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COURSE: BSN 2C

Gender & Society
Activity 2

1. Choose at least three institutions below and explain how they shape ideas of being "masculine" or "feminine":

a. Family

Parents raise boys and girls differently. Boys are often encouraged to engage in activities that require physical strength like sports. Parents usually ask the male to carry heavy equipment such as a water jug as a chore. On the flip side, girls are encouraged to nurture their compassion and caring attitude. They are encouraged to take care of their younger siblings and focus their skills on domestic work like cleaning, washing the dishes, and cooking.

b. Education

Social interactions in schools can put a lot of pressure on students to fit in with gender norms. To blend in with their masculine friends, boys may experience pressure to act strong, repress their feelings, or participate in physical activities. People who don't fit these molds may be made fun of or excluded. On the contrary, girls might be encouraged to focus on appearance, relationships, and social harmony, while boys may view these traits as weaknesses. Girls who challenge these norms by being outspoken, assertive, or "too bold" might face social rejection.

c. Religion

Ideas of what it means to be "masculine" or "feminine" have historically been greatly influenced by religion, as many religious traditions offer teachings, narratives, and instructions that support particular gender roles. Certain cultures have religious teachings that enforce stringent dress codes for women, such as the hijab in Islam or modest attire in many Christian and Jewish communities. Though the emphasis on modesty and physical attractiveness is frequently greater for women, men may also be expected to dress modestly and act honorably.

2. Give three examples of traditional masculinity and femininity in society.

Women have been traditionally seen as the one who stays at home and manages the house—does the cooking, cleaning, washing, and raising the children. On the other hand, men are expected to be physically strong and can handle hard labor. They are expected to bring food to the table and be the money maker of the family.

Society also pressures women to conform to beauty standards; that women should be physically attractive even as they get older. Sometimes, society justifies men cheating on their wives because their wives have "lost their beauty." While women's appearances are scrutinized, men also experience the same pressures, but with their emotions. Men are traditionally supposed to be the backbone of the family, and he must not show vulnerability. People have

called men who have shown their emotions as part of the gay people community. Thus, men are taught to suppress their emotions and remain calm and poised during challenges.

In many cultures and religious beliefs, women are expected to take the supporting role in the family and even professionally. They must be submissive to their husbands and defer to the decisions of men. In contrast, men should display assertiveness and confidence in making decisions. Men are expected to take the lead role and assert their dominance in relationships and work.

3. How are gender roles changing in modern society? Pick two changes happening today.

In the past, women were often expected to focus on homemaking and raising children. Now, women are pursuing careers in all sectors, from leadership positions in business to STEM fields. The idea that women may succeed in the workplace without compromising their duties as partners or mothers is becoming more widely accepted. This change is possible due to the evolving workplace regulations that make it easier for women to manage their professional and family obligations, such as remote work, flexible scheduling, and parental leave.

Another thing is that society is now steadily removing the shackles of the stereotypes about gender-specific careers. Before, there were “appropriate” jobs for men and women. Today, those boundaries are becoming much more fluid. Women are entering male-dominated fields like technology, engineering, and finance, while men are increasingly joining fields like nursing, teaching, and the arts, which were traditionally “a woman’s work”.