



Disability, Gender and the Trajectories of Power

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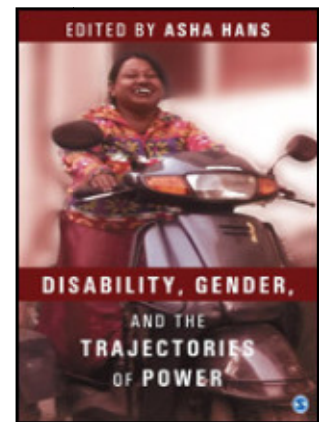
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Gender is often understood as the cultural interpretation of sexed bodies, embedded in the whole apparatus of a society's roles and norms. Usually seen in commission class structure - men being more powerful and dominant while women are less powerful and weaker. These power relations produce stereotypes of masculinity and femininity - traits and behaviour that are expected of men and women. Role expectations of women as the nurturer, men as breadwinner and so on, define approved ways to perform gender. In disability studies one pertinent question is, men and women experience disability similar or different?¹ This book is a good source to find out the answer of this question.

This edited volume offers a thorough overview of the various issues pertaining to women with disabilities which includes prospects and practices in the field of women with disabilities. The book has eleven chapters divided in three parts - Part I: Disability: a gendered problematic and conceptualization, Part II: Human experiences and agency and Part III: Toward nondiscriminatory gendered strategies apart from a Introduction: gendering the disability framework and an Epilogue: transforming invisibilities and obscure directions.

It is nice to see that two chapters are exclusively on psychosocial disability (disability related to mental health conditions) which generally not getting an adequate stake in disability related literature at least in India. The book successfully delineated the shift of focus on social over a medical model and argues for the rights of women with

psychosocial disabilities which is compromised and keep them on the periphery of society.

In a chapter, the value of women with disabilities in our society was outlined and double stand parameters used for the same was exposed. It is worth reading the chapter, 'I Feel Normal Inside. Outside, My Body Isn't!' by Malini Chib which gives a first hand account on indistinctness of normality concept which only considering so-called normal body and ignore normal identity of a individual who has disability. This book covered a range of issues - marriage, family, child-rearing and work associated to women with disabilities. Its gives an intersectional analysis and invisibilities and obscure directions on related issues of women with disabilities. It will be valuable reading in the field of women's rights, disability rights, women studies and disability studies particularly in social perspective even for health/rehabilitation it may give a new angle to think which is different than clinical or medical one. It fills the gap in the existing feminist and disability research.

While the simple binary (man and woman) has been persuasive, we now know that there are more than two biological sexes (transgender, and people with congenital ambiguous sex organs), and many ways of performing gender. Far from being a simple dichotomy gender turns out to be a complicated and evolving realm of meaning making among people with sexed bodies. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender suggest the fluidity of these performances and their capacity to change over time and across societies.¹ In this volume this particular aspect of gender and disability is not considered, rather only one gender that is female is exclusively considered like other literature generally do. So in the title 'women' is more apt than 'gender'.

REFERENCE

1. H. Meekosha. Gender and disability. Draft entry for the forthcoming Sage Encyclopaedia of Disability Edited by Gary L. Albrecht. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 2004. Retrieved on May15, 2015 from: disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/meekosha-meekosha.pdf.

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