

ISSN: 2582-2942



# LEXFORTI

Legal Journal

Vol-II Issue- I

October, 2020

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**Gender Neutral Language**

Swathy Sudhir

Devika Jayaraj

## ABSTRACT

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*Gender Neutral Language has recently gained its recognition. Nowadays, LGBTQIA+ and linguists have been struggling to include gender neutral language. This paper aims to identify what gender neutral language is, how language is gendered and how it is narrowed down to just norms of binary gender. This paper would also explore how gendered language reinforces gendered stereotypes, biasness and patriarchy in the society. This is a one main disadvantage for women and their development in the society. It sheds light upon gender neutral language and law. How law and judgments have been using masculine overtone to denote any person regardless of their gender. This paper would also emphasise the need of gender neutral language in law so as to change the current system.*

## INTRODUCTION

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- Don't be sad (English)
- لا تحزن (Arabic)
- Ne soyez pas triste (French)

The three sentences mean the same, the differences lie in the association of gender in these languages. The English language is natural gender language and does not assign either the male or female gender to the statement. But both Arabic and French use the male plural form to connote this general statement.

There are over 7000 languages in the world, but many languages use the concept of gender as a grammatical category to classify nouns. The Greek philosopher Protagoras used the terms masculine, feminine, and neuter to categorise nouns, and introduced the concept of grammatical gender. This gender classification is based on a binary understanding of gender, i.e. gender and gender.

Languages that use gender can be classified into three. The first category is of *grammatical gender languages* or *gendered languages*. These languages are characterized by their assignment of feminine or masculine gender to nouns. When such nouns are used to refer to people, it generally reflects the gender of the person and other dependent forms like the adjectives and pronouns that are used to describe the said noun. These languages also tend to use the male forms of the noun to describe something in general (as mentioned above). Such languages are generally of Slavic (Russian), Germanic (German), Romance (Spanish), Indo-Aryan (Hindi), or Semitic (Hebrew) linguist families<sup>1</sup>. The next category includes languages that are called *natural gender languages*. They include English (a West Germanic language), and Northern Germanic (or Scandinavian) languages<sup>2</sup>. These languages distinguish gender through pronouns such as he/she and him/her, although, unlike gendered languages, most of the nouns are not assigned a gender. The third category is called *genderless languages*. These languages do not use grammatical gender to

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<sup>1</sup> Prewitt-Freilino, J. L., Caswell, T. A., & Laakso, E. K. (2011). The Gendering of Language: A Comparison of Gender Equality in Countries with Gendered, Natural Gender, and Genderless Languages. *Sex Roles*, 66(3-4), 268–281. doi:10.1007/s11199-011-0083-5

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*



distinguish their nouns including, pronouns, unlike natural gender languages. For example, *hän* in Finnish means both he and she and has no gender. They are Uralic (Finnish), Turkic (Turkish), Iranian (Persian), Sinitic (Chinese), and Bantu (Swahili) language families, along with some others<sup>3</sup>.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis developed by Edward Sapir and his pupil Benjamin Lee Whorf states that language influences one's thoughts and not vice versa. It is also called the linguistic relativity hypothesis. They hypothesized that people from different cultures think differently due to the differences in the language that they speak. The idea is that one's perception of reality is influenced by the language they speak. There have been numerous experiments and studies devoted to showing that the differences in the languages that we speak influence our thinking. Dan Isaac Slobin analyzed how different language speakers organized information about spatial relations and motion events. The concept was called the 'thinking for speaking' theory. According to the theory, while using the language, there are certain aspects of reality that relevant to the language at the moment of speaking it.

Studies reveal that gender entangled with language promotes the gendered perception of the world. When languages draw distinctions between the genders through discrimination of the feminine and masculine nouns and pronouns, people tend to display these differences between men and women. When grammatically gendered language is used generically, people visualize males. In 2009 New York high school students were made to read a passage either in a gender natural language (English) or a gendered language (French or Spanish), after which they were to complete a measure of sexism as part of a study. The exercise revealed that students who read the passage in English and took the sexism measure in English had a lesser sexist attitude as compared to students who went through the process in a gendered language<sup>4</sup>. A social experiment conducted replaced commonly used Swedish pronouns *hon* (she) and *han* (he) to *hen*, a non-gendered term that can replace both. After seven years, the native Swedish speakers imbibed the new non-binary word *hen*. Studies also suggest that countries with gendered language systems show a wider disparity between the status of men and women. But one must

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup>Wasserman, B. and Weseley, A., 2009. ¿Qué? Quoi? Do Languages with Grammatical Gender Promote Sexist Attitudes?. *Sex Roles*, 61(9-10), pp.634-643.

also keep in mind that mere disposal of gender grammatical language will not lead to a gender-neutral society.

The use of false generics affects how gender and language intersect. False-generics is when a purely feminine or masculine term is used to represent both men and women collectively. In the book '*Gender Across Languages: The Linguistic Representation of Women and Men*' suggests that false generics are almost always masculine and represent both males and females. Only a few languages use female generics, such as Iroquois languages (Seneca and Oneida), some Australian aboriginal languages, etc<sup>5</sup>. The use of male generics is not only patriarchal but also renders women invisible.

The use of male generic has negative implications on women from a legal perspective as well. When pronouns such as 'he' 'him' or 'his' used in a generic sense, create confusion whether the text talks about everyone or explicitly about men. The use of gender-neutral language in the legal sphere will go a long way toward achieving equality of all genders and their inclusivity in laws.

As the world is moving toward gender-fluidity, it is pertinent that we adopt the gender-neutral language. The usage of gender-neutral language will ensure the inclusivity of all of those people who do not fit perfectly on the binary-gender system rather than just women. The fight to achieve gender neutrality is not only about making women visible but, everyone who has been made invisible because of their gender identity.

## **WHAT IS GENDERED LANGUAGE AND HOW LANGUAGE IS GENDERED?**

Gendered-language is the usage of language which promotes bias towards a particular sex or social gender. In our daily lives, we notice many nouns and pronouns that are often gendered but neglected because of the way it has been in use over time. In English, there are terms like – '*businessman*' or '*waitress*' that specify a particular gender. The pronouns like '*he, his, and him*' are used as generic terms to refer people. E.g., *a lawyer should know how to communicate with his clients*. The fact that '*his*' used here denotes every human being irrespective of their gender proves that how gendered language is deep-rooted and normalized every day.

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<sup>5</sup> Hellinger, M. and Bussmann, H., 2001. *Gender Across Languages*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Certain adjectives like ‘*strong, protective, charming, and dependable*’ used to denote a male protagonist. How come such adjectives are not associated with women? Women do household chores, raise children, work in offices too but, they are tagged with words like – ‘*sensitive, emotional, affectionate, and so on.*’ Our minds are polluted with years of communication and experience that certain words only belong to a particular gender. What or who has to be blamed majorly for this situation? As one of the Academician, Allyson Jule quotes, “*the historical patriarchal hierarchy that has existed between men and women, where one (man) is considered the norm, and the other (woman) is marked as other – as something quite different from the norm*”<sup>6</sup>. This mind-set can cause women to be neglected and unseen.

The androcentric approach of using such powerful words to associate with men has made it difficult to abolish sexism in language. It is difficult to come out of the notion of gender-stereotypes and to be able to consider such adjectives as unisex as it is rooted in us since the eighteenth century.

What about gender other than male and female? Many non-binary famous personalities have expressed their views on how they are misgendered every day. Here comes the need for Gender-Neutral Language. Gender neutrality aims to avoid any form of discrimination that can be imposed on a person according to their sex or gender. It looks into those institutions, language, and policies that do not distinguish roles based on sex or gender. There is no social role or character assigned to any particular gender. The practice has of addressing people with stereotypical gender biases has to stop.

## **WHERE HAVE LANGUAGES BEEN GENDERED?**

### **NOUNS**

In English, ‘*man*’ and the words ending in ‘*man*’ are most commonly gendered. Unlike other languages, English doesn’t have a masculine and feminine grammatical gender for nouns except when referred to biological sex. Some of the gendered nouns used on a day to day basis are: - man, man-kind, freshman, man-made, mailman, chairman, policeman, steward/stewardess,

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<sup>6</sup> Prior, J., 2017. Teachers, What Is Gendered Language? | British Council. [online] Britishcouncil.org. Available at: <<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/what-is-gendered-language>>

actor/actress, congressman, and henceforth. There are gender-neutral nouns that can be used instead of these gendered nouns. 'Person, humanity, human-made, individual, machine-made, mail carrier, chairperson, coordinator, head, flight attendant, actor' are some of the gender-neutral nouns that can be substituted.

Spanish is a well-known example of gender language. All nouns in Spanish must be either feminine or masculine, and both definite articles and the adjectives must be consistent with the noun's gender. Also, note the fact that every word in Spanish is subjected to two sex-based noun classes. Every object partitioned into two dichotomous genders make the impression that all other aspects too shall be in such manner. Many languages assign nouns into different classes based on their cultural intelligibility. It has been proved psychologically that grammatical gender does shape our mind and attitude subconsciously.

## PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word that substitutes for a noun. Pronouns like *he, she, his, hers, him, her* are used for feminine and masculine nouns. *It* is used to represent any neutral non-human nouns. Over time, we have been taught to use '*he, his, him*' as default when the matter could be either male or female. This way of communicating and expressing was so common and normal but has recently been looked down upon. So, when there is a question of addressing any third gender person or communicate in a gender-neutral manner, there are many substitutes that can be used.

Usage of '**They**' – Even though there are doubts regarding the grammatical use of '*they*' but many still consider it as a good option. Many non-binary people have come forward with wanting to be referred to as '*they*.' Most of the time, '*they*' is used to refer to a plural antecedent. But, it can also be noticed that '*they*' is used to refer singular antecedent too.

Usage of "**She or He**", or "**She / He**" – While communicating or writing, if the gender of a person is unknown, then it is better to use '*he/she*' or '*he or she*'.

Alternate Genders and Pronouns – This situation can occur in a hypothetical situation when the audience can be either male or female, and so, the writer may choose to alternate between masculine and feminine pronouns. This will show how the pronouns and interchangeably used and still convey the same meaning while ensuring that both pronouns are being used. For people

who do not want to identify as either male or female numerous pronouns are being offered. These pronouns include ‘*Ze*’, ‘*E*’, ‘*ey*’, ‘*hir*’, ‘*xe*’ and ‘*ben*’, in Swedish; ‘*ve*’, and ‘*ne*’, and ‘*per*’, for person, ‘*thon*’ (a blend of ‘that’ and ‘one’). Another method is by eliminating the pronoun or by making the nouns and pronouns plural.

## TITLE AND NAMES

Another area where usage of gendered language is prominent is while using title and names. We all are aware of the usage of ‘*Mr.*’, ‘*Miss.*’, and ‘*Mrs.*’ ‘*Mr.*’ refers to any man whether married or not. But at the same time, *Miss* and *Mrs.* are used for women to address their status of whether being married or not. This is basically meant to define their relationship with men. Such usage can have an alternative by simply using ‘*Ms.*’ (which doesn’t indicate the marital status). It is noticed that sometimes in schools or colleges, women professors are addressed by ‘*Mrs.*’ irrespective of them being married or not. In such cases, the usage of ‘*Ms.*’ is much appropriate.

But the use of *Miss* or *Mrs* or *Mr* only includes people who identify themselves as male or female gender. What about people who gender non-binary or gender non-conforming or ones who do not want to associate with traditional binary gender classification? In 2015, the Oxford Dictionary added a new title to solve this problem, *Mx.* a gender-neutral title that can replace *Mr.*, *Miss.*, and *Mrs.* The title can be pronounced as ‘*mex*’ ‘*mix*’ or ‘*mux*’. The same year, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, issued to one of its students their graduation certificate with the honorific title *Mx.* This was in light of the Supreme Court judgment that recognized the rights of the transgender community and granted them the status of the third gender. According to Stan Carey, the title has been around since 1977 and has been gaining momentum<sup>7</sup>.

Writers tend to use only the first name while referring to a woman and use full name in case of a man. Normally, using the first name alone is considered informal and can imply a lack of respect. So, such usage and differentiation with respect to naming people has to be changed and both men and women must be addressed with their full names.

## HOW GENDERED LANGUAGE REINFORCES STEREOTYPES, BIASNESS AND PATRIARCHY?

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<sup>7</sup> Carey, S., 2020. ‘*Mx*’ – A New Gender-Neutral Title | Macmillan Dictionary Blog. [online] Macmillan Dictionary Blog. Available at: <<https://www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/mx-a-new-gender-neutral-title>>

The Cambridge Dictionary defines ‘*Stereotype*’ as a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong<sup>8</sup>. The stereotype is an assumption formed by a group of people. So, a gender stereotype is a generalized preconception about the characteristics, attributes that have to be performed by the gender. One such main stereotype is “*Women are weak*”, “*Men don’t cry*”. Gendered language has a huge role to play in these gender stereotypes. It was in 1975 when the issue of sexism and bias in language was addressed by Robyn Lakoff. She was a keen observer and wanted to steer the direction of gender research from a previous focus of grammar and phonetics to stylistic, syntactic, and semantic views<sup>9</sup>. She also insisted that women have created their subordinate status by accepting the tags and hedges given to them.

Often when writers write, it is pertinent to keep the context out of gender bias. But there are many books and write-ups where language has been gendered. Biased language offends a group of people based on sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, or political interest.

In a 2014 study, investigators tried to analyze how objects grammatical gender strongly predicted whether Spanish/Russian speakers classified objects as feminine or masculine, which means their language guided their decision. In research, when German and Spanish speakers were asked to describe the word ‘*key*’ that is masculine in German and feminine in Spanish, their description reflected this difference. The Germans described the key as hard, metal, jagged, serrated, etc. But Spanish people described it as little, shiny, golden, or intricate. The same responses reversed when another word “*bridge*”, which is masculine in Spanish and feminine in German, was given. Countries that spoke more gendered language had more gender inequality. So, in most cases, it becomes problematic when language reinforces inequality. It can also be stated with existing evidence that societies with deep gendered language have more gender inequality than a society with neutral gender language.

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<sup>8</sup> Dictionary.cambridge.org. n.d. STEREOTYPE | Meaning In The Cambridge English Dictionary. [online] Available at: <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/stereotype>>

<sup>9</sup> WRIGHT, B., 2002. Gender And Language: Challenging The Stereotypes. [ebook] Edgbaston, Birmingham, United Kingdom. Available at: <<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-artslaw/cels/essays/sociolinguistics/wright5.pdf>>

The language also seems to have an impact on moulding an individual's attitude towards gender and occupation. Gottfredson's theory on circumscription and compromise states that individuals will only consider occupation within an area bounded by their acceptable levels of prestige and sex type that was called the zone of acceptable alternatives<sup>10</sup>. This theory is divided into a developmental scheme of four stages. The second stage (age 6-8) is considered to be the time by when children start eliminating occupations that contrast with their gender self – concept. This implies that linguistic bias seems to have a deeper impact since childhood. Language depicts the character of a person, and it also defines the social life of a person. The schooling and literature of the children also play an important role in defining gender roles. The curriculum skews male and outnumbers women. It portrays male characters in heroic roles, and female characters are relegated to subordinate themes. Such a stereotypically fabricated image can have deeper roots in an individual's mind and may narrow down the role of a woman into accepting such dependant roles.

While reading a gender-specific noun, such as brother and sister or by a proper name such as Deepak and Rita, the gendered character of the person is automatically generated in our brain. The English language has no grammatical gender nouns, though stereotypical information can pass through the semantic definition of a noun, e.g., *mothers* are women. Similarly, one may come across a cognitive representation of a role name that is gender-biased. E.g., '*mechanics*' are generally considered to be men and, '*nurses*' are considered as female. Hence, simple usage of the noun 'mechanic' can result in inferring the noun to be a man and to be a woman in case if the noun is 'nurse'.

Occupation and employment is another area where such biases can be observed. A recent study aimed to explore the gender stereotypes in language that poses the support of equality in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics careers were by digging into 25 different languages. This study was to find the depth of languages on career stereotypes by gender. It was found that the language one spoke reflected indirectly in gender associations. It meant that linguistic associations may implicit people's judgment on what women are capable of. Language is moulded by cultural stereotypes that are one of the main causes of such biasness. Overall, the

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<sup>10</sup> Brott, P., 1993. Gottfredson's Theory Of Circumscription And Compromise: Implications For Career Counseling.. [online] Files.eric.ed.gov. Available at: <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED400482.pdf>>

study proved that if a person speaks gendered-language, then is most likely that he/she/they have a gender stereotype and assign men with careers and women with a family.

Patriarchy has enforced gendered language, but the gendered language has reinforced the patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social structure or system where men hold primary power and dominate in all sectors. It consists of various sociological patterns. We, humans, have created this social structure, and now it is deep-rooted in most essential elements of human behaviour i.e., language. Language is the primary mode of communication and is also the ground where patriarchy has made a huge impact. Women subjected to a certain role are proof of the rampant use of gendered language. So, what we speak is the reflection of our behaviour and biases.

Almost 75% of the world's language is gendered. The usage of male pronouns displays gender binarism that talks about only two genders and ignore any other gender. Every day we come across words like '*chairman*', '*fireman*' but still ignores how heavily it is gendered. These terms directly imply a person's mind that such posts are held by men and not women. Also, disregarding any gender other than male and female. Lack of representation is another reason why such gendered language exists. Many websites like the Oxford dictionary, Reuters, and Wikipedia are dominated by men. Men arguably do not understand the implications of using language. Hence, patriarchal values are maintained within the structure itself.

## **GENDERED LANGUAGE & LAW**

Section 8 of the IPC defines gender as “the pronoun ‘he’ and its derivatives are used of any person, whether male or female.”<sup>11</sup> A similar definition given in American law under 1 U.S. Code § 1 influenced by the Federal Dictionary Act of 1871 states that words with masculine overtones include feminine gender as well<sup>12</sup>. But the British version of the same, the Interpretation Act 1978 under Section 6 provides a more gender-inclusive definition of gender<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> The Indian Penal Code, 1860 Act No. 45 Of 1860

<sup>12</sup> United States Code, 2012 Edition, Title 1 - General Provisions, Chapter 1 - Rules Of Construction, Section 1 “In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, unless the context indicates otherwise—.....words importing the masculine gender include the feminine as well;...”

<sup>13</sup> Interpretation Act 1978, 1978 CHAPTER 30, Section 6 - Gender & Number “Gender and number



Most legislations and judgments use masculine pronouns such as he, his or him to cover people regardless of their gender or sex such use reinforces gender stereotypes. It fails to provide clarity, equality, and inclusivity. In 1872, Susan B. Anthony was arrested for trying to vote in the elections, before the trial she pointed out in her speech the hypocrisy of the Dictionary Act's treatment of pronouns when it came to voting rights as opposed to taxes or criminal penalties.

The use of masculine pronouns in legal language stems from the understanding that gender is a binary concept. The use of these pronouns does not only exclude the feminine gender but also others who do not sit perfectly within these constructs. In a society that is becoming gender-fluid, the use of gender binary pronouns makes one's gender identification difficult, and such use in law solidifies this tension. As stated earlier in this paper, the use of language is connected strongly with how one perceives the world. Laws intend to eliminate discrimination, protect rights, and provide safety to all, irrespective of their caste, creed, gender, or race. Hence, the use of gender-neutral language in law becomes all the more necessary. When the very thing that is supposed to protect one from discrimination and abuse fails to do so, the essence is lost. To ensure gender justice legal language must be gender neutral.

The consequences of using gendered language in the law were demonstrated in a study at the University of Kentucky. The participants (students of the introductory psychology course) were to act as jury in a mock murder case. The task at hand was to decide whether the woman had acted in self-defence. There were 72 participants and were divided into groups of three. They were provided with the meaning of self-defence with either *he*, *he/she*, or *she* used in the explanation. Out of the 24 who read the description with *he*, only 5 were willing to acknowledge self-defence but 16 from the group who read with *he/she* and 11 from *she* acknowledged self-defence. This indicates that male generic lexical in legal proceedings can have a sensational influence on a person's perceptions of guilt or innocence.

The subtle sexism is amplified in law by the use of masculine generics in titles to refer to lawyers, judges, legislators, property owners, political candidates, and so on. Moreover, the use of gendered pronouns increases the scope of ambiguity. When gendered pronouns are used it reduces clarity and precision of the law. E.g., when the word "man," is ambiguous because it

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In any Act, unless the contrary intention appears,—

(a) words importing the masculine gender include the feminine;

(b) words importing the feminine gender include the masculine;....."

can be used to refer to a specific adult male or human being generally. Gendered pronouns when used in a wide sense alone or as a part of a compound, like chairman or congressman can be misinterpreted by the reader. Gendered language in judicial opinions can cause confusion as the reader may not be able to understand whether the particular passage refers to generally to everyone, generally to all men or specifically to a party in the case.

Non-sexist language is important to maintain the fairness of law. Laws convey societal norms and these must be fair to all its citizens and hence, must be inclusive in nature. In addition to reflecting social changes, legal authors help create fairness standards that increase the reader's insight both emotionally and morally. This can help build a legal system framework that includes and empowers all genders.

The United Nations Charter is the first international document that calls for gender equality as a fundamental right. Since then, numerous international conventions have worked towards attaining equality of genders including, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979). But these conventions do not specifically mention gender discrimination based on language. The United Nations paved the path of gender-neutral language in its drafting. Later in 2008, CEDAW revised the masculine overtones in writing declarations and human rights documentation. UNESCO is one of the first specialized UN agencies to formally address sexism in language and actively tried to avoid discriminatory language in policies. Their objective is to transform the behaviour and attitudes that legitimize and perpetuate the moral and social exclusion of women. Over the last 20 years, UNESCO has worked with the idea that language shapes our thinking to amend the language used in the Basic Texts published by the organization and to promote regulations for a more gender-neutral language in educational textbooks and fora. The UNESCO guidelines, suggest avoiding male pronouns that involve recasting of plural sentences; however, the use of double pronouns is also offered as a solution, although it is recommended that this strategy be used sparingly in order to avoid burdensome formulations and monotonous repetition. Another tactic is to use they and their as singular pronouns. The Council of Europe is another international organization to recognize the need to include non-discriminatory language. In 1988, the Council adopted the Declaration on Equality of Women and Men. In 1990, as a part of their recommendations to attain gender equality sexism from language was eliminated. The European Parliament in 2008, adopted multilingual guidelines on gender-neutral language.

The Indian Constitution under Article 14 provides for equality of all before the law irrespective of caste, creed, gender, and race, and Article 15 provides for an anti-discriminatory clause. For this to be a reality, laws need to be written in a gender-inclusive language. The idea is not to disregard gender specific legislations based on the principle of protective discrimination but to make sure that all genders are equally represented.

The idea is not to disregard gender specific legislations based on the principle of protective discrimination but to make sure that all genders are equally represented. The idea is not to disregard gender-specific legislation based on the principle of protective discrimination but to make sure that all genders are represented equally.

Adv. Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay has preferred a plea in Supreme Court seeking 'gender-neutral and religion-neutral uniform grounds of succession and inheritance' for all Indian citizens. The plea, made in the spirit of the Articles 14, 15, 21, 44, and international conventions. In India, every religion has its laws, and this is against the constitutional ethos. The plea strives to strengthen the constitutional ethos set down under Part IV and V of the constitution and attempts to remove anomalies in succession and inheritance rights to make it gender-neutral, religion-neutral, and uniform for all citizens.

### **HOW TO INCLUDE GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE IN LAW?**

When law excludes references to genders other than it does not promote gender equality. Gender-specific language must be avoided in legislations unless otherwise necessary, e.g., while taking about reservation rules where gender needs to be specified. The following techniques can be adopted to replace gender-specific pronouns:

- use singular "*they*" and its other grammatical forms ("*them*", "*themselves*" and "*their*") to refer to indefinite pronouns and singular nouns;

E.g., A person is said to be of sound for the purposes of making a contract, if, at the time when *he* makes it, *he* is capable of understanding i and of forming a rational judgement as its effect upon *his* interests.

Instead, a person is said to be of sound mind for the purposes of making a contract, if , at the time when they make it, they are capable of understanding it and of forming a rational judgment as to its effect upon their interests.

- replace the masculine pronoun with an article;

E.g., Admission- by party to proceeding or his agent

Instead, admission- by party to proceeding or their agent

- use both pronouns "he" and "she";

E.g., A person who is usually of unsound mind, but occasionally of sound mind, may make a contract when he is of sound mind.

Instead, a person who is usually of unsound mind, but occasionally of sound mind, may make a contract when he/she is of sound mind.

- use the plural;

E.g., A person who is usually of sound mind, but occasionally of unsound mind, may not make a contract when he is of unsound mind.

Instead, the persons who is usually of unsound mind, but occasionally of unsound mind, may not make a contract when they are of unsound mind.

- use a neutral word or phrase such as "person", "any person", "every person" or "no person";

E.g., No person shall be a citizen of India by virtue of article 5, or be deemed to be a citizen of India by virtue of article 6 or article 8, if he has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of any foreign State.

Instead, No person shall be a citizen of India by virtue of article 5, or be deemed to be a citizen of India by virtue of article 6 or article 8, if the person has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of any foreign State.

- repeat the noun;

E.g., The executive power of the Union shall be vested in the President and shall be exercised by *him* either directly or through officers subordinate to *him* in accordance with this Constitution.

Instead, The executive power of the Union shall be vested in the President and shall be exercised by *the President* either directly or through officers subordinate to *the President* in accordance with this Constitution.

- revise the sentence in order to completely remove the pronoun

E.g., Admission by party to proceeding or *his* agent.

Instead, Admission by party to proceeding *or agent*.

## CONCLUSION

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We live in a society with diverse cultures, religions, and languages. This society also being a habitat where millions of people exist with different sexuality, gender identity, and gender expression. The society continues to develop, and in such advancing pace of the present scenario, isn't it too conservative of us if we just assumed that there existed only two genders? To be a more inclusive society, one must adopt a more inclusive language. Such a practice will help in breaking the gender stereotypes in our languages. This practice is not easy, but since languages always have been evolving, it can so happen that small changes from addressing an audience as 'everyone' instead of 'ladies and gentleman' can bring immense improvement gradually. The practice is the first step towards inculcating gender-neutral languages, and this proves one's intent to break free from such stereotypical and gender-biased usage of languages. Many have come forward challenging the binary gender system, so it is high time we include gender-neutral languages as the new normal. By practicing the gender-neutral languages, it also allows analyzing how we think and what we think and to also reconsider our pre-existing assumptions about people and their gender. Hence, it is the need of the hour as language must represent everyone.