Early Youth-Adolescence (15-19 years)	Career exploration, reduction in drop outs and completion of school education, vocational education, reproductive and sexual health education, life skills education
Mid Youth (20-28 years)	Completion of higher education, career guidance, employability, intervention to increase workforce participation of women, interventions to increase safety of women in public and workspaces, effective planned migration, mobility and enterprise development programs
Late Youth (29-35 years)	Efficient public health service delivery, effective child care services in work places, efficient public education services

Self Assessment Questions I

State whether the following are True (T) or False (F):

1) The key task of development in adolescence according to Erikson is the 'achievement of Identity'.

2) The youth power is concerned with 'production and reproduction' of society, as well as the 'transformation' of society.

3) The general public links education to employment.

4) Adolescence stage is characterized by intimacy vs. isolation as one of the developmental crises.

5) Early marriages are not a concern in the youth.

7.4 INFLUENCE OF GLOBALIZATION ON YOUTH IDENTITY

In the last 30-40 years, the world has become increasingly 'globalised'. So, what is globalization? Globalization involves a multidirectional flow of people, goods and ideas (Appadurai, 2000; Hermans & Kempen, 1998). It is different from colonialism. What was colonialism in the Indian context? It was the one directional entry of a foreign business and commerce company (the British East India Company) and their business and political relationships with various small and large kingdoms and fiefdoms in India. Over the period of 100-150 years, the company increasingly became powerful in all its relationships and became wealthier enough to extend loans and receive revenues through agreements from the small kingdoms and fiefdoms in the Indian sub-continent. History tells us that, there was no unifying strong kingdom that could arrest the political and economic influence of the British East India Company. This fragmentation of political power and competing economic and political interests of the small regional kingdoms helped the British, to completely destroy Indian textile and handloom industry, which was then subsequently protested/ reflected in the burning of the foreign cloth during the freedom struggle. Indians united in 1857 and the first war of independence in 1857 created a severe crisis and human loss. The British East India Company could not justify the violent response to the so called 'mutiny'. The powerful company ceded its control over kingdoms within India to the British government and the Queen was declared the sovereign of India in 1876. However, colonialism was a unidirectional movement of economic activity that is, Indian companies could not engage with the British government with the same capacity. The East India Company exploited the natural and economic resources of India purely for its commercial benefit.

Globalization in contrast to colonization as defined in the beginning of the section involves multidirectional flow of good (economic activity), people (migration and mobility of workforce) and ideas; it means that people from any part of the world can engage in business activities in any other part of the world on mutual agreement and subject to the compliance of the relevant trade and commerce policies. Thus, potentially, globalization provides a level playing field for trade and commercial activities. It means that Indian companies can trade and bid for business contracts anywhere. Countries all across the world seek and invite foreign investments. This is one of the most positive aspects of globalization and has allowed countries such as Korea, China, Indonesia and Malaysia to grow in trade and receive economic benefit. However, the political implications of this have been an intense tug of war between countries that need to 'protect' their jobs and industrial economic activity and countries that seek to increase their trade footprint in other countries. Countries such as India have benefitted from opening its economy to globalization.

On the surface of it, globalization is a gigantic shift in trade, business and economic activity, a deeper look suggests that globalization fundamentally transforms the relationship between the places we inhabit, our cultural practices, experiences and identities and our relationships with people, places and activities (Tomlinson, 1999). At one level, Globalization appears as primarily economic and business phenomenon and at another level, globalization is a cultural, sociological phenomenon. Globalization changes the way people look at themselves, it changes their language, their dress, their diet/cuisine and how they would like to enjoy themselves. Globalization fundamentally changes our meaning making. Thus, globalization deeply affects the youth identity. We move towards world culture or the world as a melting pot of the cultures. The youth identify themselves with a world identity and are able to connect to events and experiences outside their countries. This is both positive as well as a challenging development for the society, culture as well as the developing youth identity. Let us now look at different aspects of youth identity and globalization in the following discussion.

7.4.1 Globalization, Technology and Youth

On a positive note, technology driven media and globalization are twins. Technology facilitates globalization. The new media and technology bring information about events and situations in multiple formats - through videos, social media, online internet and mobile technology and this has critical impact on youth identity. As the youth look at these experiences in multimedia, they feel closer to the other youth and the causes other youth espouse, thus, their political and social identities are affected. The access of technology has fundamentally transformed awareness about education opportunities, the possibilities of change and the multitude of careers available. Secondly, it is undeniable that new technology is driven by profit and that is true regardless of some exceptional instances like open source software etc. So, it provides an opportunity to the youth to leverage their global identities and take their entrepreneurship ideas across the world. It also provides an opportunity for the talented workforce to be mobile and find opportunities elsewhere in the world through their digital skills. The examples of Flipkart and Naukri.com are pertinent here. The youth thus, are able to forge a global, more aware identity across national and cultural boundaries.

On the other hand, the youth who do not have access to technology are left behind. Technology itself is neutral, but those who are able to use it, can present their perspective and many other perspectives as compared to those who are less digitally savvy. Secondly, the time required to process and deliberate on a view point or perspective is shortened, so impulsive views get fixed.

7.4.2 Globalization, Youth and Changing Work Patterns

As part of globalization process, patterns of education have changed. Distance Education, Online education through video and audio formats and increased exposure to information and knowledge about a variety of domains has transformed the possibilities of life-long learning. Exposure to regions and contexts outside the known and the familiar, knowledge and fluency in one or more languages and readiness to travel emerge as some of the key factors affecting both education and employment. This is positive development in the sense that

youth is not constrained by their physical location for learning. Even during work life, one can continue to learn new subjects or topics of interest. On the other hand, the connection and the respect for a teacher, who is present to guide the student and solve doubts as they arise is lacking here.

Secondly, work patterns have also changed in the globalized world. In comparison to the past, when it was normative to secure a job and continue with it, young people in the changing society change their jobs faster; this is especially true of some sectors such as the IT sector, where people work in international teams, according to different time shifts and can also work on flexible time schedules. Thus, the earlier pattern of a fixed time work schedule, a fixed tenure of work and a consistent pattern of work has changed. On the positive side, this has meant an international exposure and new knowledge. It also means faster career growth. But on the other hand, the youth work identity is very fragile and the youth become very insecure as their jobs are never secure, their work becomes obsolete faster. Increasing international exposure creates a higher sense of aspiration. The youth also find it challenging to appreciate and respect the work of the earlier generation.

These changes have consequently meant changes in family and social interactions as well. The earlier family and social interactions were more leisurely, hierarchical and had fixity in them. They are changing now, as the youth may feel that the elder do not know how to navigate through the new world.

7.4.3 Globalization, Youth and Changing Culture

As technology is ushering in changes in our awareness about the world, it consequently brings in changes in how we view ourselves. With exposure to different cultures, foods, cuisines, dresses, music, dance and art, the social norms of what is acceptable and what is not; what is desirable and what is not; what is fashionable and what is not have become clearly marked. Thus, the youth sub-culture which always was a part of youth identity in pre-globalisation period can now in the globalisation era be dramatically different from the local culture. The inter-generational gaps are wider as the parents and other elders have no preceding script or norms to depend on. As the new technologies are completely different, the earlier generation cohort may depend on the youth to learn and thus, the earlier mechanisms of culture transfer from the earlier generation to the new are equalised and made bi-directional. It is indeed well-recognised by psychologists and social scientists that not only is socialisation lifelong, but is also bi-directional. Children socialise parents into a parenthood, just as parents socialise children within families.

This bi-directionality is further emphasised in youth identity and the results are a complexity in changing local culture, with some aspects of culture changing faster and some remaining unchanged/resistant to change. Some sociological thinkers have called it a 'mutable self' – a self that seems to be different in different contexts. This has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, it implies flexibility and adaptation to the rapidly changing scenario. On the negative side, it implies a fragmented self and perhaps an increased alienation. For example, people frequently have a deceptive digital persona and are quite different in non-digital 'real' life. Many youth may not share or communicate with their families or households about their experiences or

interactions on the digital platforms. Thus, they on one hand, might think that their families are 'old fashioned' and they, themselves are 'modern', thus creating a distance between them and their families. Their families might feel left out and less confident of the whole situation. On the other hand, by not sharing information, the person is unable to secure the protection, comfort and wise advise that comes from families, as they have known the person from before. This situation creates a fragmented alienated self. Sometimes, young people, get engrossed and addicted to the available games and activities on online and mobile platforms. They are then unable to fully participate in their personal, family and social lives. Again, an alienated self and identity is experienced, when new words, new practices and ways of thinking and doing things, enter into the non-digital 'real' – the young person who does not have access to that digital experience, due to poverty or rural location etc. Thus, the young person feels left out.

7.4.4 Globalization, Gender Identity and Youth

As we had discussed in Unit 6, gender is a social construction and as the society itself changes rapidly due to globalization, our understanding of gender identity also changes rapidly. This creates its own set of challenges and opportunities.

In the last sub-section 7.4.3, we discussed both the challenges and opportunities that globalization offers in transforming cultures and societies and thereby, altering the dynamics of social power and gender roles.

It can be noted here that gender is a lifelong socialization, where youth identity is a specific location in the life span, that defines and determines the trajectory of our individual, interpersonal and social life in adulthood. Thus, we need to understand and appreciate that globalization affects our gender stereotypes, aspirations, work and family relationships in a fundamental way as a new globalized generation takes charge in these turbulent but fascinating times. Young men, women as well as transpeople take charge of a connected world, where, earlier templates are rapidly modified with few precedents. Thus, we see that all the structures of stability in the earlier societies – religion, governance/politics and culture are put to test.

We view three strong interlinked social phenomena which are fundamentally changing and transforming our understanding of what it means to be born a man or a woman and what it means to be a young man or a woman in these rapidly changing times.

The first and obvious change in gender identity in globalization is the change in the power relations as they move away from traditional locations to multiple locations. For example, if information is power, the traditional locations of power was in urban areas, but with globalization, rural areas would also have access to information through new media and the internet. Thus, even if, the girl or woman is 'not allowed' to go out of the house in the village, or go to the Panchayat or block/district office to get any information relevant to her, she can still access it, through her mobile phone. She is not dependent on anybody to access the information as compared to when she has to physically travel to the urban area or the block or district office. The opportunity here to the young girl or woman as a young mother or a young pregnant woman, or a young girl student is

immense. Now, as she has new information, two challenges arise- one, the society around her must respond to this change and the dynamic of its resistance to this change in power relation vis a vis its acceptance will determine the future of the societies. For example, in many traditional societies, the elders do not give access to mobile phones to young girls/women, because, they do not know, how to address this change in power.

The second challenge that arises is the authenticity of the information and the appropriateness of it, based on age and/or context. This challenge is more serious, and many researches are being done in psychology regarding this. For example, the internet and the content may not be appropriate for children and they may inadvertently or sometimes, knowingly/forced to watch. Or, the internet may provide false or unvalidated information. How societies respond to these changes in power relations overall and in the specific context of gender would be crucial in determining how not only societies, but how technology evolves over time.

Thirdly, societies with fixed and stable gender socialization norms are ingressed with confronting and critical information from other societies and cultures. For example, societies in Afghanistan who strictly believe in the socialization of girls and women in veils are confronted with visuals, stories and examples of women and girls, who live and work in the world, without veils. Now, these societies must find ways and means of understanding and reconciling this 'dissonance'. On the other hand, women in veils are frowned as 'backward and regressive' in western societies; thus, western societies must address the stereotypes about modernity and backwardness within their societies as well.

We have noted that globalization brings rapid and multidirectional changes in our societies- in our cultural, economic and political lives. Gender socialization and identity is also affected in economic terms. For example, access to finance and markets is not in control of the traditional structures and thus, women and girls can work or drive businesses in flexible work patterns. Because of the multi-linear flow of capital, goods, information and people, women and girls have more opportunities for travel for education and work and thus, by consequence, the workplaces and education spaces must become more gender friendly. Women led businesses are not dependent on traditional sources of capital through banks or money-lenders. From crowd-funding to doing business through mobile apps, the traditional means of having access to finance and markets have also changed.

Women leadership is an important aspect, where the traditional stereotypes may not hold or will be critically confronted in all societies. For example, it is traditionally held that women cannot do certain types of jobs - say in finance or in media. Due to the influx of new ideas, talent and capital, these gender stereotypes are brought to question. And societies are forced to confront the dissonances within. For example, traditionally, there was and still continues to be a gap in the pay offered to men and women for similar kinds of job profiles. Now this is being critically confronted in this era of globalization.

As the gender stereotypes and discrimination are being questioned, the girls and women growing up today are quite different in their self-awareness and expression from a generational cohort 20 years before. So, what has not changed in the face of globalization, what identity expressions remain same or similar?

The human-focused or relationship- focused aspects of identity seem to endure or become more important. Relationships and human engagements in workplaces and in social and family life remain as critically important as they were earlier. In fact, in these times, friendships and peer relationships across cultures and other contexts, make empathy, respect and sensitivity – all emotions traditionally ascribed to femininity become important life skills for all.

Globalization and gender identity also includes changes in gender stereotyping, discrimination, social power, lifestyles and the idea of inclusion for all the colors of the rainbow (the transgender). As globalization forces us to confront the deeply embedded stereotypes associated with transpeople and the discrimination experienced by them, the societies must address all forms of gender identity and promote healthy sexuality. Traditional societies perceive this as a major challenge, because even as the transpeople existed and were sometimes celebrated in myths and stories, in reality they lived in the margins and seldom in the mainstream of the societies. The trans-people were invisible to the mainstream. With globalization and the churning of societies, the transpeople experience the challenges and opportunities that increased visibility and connectivity bring. Societies must confront their belief systems and take a stand on ending violence and silencing of gender identities, which are not hetero-normative. Globalization bring opportunities of alliances and inclusion of all gender identities, even as the trans-people face the challenges of violence and discrimination that higher visibility may bring in some cases. For example, the recent supreme court judgment on the section 370 brought the subject in great discussion and debate, where the society was confronted with the concerns of the LGBTQI people and resolve the same by reviewing the archaic victorian law. This greater visibility also helped the trans-people to build alliances and secure sensitive responses from the society.

Self Assessment Questions II

1) What is globalizaton?

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2) What is the major way in which globalization has affected changes in gender identity?

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3) Globalization bring opportunities of alliances and inclusion of all gender identities – True or False

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7.5   LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we focused on the influence of globalization on the youth. Different stages of youth were described with their corresponding issues and concerns. The complexities in the interaction between the social (globalization) and individual (youthhood) transformation make for exciting as well as uncertain times. Impact of globalization was discussed in the context of technology, changing work patterns and culture. Further, we also have looked at gender and youth identities in the era of globalization. Youth as a demographic dividend, have the opportunity to shape not only their individual and family lives, but also shape the future of the societies through their decisions and active commitment.

Finally, as we discussed gender we discussed very briefly how accepting transpeople or people, who experience sexuality 'differently' from the norm is part of healthy sexuality with us and in our interpersonal and social lives.

7.6   KEY WORDS

Youth   :   is a transition period between childhood and adulthood.

Identity   :   Refers to a sense of self achieved by the adolescents by questioning the given values, norms, rules and situations in and around them.

Globalization :   involves a multidirectional flow of people (migration and mobility of workforce), goods (economic activity) and ideas.

7.7   ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions I

Answers: 1) T;   2) T;   3) T;   4) F;   5) F

Self Assessment Questions II

1)   Globalization means that people from any part of the world can engage in business activities in any other part of the world on mutual agreement and subject to the compliance of the relevant trade and commerce policies.

2)   The major impact of globalization on gender identity is the change in the power relations as they move away from traditional locations to multiple locations.

3)   True

7.8   UNIT END QUESTIONS

1)   Reflect on the learning module and write a 1000 word essay on issues and concerns relating to youth identity in your region (you may interview a few youth to supplement your answer).

2) Discuss the impact of globalization on youth identity in your region, village/town/city/district/state in about 1000 words.

3) Write three best ways, according to you, through which, the youth can derive the best from their development stage and the emergence of new technologies. How can it augment their livelihoods, relationships, cultures and family structure and functions? Write in about 1000 words.

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7.10   SUGGESTED READINGS

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