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CHAPTER : I

THE PROBLEM

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THE PROBLEM1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since earliest times the menstruating woman has been the object of much attention. In every culture, menstruation is viewed in a specific way and this view is transmitted to its members in a given culture. (Weitz, 1977). The ideas, superstitions, customs and taboos associated with the menses, influence the woman's personal, social and economic life. The feelings, attitudes and beliefs that a woman has towards her menstrual function to a great extent affects the menstrual distress that she experiences. The manner in which women consciously/unconsciously use the menstrual function to express their distress about environmental stresses, difficulties in inter-personal relationships, conflicts about their own feminity, failure to conceive and failure to accept their feminine psychosocial or psycho sexual role are proposed as psychological factors related to premenstrual tension. Researches have also studied the effects of socio-psychological factors such as sociodemographic factors, mood, personality

factors, psychiatric disturbance, cognitive and perceptual motor performance, attitudes about menstruation, religion factors, life stressors and social resources (Moos, 1985) on menstrual distress.

In recent years there has been an interest in the attempt to measure physiological and psychological changes that might accompany the monthly fluctuations of hormones known as the menstrual cycle. The relevance of the menstrual cycle to the well being of women remains a controversial issue. It is debated whether cyclical subjective changes are psychologically or hormonally determined and whether, with either explanations, they are manifestations of an abnormal process or rather variations of a normal pattern (Sanders et. al. 1983).

It is accepted that each month many women become distressed in direct response to their menstrual cycle. In most cases, symptoms appear to peak within 3 to 4 days prior to the onset of menstrual flow and often disappear when the flow begins. This has led to the use of the term "premenstrual tension", but a number of women report that symptoms begin and/or desist at other times in the cycle such as at ovulation and during actual flow. Since "menstrual tension" refers to

disturbances of mood and effect, as well as such physical symptoms as nausea and fuzzy vision, a more inclusive term is "menstrual distress" (Berry, McGuire 1972).

The great variety of symptoms provide a continuum of complaints ranging from such "physiologic" manifestations as headache, back pain, breast fullness, weight gain, abdominal distention, fatigue and nausea to those more "psychological" symptoms such as depression, difficulty in concentration, nervousness, irritability, restlessness and generalized emotional tension. Apparently, symptoms may involve almost any bodily system and may fluctuate in intensity and duration from cycle to cycle.

It has been estimated that about 40% of all menstruating women suffer from some form of menstrual distress (Dalton, 1964; Paulson, 1961). In many cases, the symptoms are mild and are often ignored. In other cases, these have been associated with total incapacitation, increased accident rate, lowered industrial production, marital disharmony, severe depression and increased suicide rates (Berry & McGuire, 1972).

Some researchers regard menstrual distress as something which every woman experiences regardless of psychological make-up, while some others consider it as psychosomatic condition recognizing the possible influence of psychological stress, individual predisposition or individual ability to withstand internal pressures. Both biochemical and psychosocial elements need to be explored to understand this "multifactorial" psychoneuroendocrine dysfunction (Reid & Yen, 1981).

## 1.2 CONCEPT OF MENSTRUAL DISTRESS IN RETROSPECT

The history of concern about the menstrual cycle and menstruation is a long and varied one. To have a current perspective on the concept it must be seen in relation to its etymological derivations. **Menstrual** is a modern English adjective and its etymological history within English itself indicates that it was known as **menstruall** in middle English and this was derived from the latin word **menstrualis** which in turn was derived from the latin word **mensis** or the Greek word **men** both meaning **month**. **Distress** is a verb in English which means mental pain due to exhaustion.

Distress experienced during menstruation has been first cited in literature ever since the phenomenon first occurred in **Djahi**, an ancient

persian goddess The powers for evil and for good which have been ascribed to the menstruating women were associated with the magic of the moon who, being a woman, also menstruated. Ancient physicians described the symptoms of premenstrual tension, and sympathy between the uterus and the breasts had been noted. Although ovarian function and menstruation were generally considered unrelated, the nineteenth century saw several studies on the menstrual wave and the ebb and flow of vital functions associated with menstruation (Jackson, 1884). These included studies on pulse rate, blood pressure, temperature, vital capacity, muscle strength, reflexes, hemoglobin, red corpuscles, nitrogen balance, excretion of urea and other reactions associated with menstruation. However, recognition of the changing hormonal environment during the menstrual cycle was in general delayed until the twentieth century (Southam, Gonzaga, 1965).

The menstrual disorders were not fully recognized till 1931 when R.T.Frank directed attention to these disorders and coined the term Premenstrual tension to describe these. In 1957, Fluhman defined menstrual tension as including adverse signs and symptoms of general nature which

manifest themselves rhythmically during the various phases of menstrual cycle (Moos, 1968). Subsequently, many writers have elaborated the description of the menstrual distress syndrome with reports of manifold physical, psychological and behavioural changes (Altman, 1947; Rees, 1953; Fortin, 1958; Dalton, 1964; Haskett et. al, 1980). Since the 1960's, a number of studies have attempted to identify the various symptoms and causes of menstrual distress in one or the other phase of menstrual cycle, using diverse techniques. (Moos, 1968).

Today, menstrual distress is being studied as both cause and symptom in biological, psychological and socio-cultural contexts.

### 1.3 MENSTRUAL DISTRESS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES:

#### 1.3(a) Biochemical Perspective :

The biochemical phenomenon of menstruation is a fact of life which characterises the fertile adult years of women. The average menstrual cycle is 28 days long (although menstrual cycles can range from 21 to 40 days). The cycle is divided into three phases :

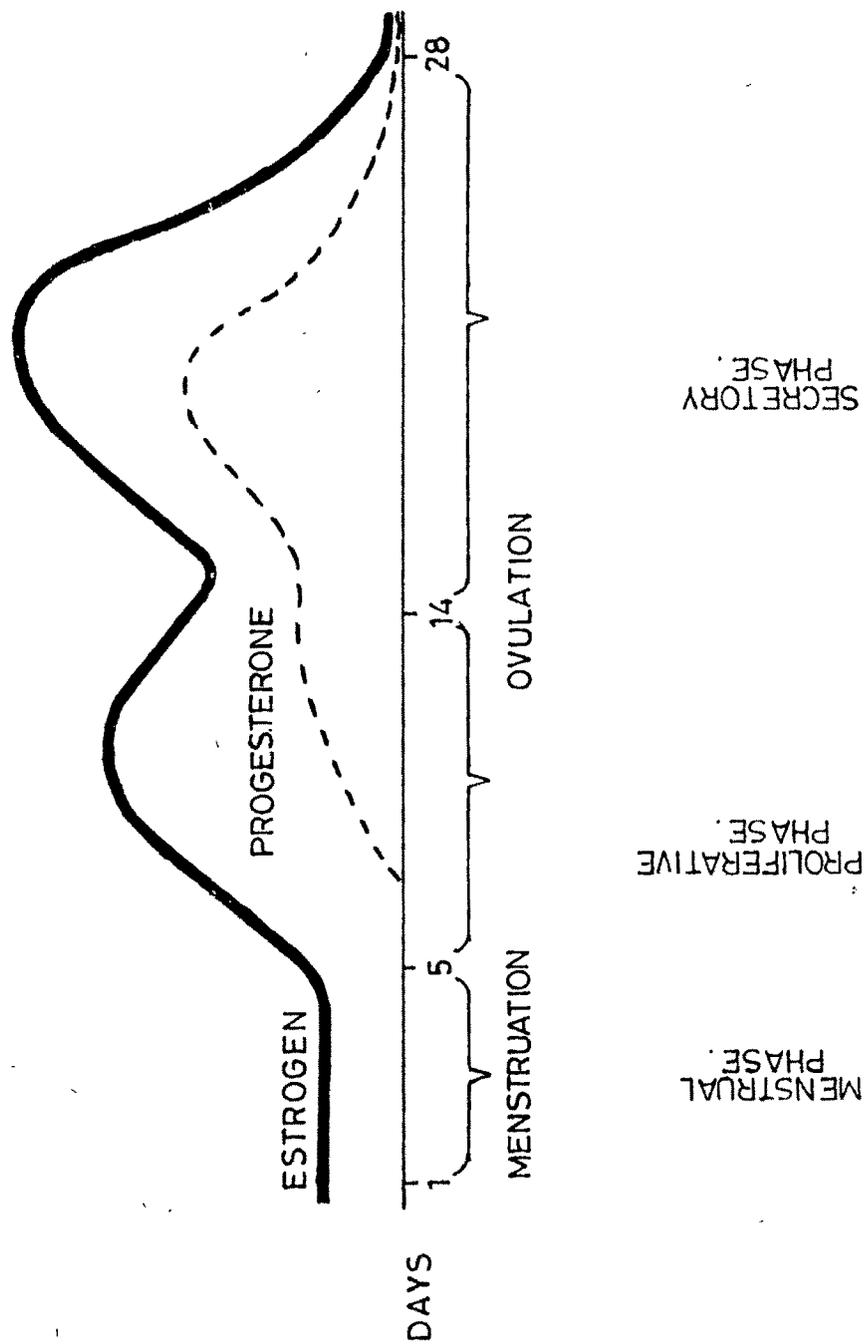
- (i) Menstrual phase, (ii) Proliferative phase and (iii) Secretory phase.

The whole biochemical function of changes in the sex hormone levels in women over the menstrual cycle is shown in the diagram No.1 below and the hormonal activity phases chart to supplement it.

**HORMONAL ACTIVITY PHASE CHART**

DAYS	PHASE	ESTROGEN LEVEL	PROGESTERONE LEVEL
1-4	Menstruation	Low	Absent
5-8	Early Postmenstrum	Rising	Absent
9-12	Late Postmenstrum	High	Absent
13-16	Ovulation	Falling	Low
17-20	Early luteal	Rising	Rising
21-24	Late Luteal	High	High
25-28	Premenstrum	Falling	Falling

The menstrual phase lasts for the first five days of the menstrual cycle when the two key female sex hormones namely progesterones and estrogens are at relatively low levels.



SEX HORMONE LEVELS DURING MENSTRUAL CYCLE  
(LIPS HILARY & COLWILL N.L. 1979)

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This phase is followed by the proliferative phase when there is a gradual increase in the secretion of FSH - (Follicle Stimulating Hormone) which stimulates ovarian follicles to develop with the ultimate aim of leading one ovum for ovulation. The FSH also regulates the estrogen levels. The estrogen which stimulates the buildup of the uterine wall, needed to nourish the implanted foetus. The high level of estrogen in the follicles causes FSH secretion to decrease (through a negative feedback loop) and LH (Luteinizing Hormone) to peak. The sudden peak in LH leads to ovulation. With ovulation the proliferation phase of the menstrual cycle ends.

The even of ovulation usually occurs on the 14th day of the cycle. It is only during ovulation that impregnation is possible. At ovulation estrogen levels off and decreases slightly, but progesterone builds up to a peak. This post ovulatory part of the cycle is the secretory phase. This phase is largely under the control of progesterone. This hormone stimulates glandular secretions into the uterine lining.

Near the end of the secretory phase both estrogen and progesterone are at relatively high levels but if no impregnation takes place after ovulation the

levels drop rapidly. With a rapid drop in the levels of estrogen and progesterone the uterine lining cannot then be maintained and is expelled, beginning menstruation.

Most of the menstrual distress theories seem to have concentrated on the last few days of the secretory phase, the pre-menstrual period. Some others consider all the three phases of the menstrual cycle viz menstrual, pre-menstrum and inter menstrual phases (Lips, 1974).

As regards the etiology of menstrual distress, the long held theory by Hippocrates that "the agitated blood seeks a channel of escape from the womb" is fast receding into the limbo of forgotten theories (Dalton, 1977). Recently several hypotheses have been formulated to explain the etiology of Menstrual Distress based on the following biochemical facts of menstrual cycle (Reid & Yen, 1981).

- (a) Estrogen excess or Progesterone deficiency.
- (b) Defect in the menstrual controlling hypothalamic centre.
- (c) Vitamin deficiency.
- (d) Hypoglycemia.
- (e) Endogenous Hormone Allergy.

- (f) Psychosomatic factors
- (g) Fluid Retention

### 1.3(b) Menstrual Distress: A Psychosocial Perspective

Many fruitful etiological hypotheses have been postulated to explain the phenomena of Menstrual Distress. While there is evidence to support the various endocrinologic and hormonal theories, the frequent presence of menstrual distress without any disturbance in physiologic balance lends support to the belief that its genesis will in part be found in psychological factors (Paulson, 1961).

The hypotheses of Benedek, Rubenstein and Suarez Murias (1979) which are associated with the psychosocial concomitants of menstrual distress should be considered to establish the etiology of Menstrual Distress (Paulson, 1961). According to them, psychologically, premenstrual tension seems related to the manner in which the women accept their menstrual functioning.

Non-analytic formulations of the psychological factors have included the role of suggestion, imitation of mother, negative attitudes

towards menstruation due to primitive taboos, and concept of self fulfilling prophecy. Psychoanalytic formulations have also varied. It has been hypothesized that increase in heterosexual desire which arises in the intermenstrual cycle revives oedipal wishes, which activates guilt feelings, pregenital urges and regression. Menninger explains the syndrome as woman's rejection of her femininity (Berry and McGuire, 1972).

#### 1.4 MENSTRUAL DISTRESS AND RELIGION

The etiological factors affecting menstrual distress extends beyond the physiological and psychological correlates. These include factors like religion, beliefs, ethos, myths, superstitions as evidenced in historical and anthropological studies of different cultural groups. The menstruating woman has universally been regarded as unclean and dangerous : a threat to men. One of the most widespread taboos is that of prohibiting contact with a menstruating woman. Cultures vary in the severity of the taboo, e.g. for some, it is just restrictions against sexual intercourse. Orthodox Jews practice *niddah* or separation during menstrual period and for seven days after it and immersion in

a ritual bath mikvah is required before intercourse is resumed. In some asian cultures the menstruating woman is secluded during her period, forbidden to prepare food or have any contact with men (Weitz, 1977).

The menstrual blood is an organic universal and is considered by most religious systems as charged with supernatural powers.

In many religious systems the males perceive the menstrual process in negative constructs. The common Christian belief found in medieval theology is that "no menstruating woman should receive communion or even enter church" because menstrual blood was thought to attract devils, unclean spirits and a menstruating woman would by her presence, sour milk and kill the grass she walked upon. In some cultures menstrual blood is most important exual source of power for women, e.g., among the Gururumba of New Guinea, menstrual blood is a vital essence identified with sexual energy necessary for procreation (Fornaro, 1985). What is negative for men can be positive for women : Menstrual blood is used in sexual magic by women in Belize. It is believed that the use of this ensures the man's

sexual loyalty and it nullifies all supernatural powers possessed by persons or spirits. In this culture it is believed that menstrual blood can protect as well as harm.

Within the Hindu system of thought, the Rigveda says that Milk, Blood and Seed are fluids related to female sexuality. A man produces blood when he dies, a woman produces blood when she creates. Thus it is evident that within the Hindu System the menstrual blood is not conceptualized as primarily polluting as in various other cultures. Rather it is sacred fluid and menstruation is a sacred process in the broadest sense (D. Flaherty, 1980). The Hindu Dharma Shastras have described menstruation as a physiological change in the girl's body which makes her capable of conception and creation.

The phenomenon of menstruation has been associated with several taboos irrespective of cultural diversities. The feeling tone is of shame, secrecy and even guilt. Even today many young women are unprepared for menarche because others observe the taboo and do not talk to the young girl about it. For generations menstruation has been referred

to as the **cursed** and many young women learn to anticipate pain, discomfort and restricted activity during these days (Longlaws and Schwartz, 1979).

Margaret Mead (1977) and some other anthropologists have interpreted the taboo as speaking of a universal fear of blood especially the **magical** menstrual blood which appears and disappears at regular intervals without harming the woman. Thus the menstrual taboo is actually a blood taboo. This taboo seems to be generalizable as a more widespread fear of "Power of Women", since it is the menstruating woman who is feared. There are certain specific psychological and social explanations for the menstrual taboo. The Freudian view of the menstrual taboo concerns itself with castration anxiety. According to Freud, the male's view of the female genitalia is that of a wound after castration and women also have this view and mourned the loss of their penis through **penis envv**. Menstruation is seen as an experience that emphasizes the idea of the female genitalia as a wound which bleeds. Hence, women are angry during this period of bleeding due to reawakened trauma of loss of penis and men fear these women for oedipal punishment. According to the British anthropologist, Douglas (1977), the source of menstrual taboo in a society is symptomatic of a

source of unarticulated power. The women who lack legitimate power in an ambiguously structured society mostly resort to magical means (Weitz, 1977). Hence, fear of the menstruating women and witchcraft come from the same source and witches are sometimes associated with menstruation in legend. Thus it is possible that the cultural and religious meanings attached to menstruation have an influence on how women experience it. Thus, religion and cultural myths can also be an important factor in the etiology of menstrual distress.

1.5 RELIGION AND MESTRUAL DISTRESS:  
RELATED RESEARCHES

The moderating role of religion in menstrual distress has been studied in many investigations.

Paige in 1973 suggested that a woman's religion may moderate the relationship between traditional role orientation and likelihood of reporting menstrual distress. She found that Protestants, Catholics and Jews were equally likely to report menstrual symptoms on the MDQ and that catholic women considered menstrual distress as an integral part of the traditional female role.

Godd and Smith (1980) also found that more feminine (as measured by BSRI) Catholic women reported more menstrual distress, than women of masculine sex type.

Siegel in 1983 found no differences in reported menstrual distress between married Jewish women who were and those who were not Mikvah (common ritual cleansing bath) users.

Rao, Jaiprakash and Murthy (1982) found in a study on college girls a significant difference in proportion of severity between Hindus and Christians in reporting of menstrual symptoms. They also found that reports of severity was greater among muslims and Christians than among Hindus in premenstrual symptoms.

#### 1.6 INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF STRESS:

The concept of stress is a concept borrowed from natural sciences. During the 18th and 19th Centuries, stress was equated with "force, pressure or strain" exerted upon a material object or person which resists these forces and attempts to maintain its original state(Pestonjee, 1984). The use of the concept in this fashion encouraged physicists and

engineers into adopting it to suit their ends. Thus, stress in engineering is known as "the ratio of the internal force brought into play when a substance is distorted to the area over which the force acts" (Hinkle, 1973).

The concept of stress was first introduced in life sciences by Hans Selye in 1936. Since then stress has become a popular concept for explaining a wide variety of outcomes, mostly negative. In the scientific realm, stress has been used as a psychological precursor of illness, as a result of any number of conditions. Despite its general use, the term **stress** refers to a process that is not only specific, but also central to the relationship between people and their surroundings (Baum et.al. 1981). Stress is a process in which environmental events or forces, called stressors, threaten an organism's existence and well being and the organism responds to this threat. There has been a substantial disagreement over the definitions of stress and different scholars have given different definitions which are suited to their particular purpose.

#### 1.7 THE CONCEPT OF STRESS IN RETROSPECT:

In ancient Greece, Hippocrates, recognized the existence of a "vis medicatrix naturae" or

"Healing power of nature" made up of inherent bodily mechanisms for restoring health after exposure to pathogens. However, he failed to distinguish between unpleasant distress and general concept of stress which also encompasses experiences of intense joy and pleasure of self expression. The French physiologist Bernard in 1879 advanced this concept of stress by pointing out that internal environment of a living organism must remain fairly constant despite changes in the external environment. He stated "It is the fixity of the milieu interieur" which is the condition of free and independent life. He was criticized for his concept of fixity by later investigators who believed that what distinguished life is "adaptability to change" and not "fixity".

In 1877, the German physiologist Pfluger crystallized this relationship between active adaptation and steady state when he noted that "the cause of every need of a living being is also the cause of the satisfaction of that need".

In 1885 the Belgian physiologist Fredericq expressed a similar view that "The living being in an agency of such cost that each disturbing influence induces by itself the calling forth of compensatory activity to neutralize or repair the disturbance".

In early 20th Century (1939) the American Physiologist suggested the term "homeostasis" (from the Greek 'homoios' - Similar, and "stasis" = position), for "the co-ordinated physiologic processes which maintain most of the steady states in the organism". His studies established the existence of many highly specific mechanisms for protection against all agents disturbing the steady state of the body. He emphasized the role of autonomic processes in preparing the body to fight these agents.

It was against this cumulative background that, as a medical student Hans Selye in 1936 gave the concept of "General Adaptation Syndrome" or "Biologic Stress Syndrome". Which was based on the phenomena of Triad of Alarm reaction involving adrenals, thymus and lymph nodes, and stomach (Goldberger, 1982). Discoveries since 1936 have linked non-specific stress with numerous biochemical and structural changes and there has been progress in analysing the mediation of stress reactions by hormones.

The word **stress** was a foreign word to the psychologists of 40 years ago. There is no reference

of it in the earlier editions of Henderson and Gillespie (1963) nor indeed had Mayer-Gross, Roth and Stater (1969) very much to say about it. Freud also did not use the term nor did Fenichel (1945) (Nathawat, 1984). The application of the word stress to psychological and psychiatric problems came into literature during the last world war. Concept of stress was also developed from the upheaval in personal life, which were the consequences of the war.

Contemporary research on psychological stress emerged more than a quarter of a century ago, stimulated by the desire to understand breakdowns in adaptive behaviour observed in extreme situations. Situations that were of immediate concern at that time included military combat (Grinker & Spiegel, 1945); concentration camps (Bettelheim, 1943); bereavement (Lindemann, 1944) and traumatic injury (Hamberg & DeGoza, 1953). The disturbances that were observed as consequences of stress were severe anxiety, psychotic behaviour, bleeding ulcers and hypertension (Paster, 1948, Swank, 1949). The investigators then developed hypotheses about sources of stress, mechanisms of stress production and factors influencing the magnitude of

of stress. In subsequent decades, the scope of stress research expanded from field studies to laboratory analogue studies (Lazarus, 1982).

Currently, considerable interest both popular and scientific are shown in the problem of stress. Because stressful life events such as natural disasters and war dramatically disrupt peoples lives, psychologists have naturally started searching for the determinants of stress experience in characteristics of the stressful events themselves (Eg. Holmes and Masuda, 1974). Effort has been made to demonstrate that level of stress can be predicted from life event scales (Holroyd, Lazarus, 1982).

#### 1.8 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES :

In most areas of science, the nature of theories proposed, frequently dictates the operational definitions, and through these definitions, specifies or imposes a structure upon the nature of measurement. The area of stress research is no exception in this regard.

As Lazarus (1966), Asthana (1985) and others have noted models or theories of stress may be partitioned into the following types :

1. Stimulus oriented theories.
2. Response oriented theories.
3. Interactional theories.
4. Psychodynamic theories.
5. Phenomenological theory.

1. Stimulus oriented theories :

Stimulus oriented theories view stress as a potential residing within the stimulus properties of the organisms environment. According to this approach, those aspects of the environment that are demanding or disorganizing for the individual impose stress upon him. Cox (1978) pointed out that stimulus theorists frequently use an engineering analogy for human stress phenomena which states that each individual has an innate capacity to withstand environmental stressors. When the cumulative stress is greater than this capacity, the individual begins to undergo a deterioration in function - the reaction to stress. Models based on this theory focus measurement efforts on the characteristics of the individuals environment (e.g. life events, time

demands, internal and external noxious conditions) and use instruments that reflect cumulative environmental stress (Derogatis, 1982).

2. Response oriented theories :

Response oriented theory defines stress as the response of the individual to the events of the environment. The pattern and amplitude of emotional responses (at psychological level) are used to evaluate presumptive levels of stress. The first systematic response oriented theory of stress was given by Selye (1956, 1976) in his elucidation of "General Adaptation Syndrome". Selye's description of stress is primarily based on "Pathogen model" i.e. threats to the organism are physiological and response is based on mobilization to fight off this threat. (Baum, 1981), Selye's response oriented physiological stress model is based upon a triad of physiological responses that accompany physiological challenge. The triad consisted of responses by the adrenal glands which enlarged, the thymus and lymph gland which shrunk and inner surface of stomach which acquired ulcers. Response oriented models of psychological stress measure stress in terms of disorganized functioning using psychological symptom

inventories, scale measuring negative affect and mood and instruments showing general psychological adjustment (Derogatis, 1982).

3. Interactional theories :

The third major group of theorists is that of those holding an interactional point of view. This interaction theory emphasizes the characteristics of the organism as major mediating mechanisms between stimulus characteristics of the environment and the response they invoke. These theorists follow the "transactional model" i.e. not only does the individual mediate the impact of environmental stimulus events upon responses in a linear fashion but, the perceptual, cognitive and physiological characteristics of the individual can affect and become a significant part of the environment (Lazarus, 1976, 1981). These theorists describe a dynamic cybernetic system in which reciprocal interactions occur between the individuals cognitive perceptual and emotional functions on one hand and the characteristics of the external environment on the other. Feedback loops allow for constant interplay among the components of the system to provide for a dynamic equilibrium. The transactional model developed by Lazarus holds that stress occurs when "demands that tax or exceed the resources of

the system" or "demands to which there are no readily available or automatic adaptive responses". This position holds that the perceptual, cognitive, and emotional mediating processes of the individual actively affect the "demand characteristics" of the environment so that the status of the system is constantly changing. (Derogatis, 1982). Thus for these theorists, the ongoing relationship between the persons adaptive mechanisms and stimulus properties of the environment is central to the definition of stress. Such a definition implies that accurate measurement of the stimulus field response spectrum or stable mediating traits of the individual would be insufficient since the dynamic reciprocal relationship among them would definitely alter the component values. What is required in the measurement of stress as defined by this approach is "a stable time referant". Thus, the transactional model suggests a "suquential measurement approach" which is what Lazarus (1980) means by his "ipsative - normative research designs" (Derogatis, 1982).

#### 4. Psychodynamic theories :

The psychodynamic and etiological theories of stress view it as external or internal events which

pose threat to the integrity of the organism leading to the disorganization to the integrity of the organism leading to the disorganization of personality (Freedman, 1967; Asthana, 1984). According to these theorists stress is a prediction of loss of ego, strength and loss of ego support. Stress is induced by inter personal (external) or intra psychic (between one's own impulses and ego) factors which results in anxiety. Sometimes stress is defined in terms of adjustment. The handling of extrapsychic stress is looked upon as coping behaviour whereas handling of intra psychic stress is looked upon as Defense Mechanisms. These theories thus view stress as caused due to some unsuccessfully resolved past situation or lack of ego capabilities. In either case stress poses a threat to the individual's self esteem, the intra-psychic coherence being disturbed (Asthana, 1984).

5. Phenomenological theories :

The phenomenological approach to the concept of stress as proposed by Asthana (1984) views stress as a concomitant of life. According to him, stress like feelings is experienced and since the person experiences it or rather suffers from it, stress has a phenomenal existence and hence can be regarded as

a fact. The phenomenological approach to stress is an analysis of stress as an intentional immediate experience. (intentional meaning unbiased, unprejudiced inspection without any mediating thing). Thus, this theory lays that stress may be felt or experienced even without any object actually existing, for, this object is only meant, in the act of apprehension or threat. Stress, thus involves a fear of something vague. The approach further lays that there is a closed reciprocal relation between the subject and its intentional object. In the feeling of stress, consciousness is linked up with something and is isolated from the rest of the world, where then, we encounter the something which threatens us and put up resistance against it. The encounter with resistance has a typical dynamical structure of (i) being shocked, (ii) being injured, (iii) being overwhelmed and (iv) abandoning of one's self.

Thus according to the phenomenological approach stress is an enveloping feeling, a feeling of being segregated as a gestalt.

#### ORIGIN OF STRESS IN INDIAN THOUGHT...

The term stress has acquired a technical connotation since 1954 when Hans Selye used it but,

this English word as an aphetic form of distress has been in vogue at least since 1513 and even then it meant "overpowering pressure of an adverse force" for instance "the stress of weather". Around 1630 the term **stress** was associated with **storm** signifying the condition of things compelling strained effort. The word was primarily used to describe an external event, and only later it suggested metaphorically an inner mental condition (Ramchandra Rao, 1983). The Indian words correspond not only to the word **stress** but also to the word in its technical sense. These words are primarily descriptive of internal conditions. These two words are **Klesa** and **Dukha**, **Klesa** refers largely to the stressor aspect and has been crystalized in the **yoga** framework while **Dukha** is a phenomenon of stress itself and has been crystalized in the **Samkhya** framework.

The word **Klesa** has its origin in the root **Klis** (upatap, torment) which means to cause pain. **Bhagvad Gita** uses the word in the sense of effort (**srama**). **Svetasvatara Upanishad** uses the word in the sense of hindrances. The **Klesas** are not mental processes but are a hindering load on the mental processes. **Vyasa's** commentary on **Patanjali's Yoga Sutra** gives in detail the dimensions of **Klesa**. According to him, the **Klesas** flooding the mental

process produce a stream of reactions and stimulations. Thus Klesa is viewed as an intervening variable in Yoga manuals. It is reviewed as a stressor rather than as a phenomenon of stress itself.

The word in sanskrit for stress seems to be dukha because it describes an organismic state involving the experience of emotions, and characterized by an urge to escape or avoid (jitrasa). According to grammarians the correct form of the word dukha is dushkha which is a modification of the prakrit word dushta meaning "ill standing". In due course dukha acquired the significance of trouble (pida) hindrance (badha) suffering (arti). Samkhya, the earliest of systems made it the starting point of its inquiry. Buddhism which was derived from samkhya focussed attention on four aspects of dukha; its nature, causation, elimination and method. The Samkhya takes dukha to signify the stress that the individual experiences in the course of his interaction with the world around him (Ramchandra Rao, 1983).

The Samkya-Yoga explains that the fundamental non cognition which leads to phenomenological stress

is **avidya** (non cognition). This **avidya** leads to **asmita** (self appraisal), **raga** (object appraisal), **dvesha** (threat appraisal) and **abhinivesa** (coping orientation). Faulty evaluations of these three can cause stress.

The **samkhya** speaks of three types of stress : personal (**adhyatmik**), situational (**adhibhoutik**) and environmental (**adhidaivik**). The personal stress can be of two types - physiological and psychological. The physiological stresses are born out of imbalances between three physiologic constituents, viz. **vata**, **pitta** & **kaph**. The psychological stresses are caused by emotional states of lust, hatred, greed, fear, jealousy and depression. Situational stresses are caused by competitiveness, aggression, etc. and the environmental stresses are caused by natural calamities.

**Yoga sutra** gives a model of stress (**klesa**) as operating at four modes :

- i) **Prosupta** (dormant) i.e. any mental process can become a stressor, given the right type of conditions.

- ii) **Tonu** i.e. weak stressors which are held in check by more powerful stressors.
- iii) **Vichchinna** are stressors which lack continuity due to conflict with competing responses.
- iv) **Udara** or operative stressors which are potent stress responses which have found full expression in observable behavioural mode.

This model incorporates cognitive structuring, affective or emotional stages and adaptive reactions.

Thus, the Indian system is analytical and helps an individual to understand his own stresses and the roots of these stresses (Ramchandra Rao, 1983).

#### 1.9 LIFE EVENTS STRESS : A CONCEPTUALIZATION

It is known that an awareness of the true degree of difficulty of any stressful situation comes only after the stress is over. This is particularly true of the organismic adjustment made in response to gradual environmental changes. A

sudden change in the environment which requires the organism to radically find a new steady state is perceived by the organism as stressful. The organism achieves this dynamic steady state, which helps it to survive in the changing environment, through the process of **Adaptation**. Man differs from animals in his awareness of this adaptive process. This means that he has the ability of abstraction, although his tendency of self deception tends to complicate his report of stress vulnerability, rationalization or complete denial.

The role of psychosocial factors in the etiology of diseases are widely recognized of the following two types:

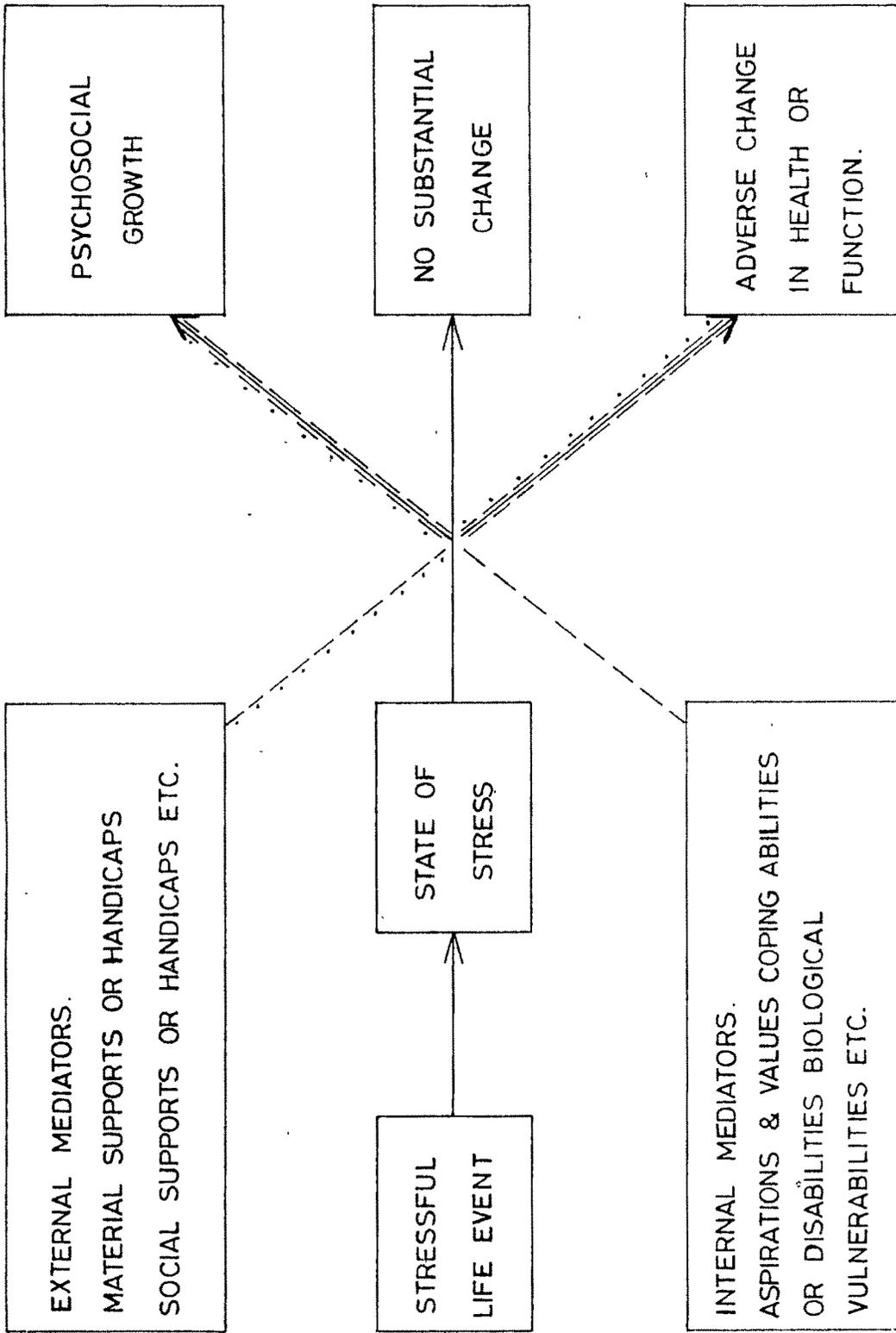
1. Stressor factors which enhance disease susceptibility.
2. Protective factors, which buffer the organism from the effect of psychological stress factors which ameliorate stress.

The example of the first are life event stresses and that of the second are social supports such as fulfillment of social need like trust, recognition, love, etc. (Dube, 1983).

Life events stress as a concept can be categorized under the stimulus oriented theories of stress which focusses on stressful characteristics within the environment which impinge upon the individual. Cumulative stress from the impact of life events has become an important variable in psychosomatic and psychological research. An extensive body of clinical and epidemiologic research suggests that stressful life events are casually implicated in a variety of undesirable effects on functioning and health. The effects described range from lowering of grades in college to sudden death (Selye, 1977).

A comprehensive description of stressful life event is based on a mediation model of psychological stress process as shown in Diagram No.2 . (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend 1977).

The process described in this model starts with a proximate rather than a distant cause of stress induced pathology, with recent event in life of an individual rather than distant childhood experiences. This initial step in the model distinguishes between a stressor, an event that initiates stress process, and the immediate reaction to the event i.e. state of stress.



MEDIATION MODEL OF LIFE EVENTS STRESS PROCESS.

( Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend 1977 )

The next step in the model suggests that what follows after the stress state depends on mediation of a situational and personal factors. Situational mediators are external conditions in the environment such as material supports, social supports and handicaps, which impinge on the individual. Personal mediations are internal conditions within the individual such as aspirations, values, coping abilities or disabilities, biological vulnerabilities, etc.

The final step in the model indicates that a state of stress interacts with situational and personal mediators to produce one of the three outcomes. A person who experiences stressful life event may as a result (1) undergo psychosocial growth (2) resume his life without permanent change or (3) experience a change for worse in his functioning or health.

Thus, this mediation model of life events stress states that if a stressful life event impinges on an individual and certain unfavourable states of internal and external mediating factors are present, then dysfunctional behaviour or illness will result.

#### 1.10 LIFE EVENTS STRESS ; IN RETROSPECT

The foundation for systematic experimental research on life events stress and its effects was laid by Cannon in his detailed observations of bodily changes related to pain, hunger and major emotions. His thinking focussed on the survival functions of internal physiological adjustments produced by stressful conditions and strong emotions, such as increased blood sugar, larger output of adrenalin, adapted circulation, greater number of red corpuscles and rapid clotting. Cannon's experimental work provided a proof that stressful life events can affect an organisms functioning and health and the organism that best produces the internal physiological alterations, has the best chances of survival. He thereby proved that stimuli or events associated with emotional arousal cause changes in basic physiological processes. A second major contribution in the field of life events stress was made by Adolf Meyer in 1930's through his advocacy of **Life Chart** as a tool in medical diagnosis. This "life chart" consisted of columns for the patients date and year of birth, periods of disorders of various organs, data on situations and reactions of the patient, changes of habitat, school entrance, graduation changes and

failures, important births and deaths in family and other fundamentally important environmental incidents.

Thus, Meyer thought that life events may be an important part of the etiology of a disorder which need not be bizzare or catastrophic to be pathogenic. Instead he suggested that even most normal and necessary life events can also be stressful and produce disorders.

Late in 1949 at a conference of Association for Research in Nervous and mental Diseases on "Life stress and Bodily Diseases" there were ten specialized sessions on diseases caused due to life events stress viz. disorders of growth, metabolism, eye, airways, head, stomach, colon, muscles, periar-ticular structures, cardiavascular, skin and genitals (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend 1974).

In 1967 a major methodological contribution in the life events stress area was by T.H. Holmes and R.H.Rahe who developed a scale to quantify this stress level caused by life events. This objective tool called the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) gives a global index of life stress in terms of life change unit (LCU). During recent years

years numerous studies have investigated the relationship between life stress and susceptibility to physical and psychological problems. There is a considerable evidence that a relationship exists between life stress operationally defined in terms of "self reported life changes" and physical illness (Sarason et.al 1978).

1.11 LIFE STRESS AND MENSTRUAL DISTRESS:  
RELATED RESEARCHES

Some researchers have tried to link menstrual cycle symptoms to such life context factors as stressful events e.g. among normally cycling college women those who experienced more life stress also reported more menstrual pain, water retention and behaviour change (Siegel, Johnson & Sarason, 1979). Women undergoing the stress of life change were found to experience a decline in physical health such that discomfort occurred with menstruation.

Woods Dery and Most in 1982 too found that total life event scores were positively linked to reports of water retention, negative affect and impaired performance during menstruation.

A study by Jordan and Meckler in 1982 on women nursing students examined the connection between life events and dysmenorrhea and how it may be moderated by social support. Social resources were tapped by the number of supportive others and the frequency with which women met with them, the quality of support and the presence of a confidant. They found moderate relationships between life change scores, MDQ pain and total distress scores among normally cycling women. Finally women with high life stress and few social resources had high MDQ scores.

Brattesani and Silverthorn (1978) found that by promoting trust and open self disclosure, supportive relationships may be conducive to less stressful menstrual cycles and fewer cyclic mood and symptom changes. For instance, Clare in 1983 and Siegel and Louis in 1984 found that girls who develop better communication with their father and boyfriend report fewer symptoms and that women who report more marital problems also experience more menstrual cycle symptoms.

#### 1.12 INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF SEX ROLES

The frequent use of the phrase **opposite sexes** is indicative of a host of cultural assumptions of

feminity and masculinity. It has always been a belief that masculinity and feminity are opposing concepts and it is not possible for a person to incorporate both of them simultaneously. One of the most famous lines from the golden age of Hollywood has to be **Me Tarzan ! You Jane !** Tarzan and Jane epitomize orthodox views of Masculinity and Feminity. The male is big and aggressive. The female is the shy admirer. There are a great deal of myths in both popular and scientific views about the male and female sex differences (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). But, there has been a rising dissatisfaction with these orthodox dichotomization of sexes.

The distinction between male and female serves as a basic organizing principle for every human culture. Although societies differ in the specific tasks they assign to the two sexes, all societies allocate adult roles on the basis of sex and anticipate this allocation in the socialization of their children. The boys and girls are expected to acquire or to have sex specific self concepts and personality attributes to be masculine or feminine as defined by that particular culture (Barry, Bacon & Child, 1957). The process by which a society thus

transmutes male and female into masculine and feminine, is known as the process of **Sex Typing**.

Sex Role standards can be defined as the sum of socially designated behaviours that differentiate between men and women. Traditionally psychologists have uncritically accepted sex roles as essential to personality development and function.

Thus psychopathologists have considered gender identity to be a crucial factor in personal adjustment with disturbances in adjustment often attributed to inadequate gender identity. The positive value of sex role standards have rarely been questioned. Recently investigators have expressed concern over possible detrimental effects of sex role standards upon the full development of capabilities of men and women.

All institutional structures of our society demand, reinforce and imply traditional sex role stereotypings of feminine and masculine that are polar opposites, negatively correlated, stable traits. These stereotypes are determined by gender assignment (Money and Ehrhardt, 1972), but they are widely believed to be biologically determined. Like-sex-typing is assumed to result in an

appropriate ideal and mature way<sup>of</sup> functioning (Mussen 1969; Parsons 1964; Winick 1968) inspite of massive evidence about its dysfunctional results (Bem 1975; Broverman et al. 1970; Gump 1972; Mussen 1961, 1962; Scott 1974). The traditional sex role patterns are being challenged by the new feminist movement.

However feminity and masculinity evolved as concepts that stressed the differences between the sexes. The dichotomy that these concepts represent has also shaped psychology's approach to the study of men and women.

#### 1.13 MASCULINITY, FEMINITY AND ANDROGYNY IN RETROSPECT

The history of human thought suggests that whenever two apparently opposing principles were observed, they were linked to maleness and femaleness. Thus the sun came to be represented as the male principle and the moon represented the female; rationality and logic was associated with the male and intution with the female; light and clarity were termed masculine, darkness and myster<sup>e</sup>y feminine (Lips and Colwill, 1974). De Beauvoir (1952) claims that these dualities were not

originally associated with sex but that the association grew up through the attempts of men to rationalize their advantaged position by defining themselves as one and women as the other. Thus it was believed that since men considered women as connected with the mysterious process of menstruation, birth and lactation, they associated her with darkness, irrationality, moon and magic.

Thus, the idea of masculinity and femininity as opposite poles of experience is found in the history and mythology of many cultures. Many philosophies have viewed each of the masculinity and femininity concepts as one half of a whole neither of which can even be complete in itself. According to this view point not only do women and men need each other but each individual must develop both masculine and feminine side of his/her nature to be a whole person.

The most persistent symbolic sexual theme in myth and ritual was that of androgyny, of the idea of masculine and feminine principles that together constitute the universe. Several religions and mystical systems build on the common idea of contrasting and complementary masculine and feminine principles.

The basic principle of the ancient Chinese philosophy Taoism rests on this very belief. In Taoist philosophy Yang the male principle and Yin the female principle signify the two archetypal poles of nature. The Tao - the middle way, the undivided unity which lies behind all earthly phenomena gives rise to Yin and the Yang. In Ching the hexagram K'un (Yin) for female is the passive principle which is identified with earth, the negative dark side symbolizing the potential, existential and natural elements of femininity. It is the eternally creative, feminine mother, the primordial chaos of darkness from which the phenomenal world emerged. The hexagram Ch'en (Yang) for male is the creative principle which is active and identified with heaven, symbolizing intelligence, rationality and motion. A psychological interpretation of this system would be that anthropomorphic sex roles were being used as a basis for the metaphysical system (Weitz, 1977). There is not a strict sexual division between Yin and Yang. Both men and women have both principles and they are dominated by the one that is in accord with their biological sex. Successful living according to Taoism, requires a balance of Yin and Yang energies within a person. Thus from a functional perspective Tao philosophy reflects the

sex role system with regard to the reproductive roles and the conceptions of activity and passivity is a divisive influence in the conception of sex roles (Weitz, 1977).

Another common theme found in Oceania, Asia, Africa and America which views male and female principles as complementary, is the theme of **Cosmic Hierogamy** the marriage between the (male) Heaven and the (female) Earth. Other archaic religions put forth the vision of an androgynous divine entity. Thus **androgyny** is a universal formula which expresses **wholeness** the co-existence of the contraries.

One interesting twist to the sexual symbolism is the Hindu Tantric view of maleness and femaleness. The male is described as the "undifferentiating absolute to be awakened by feminine energy". The female is the active creative principle and maternal imagery is the dominant theme. The Hindu Tantric system is incredibly complex and involves numerous personifications of the principles, e.g. Brahman is the ultimate matter and is both male and female but appears as the personification **Shiva** to humans. **Shiva** then unfolds into male and female principles. The female principle is known as **Shakti** described as "power,

ability, capacity, faculty, energy, the active power of a deity". The destructive aspect of Shakti is Kali. Thus, the creative and destructive are intertwined in the female principle.

The old Testament gives two accounts of creation of male and female one of Eve being created out of Adam's rib and the other of a simultaneous creation as reflected in Genesis 1:27 "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female". This passage is also interpreted as the bipolarity of male-female being a reflection of the androgynous nature of original man or of the embodiment of God within him/her.

In the Jewish mystical writings of the Kabbalah the image of God is given both a masculine and feminine (**Shekhinah**) aspect, originally unbroken in androgyny but then separated through human sin and exile (Weitz, 1977).

Thus, most myths of the origin of sexes tell of the division of a whole individual into two incomplete halves. These halves then strive to reunite to regain a sense of wholeness. This wholeness is viewed as an androgynous state - a

psychological merging of the masculine and feminine. On the whole there is considerable evidence for the existence of two traditions, that masculinity and femininity are opposing principles, and that they must be joined in an individual and in a society in order for the experience of wholeness to occur.

Psychology had made much use of the concept of masculinity and femininity in its opposing principles tradition but ignored the tradition of wholeness or androgyny through the union of these opposing principles (Lips & Colwill, 1974).

Untill the resurgence of the feminist movement in the late 1960's, gender related psychological research in United States was conducted in a social climate that took for granted the sex role system in which women had less power and access to economic and political resources than men. It is only, over the past 20 years that psychological androgyny has become a major focus in social psychological research. The founder of this research tradition Sandra Lipsitz Bem in 1974 used standardized differences between femininity and masculinity scores to identify three types of people -masculine, feminine and androgynous. Within a year

this operational definition of androgyny was challenged by Spence, Hel<sup>m</sup>reich and Stapp (1975) who found Bem's androgynous category too heterogeneous (Taylor & Hall, 1982). They gave a four group typology classifying people as masculine, feminine, androgynous and undifferentiated.

Thus, the concept of sex role has achieved much prominence in psychological research during the past decade.

#### 1.14 SEX ROLES : THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Sex roles are the cultural expectations as to the appropriate behaviour of males and females. Sex role development thus depends on both biological and cultural factors. Sex role acquisition can be understood through the evaluation of personality theories and their hypotheses about the differences between men and women.

The major theoretical perspectives that can form the basis for understanding sex role acquisition and development are :

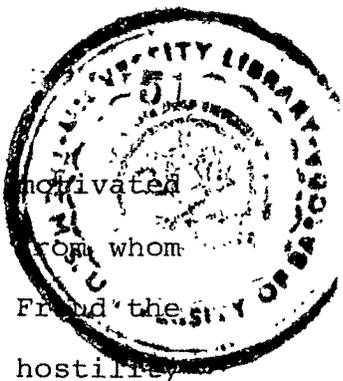
1. a predominantly biological perspective.
2. a predominantly sociological perspective.
3. a combined biological - sociological perspective.
4. a hybrid information - processing perspective.
5. a social interactionist approach.

1. BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The biological perspective on sex role acquisition comprises of Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Helene Deutsch's theory, Lionel Tiger's bonding theory & Erik Erikson's theory.

FREUD'S PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

Freud's psychoanalytic theory emphasizes identification with the same sex parent for sex role acquisition and he has related sex role acquisition to the various stages of psychosexual development. According to him men and women are basically bisexual with no sex differences in development during the oral and anal psychosexual stages. The most critical events in sex role acquisition and sexual identity takes place during the phallic stage between 4 to 6 years of age. During this period a young child, be it a boy or girl, experiences oedipal conflict. The boys resolve this conflict due



to castration anxiety and the girls are motivated due to Penis Envy to turn to her father from whom she hopes to receive a penis. According to Freud the boys repress their desire for mother and hostility for father and identify with fathers, assuming his correct sex role and the girls also resolve their conflict through identification with the same sex parent, since she does not want to lose her mother's love by competing with her for her father. Freud believed that for women, anatomy is destiny. His theory on sex role acquisition did not however rely only on hormones or biological explanations. Rather he based his theory on both biological (different external sex organs) and social (reactions to these sex organs), explanations and maintained that initially the two sexes are bisexual.

Helene Deutsch extended Freud's concepts of Narcissism, passivity and masochism to female functions such as pregnancy and childbirth. She did not agree with Freud that 'Penis Envy' played an important role in female sex role acquisition but stressed the mother-daughter relationship during pre-oedipal stages of development.

LIONEL TIGER'S BONDING THEORY:

Tiger (1969) assumes that the process of human evolution has facilitated sex appropriate behaviour differences which in turn affects sex role status and thereby sex role acquisition. According to Tiger, sex role differences are essential for survival and have been genetically transferred from generation to generation. Specifically he believes that males bond together for purpose of defence and hunting and which is beneficial for their survival. He also believes that women do not bond because it is not necessary for survival of human species. According to him, while social factors may play a small part in establishing sex role differences or sex role acquisition, bonding is the primary reason for high status of men and low status of women.

ERIK ERIKSON'S THEORY

Erikson (1963, 1968) like Freud theorized a stage theory of development. But he has extended his theory to adolescence and adult life too. The distinction between male and female functions and orientation has been elaborated by Erikson in his concepts of inner and outer space. The central thing

that distinguished a woman from a man according to him is that she holds within herself a womb. The essence of feminity is the awareness of this inner space (Matterson, 1970). He believes that while females may exhibit penis envy males may exhibit womb envy. Thus sex role acquisition and development depends, according to him on possession of an inner or outer space.

## 2. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Sociological perspective of sex role acquisition theories comprises of the social learning theories, neo-psychoanalytic theories and Parson's Social Structure hypotheses.

### SOCIAL LEARNING THEORIES

Social learning theories are based primarily on a mechanistic model (Reese & Overton, 1970) and they study the mechanisms which guide and organise behaviour. There are two divisions in the social learning theory camp with regard to the different mechanisms emphasized in sex role acquisition.

The Radical Behaviourists emphasize two basic learning processes: operant conditioning and observa-

tional learning as the mechanisms which form the core of virtually all social learning explanations of sex role acquisition. Sex roles develop by virtue of the fact that reinforcement contingencies are dependent on the sex of the responder i.e. boys and girls are rewarded or punished for different kinds of behaviour. Male and female models regularly display different kinds of behaviour. One major tenet of this approach is the situation-specificity of behaviour which implies that one should not assume that children acquire global attributes of masculinity or femininity that have cross situation generality (Huston, 1970) e.g. a child may show aggression towards a young sibling at home but show little aggression in the nursery school.

The Cognitive Social learning theorists like Bandura (1977) and Mischel (1973, 1977, 1979) emphasized internal mental processes as the mechanisms for sex role acquisition. Both proposed that children on the basis of reinforcement and punishment form expectancies which guides their future response choices. Bandura explains sex role acquisition on the basis of observation learning. According to him there are 4 major internal processes which influence a child's observation of a model and its sex role acquisition.

These are :

1. Attention : which is influenced by motivational variables and expectancies based on past experiences such as sex of the model and sex of the child. The child attends more closely to same sex models, because he is rewarded to imitate same sex models.
2. Retention: of the models behaviour occurs through symbolic coding and representation.
3. Motor Reproduction : Once the modeled behaviour is stored in memory - imitation depends on child's capacity for motor reproduction.
4. Motivational variables - Imitation also depends on his motivation to reproduce the behaviour, depending on his expectancies about reinforcement consequences for imitating behaviour.

Thus both the radical behaviourists and cognitive social learning theorists conceptualize sex role acquisition as a set of behavioural responses. According to them the bases of sex role acquisition are in the social environment, not the

organism and changes can occur relatively rapidly if learning conditions are altered.

#### PARSON'S SOCIAL STRUCTURAL HYPOTHESES

Sociological thinking about sex role acquisition is derived largely from Parsons (1970) Social Structural hypotheses based on the instrumental - expressive dichotomy. Using these basic notions Johnson (1963) proposed that the father plays a more important role than the mother in the sex role acquisition of both boys and girls. She proposed that fathers serve as models of instrumentality for their sons, but they also train their daughters in feminine expressiveness by playing the complementary instrumental part in interactions with them (Huston, 1970).

#### 3. BIOLOGICAL - SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Biological - Sociological perspective of sex role acquisition theories comprises of Neo psychoanalytic theories and cognitive developmental theories.

#### NEOPSYCHOANALYTIC THEORIES :

All the neo-psychoanalytic theorists like Adler, Jung, Clara Thompson and Horney have

recognized the crucial role of Society, environment and Culture in sex role acquisition and deny the Freudian theory that anatomy or biological functions are solely responsible for sex role acquisition. Horney and Clara Thompson both emphasized the importance of social and cultural factors that can affect sex role development and felt that children of both sexes were born with potential of self actualization which could be enhanced by a healthy environment. They both felt that the penis was a symbol of social and cultural power and was not envied for any superior sexual function (Schaffer, 1979). Both Adler and Jung too rejected Freud's predominantly biological theory of sex role acquisition. Adler emphasized conscious social interests and expectations about future and believes that both men and women are born with potential and ability to influence the course of their own lives.

Jung agreed with Freud that both men and women are initially bisexual but according to him both men and women display to the outer world a mask referred to by Jung as **Persona** which identifies a person as male or female but does not reveal his or her inner characteristics. Jung called the masculine

aspect of a woman's personality her **Animus** and feminine aspects of a man's personality as his **Anima**. Sex role acquisition according to him does not stop at childhood but continues through adulthood and old age.

### COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

The cognitive developmental theory based upon the work of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1948), has also been proposed to explain sex role acquisition. Piaget has theorized that a child's interpretation of the world is limited by his or her cognitive maturity, which is linked to the child's present stage of development. Based on Piaget's work Lawrence Kohlberg (1966, 1969) has proposed that the same process of cognitive development influences the way a child assimilates information about sex roles. He has proposed 3 stages of sex role acquisition which are as follows :

1. Ist stage when the child makes a self categorization as a girl or boy.
2. IInd stage when it develops a system of values associated with behaviour and attitudes right for its self categorized gender.

3. IIIrd stage when it develops an emotional attachment to the same - sex parent which ensures appropriate sex role acquisition.

Ullian (1976) has extended Kohlberg's original stages to include sex role acquisition through adolescence and adult hood. According to him sex role acquisition progresses from :

1. Biological orientation when male and female are distinguished on basis of biological cues to
2. Sociological orientation when there is awareness of social rules and requirements for behaviour of each sex to
3. Psychological orientation when there is an awareness that sex role differences are neither biologically based nor socially required but both men and women are free to chose their own standard of behaviour.

#### BAKAN'S THEORY

David Bakan has adopted the term **Agency** and **Communion** to characterize two fundamental modalities in the existence of living forms. **Agency** characterised the existence of an organism as an

individual and **Communion** characterized the participation of the individual in some larger organism of which the individual is a part.

**Agency** manifests itself in self protection, self assertion, self expansion, isolation, alienation, aloneness while **Communion** manifests itself in sense of being at one with other organisms, contact, openness and union.

**Agency** manifests itself in urge to master and **Communion** in noncontractual co-operation.

**Agency** manifests itself in repression of thought, feeling and impulse while **Communion** in lack and removal of repression.

According to him, the split of **Agency** from **Communion**, which is a separation, arises due to the agency feature itself and it represses the communion from which it has separated itself.

He has applied these two concepts of **Agency** and **Communion** to human sexuality and sex differences. **Sexuality** according to him is the

function of the human organism which is most closely related to his very existence, and hence, plays an important role in all facets of human existence.

According to Bakan sexual differentiation can be done at four levels.

- (a) Biological level at which sex differentiation is done in terms of their specific contribution to the reproductive processes.
- (b) Secondary sex characteristics level at which sex differentiation is done in terms of secondary sex characteristics such as facial hair and deeper voice in males and larger breasts and hips in females.
- (c) Social structure level at which sex differentiation is done in terms of place in the social structure, males taking male roles and females taking female roles in the society.
- (d) Psychological level at which sex differentiation is done in terms of differences in the psychological make up of the two sexes.

Each of these levels of sexual differentiation when carefully and closely investigated breaks down any simple male female dichotomy.

To distinguish between an abstract set of male and female principles and the assignment of individuals to the male or female category, Bakan makes a heuristic assumption that "what differentiates the aggregate of males from the aggregate of females reflects the male and female principles, respectively".

Bakan further proposes that Agency is more characteristically masculine and communion is more characteristically feminine.

Bakan clarifies this proposition with the help of some empirical data on sex differences in terms of achievement Lewin's concept of life space, aggression viability and longevity, sexual deviations and eroticism.

On the basis of these empirical studies, Bakan puts forth the following observations :

- (a) In terms of McClelland's concept of achievement, a woman's achievement is tied up with social acceptability and men's with leadership capacity and intelligence.
- (b) In terms of Kurt Lewin's 'Life space' and psychological centering, woman is an **alterocentrist** who centres her feelings, enjoyment and ambition in something outside herself. She makes another person and not herself of her surroundings the centre of her emotions. Man on the other hand is an **egocentrist** who makes himself his pleasure his activities the centre of the world in which he lives.
- (c) In terms of aggression, males are more aggressive than females due to factors such as musculature which is larger and stronger for the male, level of homeostatic mechanisms such as body temperature, basal metabolism, acid base, balance of blood and blood sugar level which is at a lower level in males; level of androgens the male hormone, which has a strong influence on the metabolism of nitrogen and thus on muscular strength and

energy. The level of androgens is higher in males.

- (d) In terms of viability and longevity the female has greater longevity than the male. Bakan draws from his concepts of agency and communion giving a logical explanation. According to him a difference in the homeostatic range between the sexes suggests that there is more harmony between the body and environment for the female and less necessity for acting upon the environment. Further more, if the agency and communion are associated with styles of interacting with the environment then it definitely influences survival too. Bakan supports his observations with Freud's notions of death instinct. Freud suggested that death instinct was related to the separation of ego from the world, that it was manifested in aggression and that the organ of the death instinct was the musculature. Bakan argues that all these notions are associated with maleness, and hence the death rate is strikingly higher in males than in females.

(e) In terms of heterosexual relationships, with marriage as a norm and all other forms of sexuality as deviations, Bakan assumes that sexual deviations ARE MORE PREVAIANT in males than females. He makes this assumption on the basis of his belief that normative sexual relationship is characteristically a greater synthesis of the agency and communion features, because in such normative relationships of marriage where there is long term commitment to partners and children resulting from their sex relationships, there is not only an interest in sexuality per se but larger involvement of the person with each other in long term larger contexts.

Hence, it would appear that sexual deviations are an expression of agentic rather than communion feature of sexuality. Since the agentic is more pronounced in male Bakan assumes that there may be a greater prevalence of sexual deviations in males than in females.

(f) In terms of eroticism Bakan assumes that libido is more prominent in the males than in

the females. He explains this assumption in Freudian terms that libido designates agentic feature of sexuality and Eros designates the communion feature. Thus the agency feature being more prominent in males than in females, libido is more of a masculine feature. After reviewing the empirical evidence on sex differences Bakan in his conclusion makes an observation significant in consideration of sex differences that in the formation of multicellular organisms different sets of organisms, different sets of organs tend to specialize in functions. In the single celled organism, one cell performs all the functions but in the multicellular organism, some organs exaggerate one or a few of these functions while the other functions are carried by other organs. However, the suspension of all functions by a single cell or a single organ of a multicellular organism is rarely complete. Most often some vestigial forms of all functions remain and when other organs of a multicellular organism tend to fail in their functions, there is a tendency for the vestigial functions to come into operation.

Similarly in males and females there is a difference in their roles of reproduction. If agency and communion are considered as two major functions associated with all living substance, then although agency is greater in the male and communion greater in female, agency and communion characterize both. The agency feature is involved in process of differentiation specialization and separation of function within and between organismic unit, where as communion is involved in a variety of relationships among organismic units. Sexual differentiation itself is a reflection of the agentic feature of division. Agency also works to divide itself hence it leaves more of the agentic and less of the communal in male and less of the agentic and more of the communal in female. It is the agentic in male and communal in female which brings them together. Bakan concludes on the note that the integration of **Agency** and **Communion** between male and female which leads to an integration of **Agency** and **Communion** within each of them, creating within them a **wholeness** is ideal, (Bakan, 1966).

#### BLOCK'S THEORY

Block (1973) proposed a developmental sequence in sex role acquisition based on

Loevinger's (1976) stage of Ego Development. According to Block the development of sex role identity is influenced by both biological and historical cultural factors in complex interaction and with changing degrees of ascendancy at different critical periods. She rejects Freud's absolutist dictum that "Anatomy is destiny" and is in accord with Erikson (1968) that "anatomy, history and personality combine to form one's destiny". Thus, according to her, sex role definition represents a synthesis of biological and cultural forces as they are mediated by cognitive and ego functions. Block's theoretical framework underlying the conceptualization of sex role development is derived from Loevinger's model of Ego Development from which Block further extrapolates sex role development, as sketched in the Table .

Block draws heavily from Bakan's (1966) conceptions of two "fundamental personalities" characteristic Agency and Communion.

Agency is concerned with the organism as an individual and manifests itself in self protection, self ascertain and self expansion.

**Communion** is descriptive of the individual organism as it exists in some larger organism of which it is a part and manifests itself in the sense of being at one with other organisms.

Bakan conceived a developmental approach in which the fundamental task of the organism is "to try and integrate Agency and communion". "Unmitigated Agency" represents evil.

Block concentrates on this 'balancing' and 'integration' of agency and communion.

Block superimposes Bakan's these conceptualizations on the development stages shown in Loevinger's diagram, in Table .

TABLE : 1  
 Loevinger's Milestones of Ego Development & Extrapolations to Sex Role Development

STAGE	IMPULSE CONTROL	INTERPERSONAL STYLE	CONSCIOUS CONCERNS	CONCEPTIONS OF SEX ROLE
Presocial/Symbiotic		Autistic, symbiotic	Self versus nonself	Sex role development extrapolated
Impulse ridden	Impulse ridden, fear of retaliation	Exploitive, dependent	Sexual and aggressive bodily feelings	self-assertion, self-expression, self-interest.
Self-protective (formerly opportunistic)	Expedient, i. r of being caught	Exploitive, manipulative, wary	Advantage, control, protection of self	Extension of self, self-extension, self-enhancement.
Conformity	Conformity to external rule	Reciprocal, superficial	Things, appearance, reputation, self acceptance	conformity to external role, development of sex role stereotypes bifurcation of sex roles.
Conscientious	Internalized rules guilt	Intensive, responsive	Differentiated inner feelings, motives, self-respect	Examination of self as sex role exemplar vis-a-vis internalized values.
Autonomous	Coping with conflict toleration of differences	Intensive concern for autonomy	Differentiated inner feelings, role concepts, self-fulfillment.	Differentiation of sex role, coping with conflicting masculine feminine aspects of self.
Integrated	Reconciling inner conflicts, reunciation on unattainable	Cherishing of individuality	All of the above plus identity	Achievement of individually defined sex role, integration of both masculine and feminine aspects of self androgynous sex role definition

According to Block, the impulse ridden and self protective levels in which the child is concerned with self assertion, self expression, and self extension represent for both sexes, the condition that Bakan has described as "Unmitigated Agency". Later, at the conformity level, the child develops a set of sex role stereotypes conforming to the cultural definitions of appropriate boy or girl roles due to influence of factors such as cognitive conceptualization of gender identity, her or his identification with same sex parent and the differential socialization pressures to which the child has been subjected during earlier stages. It is at this level, that a critical branching occurs in the interest, activities and attitudes of boys and girls. Boys are taught to control expression of feelings while assertion and extension of self are approved & appreciated and girls are taught to control aggression, assertion and extension and are encouraged to take interest only in inner familial world.

Thus, **communion** is emphasized more in girls but is explicitly discouraged in boys. Then, comes the conscientious level when a person starts evaluating oneself against his own internalized values and pre-

vailing expectations of the culture. This according to Block is the stage when the process of balancing, Agency and Communion starts, that occupies the individual through the autonomous level as he tries to cope with the demands of Agency and Communion. This process for some results in ultimate integration of two modalities in highest developmental stage.

For men the integration of Agency and Communion requires that self assertion, self interest and self extension be tempered by considerations of mutuality, interdependence and joint welfare.

For woman integration of Agency and Communion requires that the concern for harmonious functioning of the group, submission of self and importance of the consensus characteristics of Communion be amended to include aspects of agentic self assertion and expression which are essential for personal integration and self actualization.

#### PLECK'S PHASIC MODEL

Joseph Pleck (1975) gave a three phase model of sex role acquisition which is analogous to moral

development process proposed by Kohlberg (1968) (Pleck, 1975). Moral thinking develops through 3 phases - premoral phase when moral thinking is dominated by avoiding punishment and gratifying impulses, a conventional role conformity phase which is oriented to maintaining approval of others especially authorities and a final post conventional phase in which moral judgements are made on basis of self accepted moral principles. Correspondingly, in the 1st phase of sex role development, the child has amorphous and unorganized sex role concepts, including confusion over child's own gender. In the second phase, children learn the rules of sex roles differentiation and are motivated to make others and themselves conform to them. In the 3rd and final phase of sex role development, individuals transcend these sex role norms and boundaries and develop psychological androgyny in accordance with their needs and temperaments (Orlofsky and Orlofsky, 1972; Block, 1973; Bem 1975 a, 1975 b.)

#### INFORMATION PROCESSING PERSPECTIVE

The information processing perspective comprises of schema theories by Bem (1981) and by Martin & Halverson (1981).

In both these theories the primary construct used is the **Schema** a cognitive structure consisting of a set of expectations or a network of associations that guide and organize an individuals perception.

Martin and Halverson suggest that sex stereotypes serves as schemas to organize and structure social information because they relate to self and are salient in the child's environment. Sex stereotypes functions at two levels - At the first level the child evaluates the incoming information as "appropriate or inappropriate for my gender" and forms schemas for both masculine and feminine stereotypes. At the second level an environmental stimulus is judged appropriate for self. Thus, a child acquires and develops its sex role.

Bem (1979, 1981) also proposes that gender schemas are important organizers of information. According to her, sex role acquisition depends on the functional importance or salience of gender related schemas. An individual, for whom gender is a dominant scheme applied to many situations of life, is highly sex typed. While an individual, for whom gender related, schemas are present and well ingrained but are less dominant in life, is androgynous.

### GENDER SCHEMA THEORY

Gender Schema theory (Bem, 1981 b, 1983) contains features of both the cognitive-developmental and the social learning accounts of sex typing. In particular, gender schema theory proposes that sex typing derives in large measure from gender schematic processing, from a generalized readiness on the part of the child to encode and to organize information including information about the self - according to the culture's definitions of maleness and femaleness. Like cognitive-developmental theory, then, gender scheme theory proposes that sex typing is mediated by the child's own cognitive processing. However, gender schema theory further proposes that gender schematic processing is itself derived from the sex-differentiated practices of the social community. Thus, like social learning theory, gender schema theory assumes that sex typing is a learned phenomenon and hence that is neither inevitable nor unmodifiable.

### GENDER-SCHEMATIC PROCESSING

Gender schema theory begins with the observation that the developing child invariably learns his or her society's cultural definitions of femaleness and maleness. In most societies, these

definitions comprise a diverse and sprawling network of sex-linked associations encompassing not only those features directly related to female and male persons, such as anatomy, reproductive function, division of labour and personality attributes, but also features more remotely or metaphorically related to sex, such as the angularity or roundedness of an abstract shape and the periodicity of the moon. Indeed, neither dichotomy in human experience appears to have as many entities linked to it as does the distinction between female and male.

Gender Schema theory proposes that, in addition to learning such content-specific information about gender, the child also learns to invoke this heterogenous network of sex-related associations in order to evaluate and assimilate new information. The child, in short, learns to encode and organize information in terms of an evolving gender schema.

A schema is a cognitive structure, a network of associations that organises and guides an individual's perception. A schema functions as an anticipatory structure, a readiness to search for and assimilate incoming information in

schema-relevant terms. Schematic information processing is thus highly selective and enables the individual to impose structure and meaning on to a vast array of incoming stimuli. More specifically, schematic information processing entails a readiness to sort information into categories on the basis of some particular dimension, despite the existence of other dimensions that could serve equally well in this regard. Gender-schematic processing in particular thus involves spontaneously sorting persons, attributes, and behaviours into masculine and feminine categories or "equivalence classes" regardless of their differences on a variety of dimensions unrelated to gender - for example, spontaneously placing items like *tender* and *nightingale* into a feminine category and items like *assertive* and *eagle* into a masculine category. Gender schema theory thus construes perception as a constructive process in which it is the interaction between incoming information and an individual's preexisting schema that determines what is perceived.

What gender schema theory proposes, then, is that the phenomenon of sex typing derives in part from gender schematic processing, from an individual's generalized readiness to process information on the basis of the sex-linked associations

that constitute the gender schema. Specifically, the theory proposes that sex typing results in part from the assimilation of the self-concept itself to the gender schema. As children learn the contents of their society's gender schema, they learn which attributes are to be linked with their own sex and hence with themselves. This does not simply entail learning the defined relationship between each sex and each dimension or attribute - that boys are to be strong and girls weak, for example - but involves the deeper lesson that the dimensions themselves are differentially applicable to the two sexes. Thus the strong-weak dimension itself is absent from the schema to be applied to girls just as the dimension of nurturance is implicitly omitted from the schema to be applied to boys. The child learns to apply this same schematic selectivity to the self, to choose from among the many possible dimensions of human personality only that subset defined as applicable to his or her own sex and thereby eligible for organizing the diverse contents of the self-concept. Thus do children's self-concepts become sex typed, and thus do the two sexes become, in their own eyes, not only different in degree, but different in kind.

Simultaneously, the child also learns to evaluate his or her adequacy as a person according

to the gender schema, to match his or her preference, attitudes, behaviours, and personal attributes against the prototypes stored within it. The gender schema becomes a prescriptive standard or guide (cf. Kagan, 1964), and self-esteem becomes its hostage. Here, then enters an internalized motivational factor that prompts an individual to regulate his or her behaviour so that it conforms to cultural definitions of femaleness and maleness.

From the perspective of gender schema theory, then males and females behave differently from one another on the average because, as individuals, they have each come to perceive, evaluate, and regulate both their own behaviour and the behaviour of others in accordance with cultural definitions of gender appropriateness. Thus do cultural myths become self-fulfilling prophecies, and thus, according to gender schema theory, do many gender differences emerge.

It is important to note that gender schema theory is a theory of process, not content. Because sex-typed individuals are seen as processing information and regulating their behaviour according to what—ever definitions of femininity and masculinity their culture happens to provide, it is

the process of dividing the world into feminine and masculine categories - and not the content of the categories - that is central to the theory. If the culture has arbitrarily clustered a multidimensional hodgepodge of heterogeneous attributes into a category it calls masculinity or femininity, then that hodgepodge is what the sex-typed individual will take as the standard for his or her behaviour. Accordingly, sex-typed individuals are seen to differ from other individuals not primarily in the degree of femininity or masculinity they possess, but in the extent to which their self-concepts and behaviours are organized on the basis of gender rather than some other dimension. Many individuals who are not sex typed may describe themselves as, say, nurturant or dominant without implicating the concepts of femininity or masculinity. When sex-typed individuals so describe themselves, however, it is precisely the gender connotations of the attributes or behaviours that are presumed to be salient for them.

As a real life example of what it means to be gender schematic, consider how a particular college student might go about deciding which new hobby to try out from among the many possibilities available. Being gender schematic, however, means having a

readiness to look at this decision through the lens of gender and thereby to ask first : What sex is the hobby ? What sex am I ? Do they match ? If so, then the hobby will be considered further. If not, then it will be rejected without further consideration.

This is not to say, however, that gender-schematic individuals are consciously aware of their own gender schematicity. Most people unaware that their perceptions are (but need not be) organized on the basis of gender. The child learns to utilize certain dimensions rather than others as cognitive organizing principles but does not typically become aware that there were alternative dimensions that might have been used instead. The dimensions chosen as cognitive organizing principles thus function as a kind of nonconscious ideology, an underlying or deep cognitive structure influencing one's perceptions without conscious awareness. Such is the nature of schematic processing generally. Such, in particular, is the nature of gender - schematic processing.

A SOCIAL INTERACTIONIST APPROACH :  
RE-EXAMINING SEX ROLE ACQUISITION

The recent accumulation of empirical information shows that the empirical findings are incompatible with the existing theories. As noted by

Phyllis Katz (1979) " a number of discontinuities exist between theory and reasearch on sex role acquisition. According to Anne Constantinople (1979) "These theories are inadequate to account for sex role acquisition". Hence there has been a growing need for a moe adequate theory of sex role acquisition than those currently available (Cahill, 1980). Two recent articles on sex role acquisition are exemplary of this search for a theory. Constantinople (1979) in one article advances a miniature model for sex role development based on a reinterpretation of Pleck's (1975), "Sex roles as rules" Paradigm. In the other article Michael Lewis & Marsha Weinraub (1979) propose an electric theory alternately termed as interactional or constructionist. But neither is wholly satisfying the former being limited in scope and the latter encumbered by Kohlberg's cognitive developmental theoretical categories (Cahill, 1980). Hence, Spencer & Cahill (1979, 1980) proposes a social interactionist approach to be applied to sex role acquisition which incorporates the current models and traditional theories too. This approach is based on recent empirical findings on sex role acquisition and the social psychology of George Herbert Mead. This perspective holds that the meaning of objects and events emerge out of social interaction. Biological differences between the sexes do not directly

influence sex role acquisition and development. The effect is indirect, a result of typical social reactions to such differences. Hence, this theory proposes that sex be viewed as social label, an instance of social classification and it also stresses the influence of sex labels on social interactions (Cahill, 1980).

Although the social interactionist theory attempts to move beyond the limitations of existing sex role theories, it adopts certain insights from these theories. Like social learning theory it recognizes the influence of other's responses on children's gender related behaviour, like cognitive development theory it stresses on the child's active participation in his or her own gender development. This theory also incorporates Lewis & Weinraub's view that gender development is related with the child's evolving knowledge of self and others and also Constantinople's view that development of gender competence is related to process of learning gender related behaviour guidelines.

#### THE CONCEPT OF SEX ROLES IN HINDU PHILOSOPHY

The concept of bisexuality in Indian thought which is as ancient as three thousand years was harped upon by Indian thinkers to find out a

plausible cosmology. Gradually as this theory of duality developed, it was represented by various concepts such as Purusa-Prak<sup>r</sup>iti, active-passive, masculine-feminine, Siva-sakti and many others. The inner implications of all these concepts was the same and these divisions were ascribed by Indian thinkers as being the two aspects of the ultimate reality.

In the Vedas we find the two eternally co-existent substances, the golden egg or Hiranyagarbha and the eternal water evolved out of one ultimate substratum, which were contemplated at the root of creation. These two substances were interpreted as the active purusa and the passive prakriti (Dasgupta, 1946).

In the Rig Vedas we find several pair concepts arising out of ultimate reality which were composed of one male and one female such as Aditi and Daksha, Dyana and Prithvi, Narayana and Ananta, Purusa and Prakriti. In another legend of the Rig-veda, Yama was conceived as having the character of hermaphrodite being. Afterwards this Yama was split into Yama & Yami, a male and a female who were regarded as the first parents of human being. Another pair of two aspects of one hermaph<sup>r</sup>odite

being found in the **Puranas** is that of **Ila & La**. Such paired deities are also worshipped by certain Indian tribes (Sinha, 1966 , Bhattacharya 1978, Dandekar 1962).

The **Upanishadas** explain the course of creation by the principle of duality, in subordination to the principle of unity. The account of creation given in the **Upanishadas** is like this :

"**Prajapati** tired of solitude, draws forth from itself everything that exists, or produces the world after having divided himself into two, one half male and the other half female" (Radhakrishnan 1929).

Here we get a clear vision of bisexuality in ultimate reality. The male and female together form a complete whole, is maintained here.

The **Samkhya** theory of cosmology propounds the concepts of **Purusa & Prakriti** to be responsible for creation. The **Purusa** is pure consciousness, ascribed as passive. The **Prakriti** is the unconscious principle which evolves the world and is active. But

its activity for world evolution is roused only when it comes in proximity (Samyog/Sannidhi) with the Purusa. By its relation to Prakriti, Purusa is roused to its self consciousness. Thus, Purusa & Prakriti are mutually dependent and inseparable, (Radhakrishnan 1929). the concept of masculinity and femininity can be ascribed to the Purusa & Prakriti using the analogies of the Samkhya where Prakriti is described as a dancing girl and Purusa as the man who enjoys her dance. Prakriti requires the presence of Purusa in order to be appreciated by someone.

In the Vedanta we find that the principle of Maya (illusion) is responsible for the multiple appearance of reality but, Maya is included in Brahman. Mythologically Maya has been given a feminine image (Radhakrishnan 1929).

Gradually the Purusa-Prakriti concept of the Samkhya permeated into the mass-mind of ancient India. The religion of the Puranas developed the concept of androgynous god and one can find in the Hindu pantheon of Gods, the image of Ardhanarishwara, Linga Yoni, Hari Hara or Hariradha, and pair images of Vishnu-Lakshmi, Radha-Krishna, Siva-Parvati, and others ( Rao 1916).

**Ardhanarishwara** image philosophically represents the union of the creative principles of activity of passivity or masculinity and femininity.

In the **Vishnu Purana** Vishnu as the supreme being is identified with both spirit and crude matter **Purusa & Prakriti**. The **Siva Purana** offers the legend that **Brahma**, after failing in his task of creation, because he created only males, mediated upon **Siva** for a way out and **Siva** appeared before him in the composite image of male and female i.e. **Ardhanarishwara**.

In the **Bhagvat Purana**, **Mahadev** has been described as the **Parama brahman** or the supreme being and **Sakti** and **Siva** are his two agencies but one with himself (Rao, 1916).

In **Markandeya Purana**, **Rudra & Vishnu** are cojoined in a composite figure of **Hariradha** in which **Vishnu** is identified with the female aspect (Rao, 1916).

The concept of bisexuality took a new turn with the gradual development of **Tantricism**, **Vaisnavism** and several other cults. These sects

brought the concept of bisexuality or **Ardhanarishwara** to the life of every moment of an individual.

The **Tantra** believes in the principle of duality in absolute oneness. The **Brahman** has two aspects in its nature, the negative and the positive, the static and the dynamic. These two are represented by **Siva & Sakti**, the male and female principles (Das Gupta 1974).

**Tantra** holds that the human body is the best medium for realisation of truth. It imagines the left side of the body as female, and the right side as male. The union of these two leads one to realization of self knowledge.

The principle of duality and bisexuality is reflected in other sects too such as **Vaisnava** sect, **Baul** sect (lyric poets) of Bengal, **Sufi** sect and **Nath** sect of North India, Sikh religion (Dasgupta, 1946; Coomarswami ;1948, Bhulani, 1956; Singh 1956).

The principle of duality in the sense of bisexuality in man and nature was envisaged not only in India but also in the early thoughts of some other ancient civilizations too.

1.15 TRADITIONAL APPROACH V/S RECENT APPROACH

Traditionally, our society has considered masculinity to be the mark of the psychologically healthy male and feminity<sup>ni</sup><sub>^</sub> to be the mark of the psychologically healthy female. Recently, however, the women's liberation movement has been arguing that our current system of sex role differentiation has long since outlined its usefulness and prevents both men and women from developing as full and complete human beings. Supporters of this movement insist that people should no longer be socialized to conform to outdated standards of masculinity and femininity, but they should be encouraged to be, Androgynous that is, they should be encouraged to be both instrumental & expressive both assertive and yielding both masculine and feminine- depending upon the situational appropriateness of these various behaviour. This is then the recent approach to sex roles or sex typing. Given below are the operational definitions, basic underlying assumptions and dimensionality for masculinity - femininity and Androgyny approaches.

### 1.15(a) CONCEPT OF MASCULINITY FEMININITY

This traditional formulation of sex typing suggests that adoption of sex roles appropriate to one's male or female gender is developmentally desirable. Deviations from naturally sanctioned sex role behaviour was considered maladaptive and undesirable.

### DEFINITION OF MASCULINITY-FEMININITY

The terms 'Masculinity and Femininity' have a long history in the psychological discourses. A search for definitions related to some theoretical position leads almost nowhere except to Freud (1965) and Jung (1956). The most generalized definitions of the terms used by those developing tests of masculinity and femininity would seem to be that -

"Masculinity and Femininity are relatively enduring traits which are more or less rooted in anatomy, physiology and early experience and which generally serves to distinguish males from females in appearance, attitudes and behaviour". They are also defined as "additive combinations of trait terms judged to be significantly more desirable for or more characteristic of each sex, relative to

other" (Locksley & Colten, 1977).

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF MASCULINITY-FEMININITY APPROACH  
(SPENCE & HELMREICH, 1978)

The traditional conception of sex roles rely on some different assumptions than the recent formulation of androgyny.

Constantinople (1973) in her detailed critique of the traditional measurement of sex role characteristics, noted that the masculinity - femininity test construction assumes that :

1. Masculinity and Femininity represent the negatively correlated ends of a unidimensional continuum. When so defined high masculinity implies low femininity, and the absence of masculine characteristics necessarily implies the presence of feminine ones. Thus the meaning of masculinity and femininity was defined in terms of empirical sex differentiated frequency of item endorsement without apparent reliance on any theory or concept of sex roles. Sex related traits can, therefore, be represented by a single bipolar continuum with masculinity-femininity at its end points.

2. The ties among gender-related phenomena are strong. This assumption implies that the degree to which individuals are sex typed in personality characteristics, is highly correlated with the degree to which they exhibit with the degree to which they exhibit appropriate sex role preferences and behaviours.
  
3. Individuals who do not display a proper amount of sex role orientation, are less well-adjusted, socially and emotionally than those who conform to normative expectations.

DIMENSIONALITY OF THE MASCULINITY - FEMININITY  
APPROACH (CONSTANTINOPLE 1973)

The definition of masculinity - femininity that has been used by test developers has contained two assumptions - Unidimensionality and Bipolarity. This approach used the Bipolar continuum. In masculinity - femininity test construction, the assumption of bipolarity is evident in at least three ways :

- (a) The dependence on biological sex alone as the criterion for an item's masculinity - femininity relevance, since item selection is usually based solely on its ability to discriminate the responses of the two sexes;
- (b) The implication that the opposite of a masculine response is necessarily indicative of femininity especially in tests where only two options are provided;
- (c) The use of a single masculinity - femininity score which is based on the algebraic summation of masculinity and femininity responses and places the individual somewhere on a single bipolar dimension.

1.15(b) THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANDROGYNY APPROACH

The traditional conceptions of Masculine and Feminine are inappropriate to the kind of world we can live in the second half of the 20th Century. Sex roles and sex typing have experienced an enthusiastic, if occasionally impassioned rebirth of interest in the last several years. Recently, the

concept of Psychological Androgyny (Bem 1974, 1975, 1976; Block 1973, Heilburn 1973, Spence and Helmreich 1978, Spence & Stapp, 1974, 1975. Bem Note 1 ) has emerged in the wake of Masculinity - Femininity research. The appealing concept of psychological androgyny and the theory in which it is nestled, seems to be saying not only that there is no intrinsic link between one's anatomical sex and one's behaviour and interest, but also that people whose personalities fail to conform to sex role standards are better off for it. The concept implies that it is possible for an individual to be both assertive and compassionate both instrumental and expressive, both masculine and feminine, depending upon the situational modalities; and it further implies that an individual may even blend these complementary modalities in a single act (Bem 1977).

#### DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ANDROGYNY

Androgyny has been defined in various ways in the past. Few of these definitions are given below : (Hefner, Rebecca, Oleshonsky, 1973).

1. Having both male and female characteristics, hermaphroditic;

2. Bearing both male and female flowers in the same chester, with the male flowers uppermost (Botany) - (Def. 1 & 2 are from Webster's New International 2nd ed.);
3. The disappearance of sex distinctions (Stoll 1973);
4. Woman-in-man, Man-in-woman (Heilbrun, 1973);
5. ...a movement away from sexual polarization and prison of gender towards a world in which individual roles and modes of personal behaviour can be freely chosen. Androgyny suggests a spectrum upon which human beings choose their places without regard to propriety or custom (Heilbrun, 1975).
6. The person who is depending on the circumstances - both instrumental and expressive, both assertive and yielding, both masculine and feminine (Bem, 1972).
7. The capacity of a single person of either sex to embody the full range of human character

traits, despite cultural attempts to render some exclusively feminine and some exclusively masculine (Secor, 1974).

#### ASSESSMENT OF ANDROGYNY

Discontent with bipolar conceptions of masculinity and femininity has led to the development of many instruments which measure these dimensions separately. The most frequently used of these measures are two personality measures, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) developed by Bem in 1974 and the personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Spence, Helmreich and Stapp in 1974, 1975. Both these measures describe desirable instrumental and expressive traits. The demonstration that desirable masculine and feminine attributes are  $\perp$ thogonal has led to the development of methods to represent their combined influence.

Three major scoring schemes all based on a system of categories have been proposed. These have also led to reformulations of the definitions of Androgyny.

These scoring schemes are :

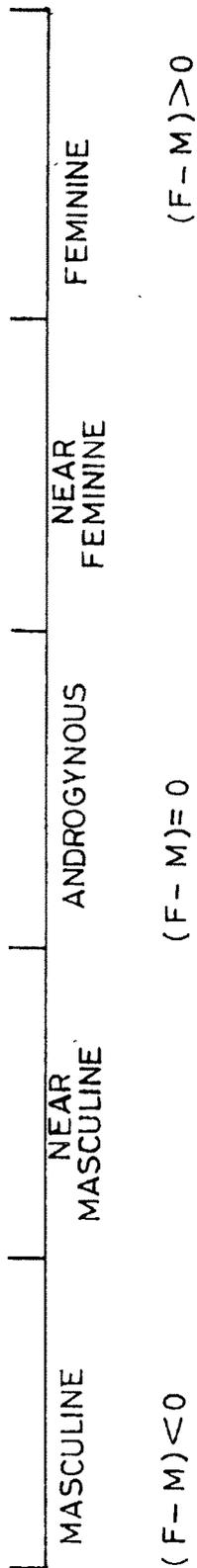
1. Bem's Balance Model.

2. Spence and Helmreich's Absolute Model.
3. Jacob Orlofsky's Hybrid Model

1. BEM'S BALANCE MODEL

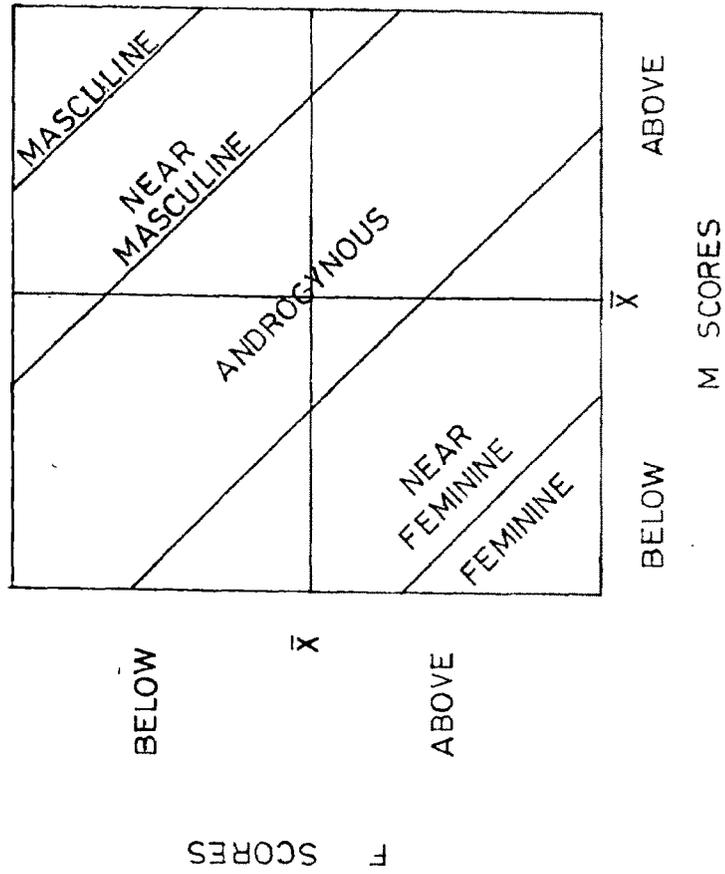
Bem in 1974 developed a scoring scheme in which masculinity and femininity scores are not kept separate and independently related to criterion measures but are combined. Masculinity is subtracted from femininity to yield a single (androgyny) score for each individual and a single distribution of scores for groups of individuals. Bem divided these differences score (femininity - masculinity) distributions using cut off scores into five positions masculine, near masculine, androgynous, near feminine and feminine as shown in the diagram 3. According to this scoring scheme Androgyny is operationally defined as a Balance of masculinity and feminity scores i.e. androgynous individuals are those men and women at the middle of the continuum whose masculinity and feminity scores are approximately equal or **Balanced**.

The relationship between the difference method of combining masculinity and femininity scores and subjects score level on each scale is schematically shown in the diagram No.4. In this



BEM'S EMPIRICAL CLASSIFICATION  
( SPENCE & HELMREICH , 1979 )

DIAGRAM NO: 4



BEM'S BALANCE MODEL

( SPENCE & HELMREICH , 1979 )

diagram mean<sup>of</sup> masculinity and femininity scores have been used to divide the figure into four quadrants (above the mean on both masculinity and femininity, above on masculinity, below on femininity, etc.) Androgynous individuals may have masculinity and femininity scores at any score level, but the absolute discrepancy between their scores is low. As one proceeds in either direction, score discrepancies increase and at the Masculine or Feminine extremes most individuals are high in one score dimension and low in the other.

Bem's basic assumption underlying this scoring scheme is that individuals who are sex typed in one attribute or behaviour exhibit the same sex typed behaviour in another. Thus, according to Bem sex typed individuals are rigid while non sex typed are flexible in all situations. Bem's definition of **sextyped** individuals were those with high level of gender specific characteristics and low level of opposite gender characteristics. Those individuals who were not so sex typed were labelled as **non sex typed**. These individuals Bem initially called the **Andogynous** who were equal in masculinity and femininity characteristics whatever their absolute level. Bem further acknowledged the possibility of **cross sexed** individuals. Thus Bem's critical

classification of sex roles is as given below in the Diagram (Spence & Helmreich, 1984) No.5.

2. SPENCE AND HELMREICH'S ABSOLUTE MODEL

Spence and Helmreich in 1975, 1978, have advocated a scoring scheme by which they classified individuals on their joint masculinity and femininity scores that takes the level of each into account. According to this scoring scheme **Androgyny** is redefined as a label for individuals with relatively high masculinity and femininity scores then as a label for those with equal masculinity and femininity scores.

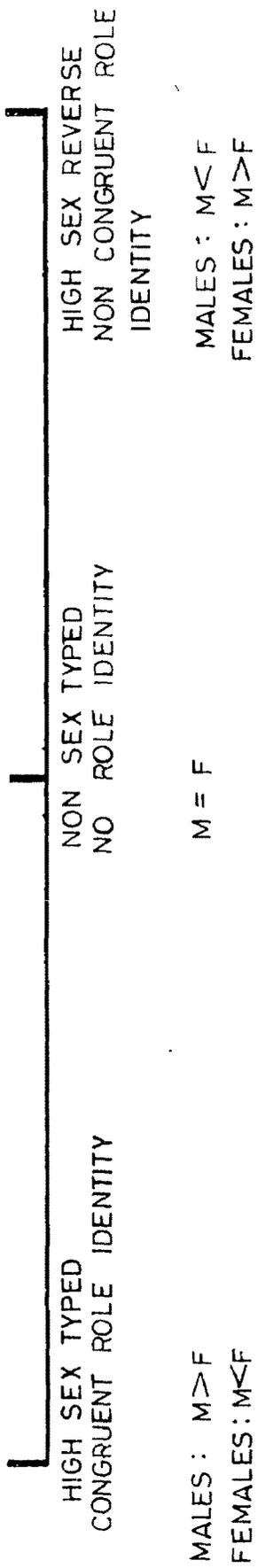
According to Spence and Helmreich, this method based on absolute score levels is derived by a median split. The medians on masculinity and femininity of some normative group are used to classify individuals into four groups. Thus, this scoring scheme redefines **Androgynous** as "those individuals" who scores on both masculinity and femininity. This quadrant scoring and orthogonal model of sex roles is shown in the Diagram No.7.

In 1977, Bem too discarded the difference method and accepted the median split method of scoring and also accepted the reformulated definition of Androgyny as "relatively higher" score on both masculinity and femininity (Spence & Helmreich 1979).

### 3. ORLOFSKY'S HYBRID DIFFERENCE / MEDIAN MODEL

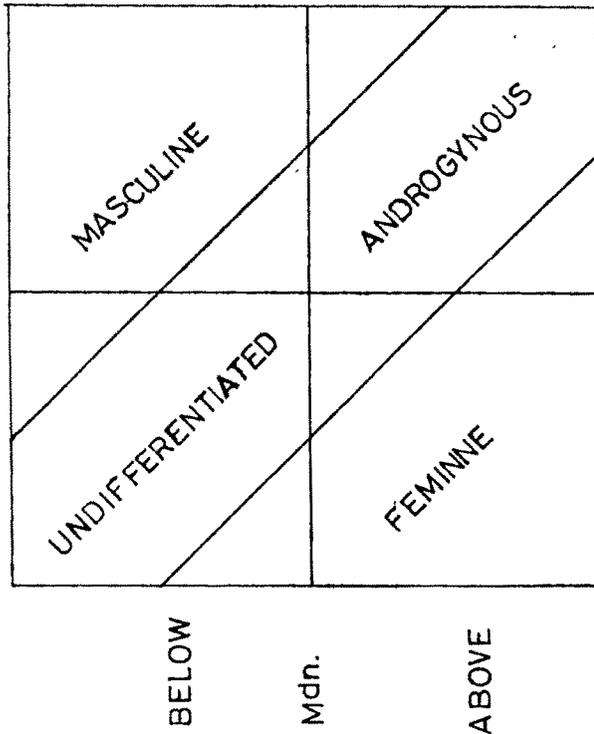
Jacob Orlofsky and his colleagues in 1977 gave a scoring scheme which combines both Bem's difference scoring schema and Spence & Helmreich's median scoring scheme which he called a hybrid scoring scheme. This scoring scheme is given in the Diagram No.6.

According to this method, subjects are broken down into three groups, using the difference score method cut off scores proposed by Bem in 1974 i.e. Masculine, Feminine and balanced. Later in the hybrid model, those in the balanced group who score below the overall median in both masculinity and femininity are separated into a fourth group of undifferentiated. The remaining of the balanced group are called Androgynous. Thus Androgyny is finally defined as "those who are higher on



BEM'S THEORETICAL CLASSIFICATION

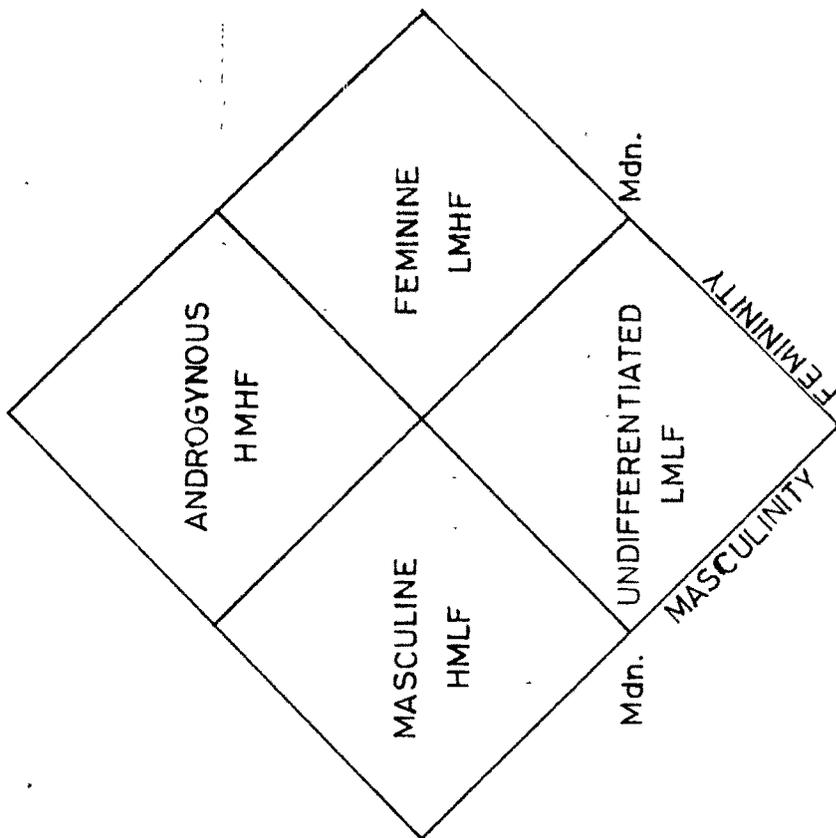
( SPENCE & HELMREICH , 1979 )



BELOW Mdn. ABOVE  
M SCORES

TACOB ORLOFSKY'S HYBRID MODEL  
( SPENCE & HELMREICH , 1979 )

F SCORES



ORTHOGONAL MODEL OF SEX TYPING.

(SPENCE & HELMREICH, 1979)

masculinity and femininity scores than the median of M&F scores" (Spence & Helmreich, 1979; Orlofsky, 1977).

#### ANDROGYNY - OPERATIONALLY DEFINED

Psychological Androgyny has been operationally defined simply as the function of Masculinity - Femininity scores. Bem has defined her subjects in her own research on sex roles as Masculine, Feminine and Androgynous on the basis of Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) which consists of both a Masculinity and Femininity Scale, each consisting of 20 personality characteristics. When taking the BSRI, the person has to rate how well each of these 20 M and 20 F traits describe him on a 7 point scale. The degree of sex role stereotyping in the person's self concept is then defined as the 't ratio' for difference between his or her mean scores on M and F scale. Thus if a person's M score is higher than his F, he has a Masculine sex role, if the F score is higher than his M, then he has a Feminine sex role, but if the person's M and F scores are approximately equal, he has an Androgynous sex role. Thus, according to this definition, "An androgynous individual is the one

who does not distinguish between Masculinity and Femininity in his or herself's description, and androgyny can thus be seen as representing the equal endorsement of both masculinity and femininity". (Bem, 1977).

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RECENT APPROACH OF  
ANDROGYNY : (KELLY & WORELL, 1977)

The recent formulation of sex roles rely on a different set of assumptions than the traditional approach. They may be listed as below :

1. An orthogonal two dimensional model of masculinity - femininity: Persons of either gender can be high or low on each dimension because they are independent domains and an individual is considered sex typed to the degree that a person endorses sex stereotyped characteristics of one variety to the exclusion of other variety. It is, therefore, possible to distinguish Androgyny as the endorsement in relatively balanced equal proportions.
2. A socio cultural definition of sex roles : If masculinity and femininity are not construed

as opposites, they must be defined in some manner that is sex typed, but nonmutually exclusive. The formulations of sex roles by Bem (1974) utilize some variant of the expressive instrumental distinction where expressive stands for Femininity culturally defined and instrumental for Masculinity culturally defined. They assume a co-existence of these separate dimensions in an androgynous individual.

3. the sampling of positive socially valued but sex-typed characteristics: Most current measures of sex role type, approach Masculinity and Femininity in terms of socially desirable characteristics for Males & Females respectively.
4. A response repertoire model of sex role style: This model has been incorporated in the androgyny model, which states that a highlysex typed person is seen to have available limited number of effective behavioural options to deal with situations. A highly sex typed person may be reluctant

to engage in cross-typed behaviour while an Androgynous has both forms of Masculine and Feminine responses in his or her repertoire and hence derives adaptive behavioural flexibility from his array of options (Bem, 1974, 1975).

#### DIMENSIONALITY OF THE RECENT APPROACH

The recent approach is based on the orthogonal model as opposed to the bipolar model of the traditional approach. It emphasizes the dualistic nature of characteristics culturally regarded as orthogonal quantifiable dimensions which coexist within the same individual without any regard to his or her gender. Typically, the newer techniques provide separate and continuous measures of masculinity and femininity with scale medians used to create a four fold or quadrant sex role typology (Penick & Power 1980).

According to this quadrant scoring system, the following sex role classification is acquired as given in Table 1 herebelow :

TABLE :

Biological Sex	Masculinity Median Score	Femininity Median Score	Sex Role Typology
Male	Above Median	Below Median	Stereotyped
Female	Below Median	Above Median	Stereotyped
Male	Below Median	Above Median	Cross sexed
Female	Above Median	Below Median	Cross sexed
Male	Above Median	Above Median	Androgynous
Female	Above Median	Above Median	Androgynous
Male	Below Median	Below Median	Undifferentiated
Female	Below Median	Below Median	Undifferentiated

The schematic representation of the above table is given in Figure : 7.

#### 1.16 SEX ROLES AND MENSTRUAL DISTRESS:RELATED RESEARCHES

Some researchers have suggested that women who have more positive attitudes about their body will report fewer menstrual distress symptoms (Dinardo, 1975) while those who are less able to accept their sex role will report more symptoms (Berry and McGuire, 1972). But the evidence linking sex role orientation to menstrual distress is mixed.

Chernovetz, Jones and Hanson (1979) asked college women to complete the MDQ & BSRI and found that although BSRI masculinity scores were not related to MDQ scores, women who were high on BSRI femininity reported more menstrual distress.

Geisen in 1981 found that women who are unassertive and dissatisfied with their sex role also report more symptoms and that there may be more sex role conflict among women with high and those with low menstrual distress. Sieverding and her colleagues too found in 1984 that some women who have a liberated concept of the female role are not able to restructure their behaviour in light of their ideas.

Several reserachers have failed to identify any link between a woman's feminine identity and her menstrual cycle symptoms e.g. Siegel in 1983. Moreover Gough in 1975 had also found that neither sexual knowledge nor sexual attitudes and practices were related to MDQ scores. Piccolo in 1982 examined the connections between menstrual cycle distress and sex roles among university women. The women wrote stories to pictures eliciting ~~responses~~ about feminine sex role and completed an avoidance of sexual

intimacy scale. There were no significant correlations between MDQ distress scores and any of these scales.

1.17 THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

One of the signs pointing to a widening conceptual scope of psychosomatic study is the recent interest in the psychological basis of non-toxic somatic functioning. Menstrual flow process prone to psychosomatic disruption is the topic of the present study. Whereas the normal psychosomatics searches for determinants of individual differences in menstruation such as menarche, duration of menstruation and bio-psycho-social transitions of feminine maturation, the customary clinical focus is on psychic determinants of menstrual distress (Peskin, 1968). In the present study several psycho-social variables have been taken in relation to menstrual distress. These are sex roles, general stress level and religion. These are the independent variables in the present research and the dependent variable is menstrual distress.

The menstrual literature reflects the beliefs that 1) woman experience fluctuations in physiological and psychological symptoms associated with menstrual cycle. 2) These fluctuations are hormonally and not psychosocially determined and 3) these fluctuations are negative in nature. Such beliefs seem likely to affect individual women's attitudes and expectations regarding the menstrual distress (Brooks, Gunn and Ruble, 1980). The acceptance of a more psycho social orientation in the study of menstruation led to expose the effects of certain psycho-social variables on menstrual distress.

Further more, numerous myths have accumulated regarding menstruation many of them being widely accepted despite a conspicuous absence of sound data to support them. Therefore, empirical evidence is needed to appraise the psychosocial determinants of menstrual distress and to dispel the myths.

Since menstrual distress is used both as an excuse for others to discriminate against women and as an excuse for women to obtain special dispensations, the undertaken research will give a

deeper insight into the psycho social causes of menstrual distress and thereby also suggest several coping strategies for menstrual distress.

The following theoretical assumptions will indicate both the need and the rationale for the present study.

1.18 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE PRESENT RESEARCH

(a) Assumption related to sex role and menstrual distress:

Past empirical research in the West suggests that females with more traditional attitudes towards their sex role tended to report more severe menstrual symptoms than women with more liberal views. (Karan and Collin, 1978, Tough, 1975). Past Indian studies have not investigated this possible cause of menstrual distress. The role of the Indian women has changed rapidly with the change in the social structure today. Today, the Indian women plays the dual role of a working woman and a housewife equally efficiently. This change in the status of women has also brought a change in her sex-role too. Thus the need of the present study is to investigate whether a change in sex roles of Indian women affects menstrual distress. The

theoretical assumption underlying the study will be that "Menstrual Distress is greater in women with (traditional) feminine sex role and is lesser in women with androgynous cross sexed and undifferentiated sex role".

(b) Assumption for general stress level and Menstrual distress.

Several studies in the West show that there are strong stress influences on menstrual cycle. Wilcoxon and her colleagues (1976) showed the effect of stress on menstrual distress and that stress plays a much more important role than biological changes in causing menstrual symptoms.

Indian society today is facing rapid social changes, urbanization and industrialization which have brought a number of stresses for the women community who plays a dual role of a working women and a housewife. Hence, Indian stress research should focus on the common irritations, frustrations and distressing demands of every day life rather than on less stressful life events. Hence, the need of the present study is to find out whether the general stress level or life events stress of Indian women affects their menstrual distress. The theoretical assumption underlying this research is

that "women with high general stress level will have greater menstrual distress compared to women with low general stress level".

(c) Assumptions regards to religion and menstrual distress

Paige (1973) suggested that the relationship between sex roles and menstrual distress may vary with the religion of the women. This is further supported by studies in the West among Protestants, Catholics and Jews on their experience of menstrual symptoms.

Thus, the need of the present study was to investigate the effect of religion on menstrual distress in Indian sample and also to find out whether religion fosters sex roles in Indian women. The theoretical assumption underlying this research is that "women from religious background which fosters a (traditional) feminine sex role will have greater menstrual distress than women from religious backgrounds which fosters other (liberal) androgynous and cross sexed sex roles".

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