

## **Sexism in Defining Gender Sensitive Lexical Entries : A Lexicographical Study From Feminist Perspective**

**Afsana Islam\***

**Abstract** : *Dictionary is one of the main sources of any target language that reflects different genre of a particular culture. The imposition of gender stereotyping in dictionaries may accompany with different traits and impact upon relational social identities of sexes. It is found that misleading lexical entries is another area of gender inequality by simply defining social identities, professions, roles and relationships. It is an effort to probe whether or not sexism is encountered in leading Bangla and English dictionaries. In this respect, the study aims at identifying implicit indicators of gender stereotyping in three renowned dictionaries which has been discussed from lexicographic attributes and social context through feminist point of view. The findings depict that most of the dictionaries represent stereotyped gender roles and definitions which are inappropriate, biased, and in some cases, fallacious. The changing social situation is being ignored that reinforcing gender stereotyping by lingual information sources like dictionaries.*

### **1. Prelude**

Dictionary is an accurate source of any language which context and content bound. It not only acquaints a person with specific language but also reflects the genre of particular society (Jackson, 2002). It means to best bridge between knower and the target language. By lingual sources we get to know about culture and traditions of a community. Sexist language is the expression of sexism in language and sexism means those attitudes and actions that degrade or stereotype individuals or groups because of their sex (Carney, 1977). If sexism lies in society than it has been reflects by language as inherent to the process itself and actively constructs the biases or inequalities in society. Present research has found different cultural expressions

---

\* Lecturer, Department of Women and Genders Studies, University of Dhaka.

through lexicon that has only written in Bangla dictionary don't even mention in Bangla to English dictionary [i.e Aputrak (অপুত্রক- who has no son); Anurha (অনুঢ়া-Unmarried woman); Bahupatnik (বহুপত্নীক- Man who have many wives); Naborha (নবোঢ়া- Newly married woman) etc.]. In English dictionary the asymmetries between seemingly parallel terms like master — mistress, king — queen, Author — authoress, Actor — actress, Adventurer-adventuress mean different standard for man and woman. Sexism reproduced into language either intentionally or unintentionally; degrading phrases that used only for woman leaves negative connotations on mind.

Feminist linguists define patriarchal social structure as gendered and andocentric<sup>1</sup> so being larger social institution or media, language has been identified also an area of struggle (Simpson, 1993). Eventually, literature, folks, music, fictions, dictionaries, legal documents, history over all genre of literary texts get blotted by gender insensitivity. Therefore, unless we could eradicate sexism in these sources we can never get gender insensitivity in language and it will be reflected through our forth generations. In many extents societal demands, new changes, present status of women's empowerment had not been addressed properly in those word contents. So it remains as a challenge for feminist linguists to critique and reconstruct the language stream for women's equal representations. This article is an effort of lexicographic investigation of language and gender discourses to quest — how lexical entries are important to represent existing gender practices in society.

In this study, lexicographic attributes and social contexts has been taken as parameter to explain sexism from feminist point of view. Henceforth, Feminist analysis especially Postmodern feminists view explores the ways societies create ideological discourses of 'gender' through lexicon. It does not mean only literature, history or folk culture of a community but includes academic materials, pronouncements, and liturgy—even a dictionary! It claims when writing a dictionary especially for young and foreign learner lexicographers should avoid exclusions of woman and gender stereotypes. To be more specific, this study tried to observe sexism in three dictionaries by a sampling list of words guided with Samarin's (1967) category of word selection. Findings shown man woman binary; gender roles are more focused; Courtesy words are marriage bounds! Some degrading words and

examples are found which affect changing pattern of society and the commitment of women's movement as a whole. It can be said that being an accurate and widely used source, dictionary is creating lacunas for gender insensitivity.

## **2. Theoretical Perspectives**

### *2.1 Lexicology, Lexicography and Sexism*

Lexicology means the study of words of sociolinguistic composition and a descriptive branch of linguistics that most concerned with theory and lexeme structures. On the other hand, Lexicography is an applied branch of linguistics concerned with the design and construction of practical usage of lexemes. It means the art of compiling, writing and editing dictionaries are systematic features of lexicons (Gibbon, 1998). Lexicographers maintain the rules of grammar; relation and interactions of society; existing culture regarding particular lexemes. They collect ideas on traditional grounds and practical considerations for both exclusions and inclusions of words in a dictionary. Hence, crafting of lexicography or compiling a dictionary depends on the issues of language influenced by socio-cultural exposure of a community. So, there remain such possibilities of sexism in compiling a dictionary. Lakoff (1972) in her writing "Language and woman's place" deals with two areas where sexism can be found one is 'language used about women' and another is 'woman used language'. Therefore, sexism in dictionary directs the first area and one of the basic feminist linguistic concerns against male chauvinism. Sexist ideology is distributed on social roles, traits on the basis of biological sex rather on human capabilities results in stereotypical representation of sociopolitical hierarchies.

### *2.2 Feminists ideology and postmodernist view*

Feminism is usually defined as an awareness or determination to change women's worst position in society and to ensure fairly treatment (Delmar, 1986). It is an ideology and advocacy process to ensure women's rights in social, economic and political sphere (Islam, 2002). Feminist scholars from third wave of feminism have discerned language as another area of struggle to achieve gender equality. They discovered through literary criticism that history, literature and lexical discourses are male biased; there is a gap in existing paradigm systematically ignore or erase the significant women's experiences (Thorne & Stacey, 1993). Postmodern feminists prominently marked

sexism through texts. The postmodern feminist ideology is closely linked to late twenty's philosophical movement 'postmodernism' and 'post-structuralism' and sometimes interpreted by 'deconstruction'. Benini noted, postmodern feminists view truth as a 'destructive illusion' and world as endless stories or texts, many of which integration of power and oppression (cited in : Sarantakos, 2012: 53-62). Postmodern feminists reject a phallogocentric thought that is 'male' in style. This ideology evolved on the basis of various '-isms' and doctrines like existentialism, French feminism, deconstructionism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Foucaultian analysis, Rorty's conversationalism etc. (Tong, 2009 : 285).

Over all, feminists theories and critics manifested from Simone de Beauvoir's writing (especially *The Second Sex*: 1949), postmodern feminism is not beyond. In connection with that Beauvoir stated, throughout history women have been reduced to objects for men 'women' has been constructed as men's 'Other', denied the right to her own actions (Moi, 1985; Bhagwat, 2004). Continuing this, some postmodern feminists emphasize particularly on the tendency of sexism in textual analysis and production of literary texts. Lack of locus prevents from mentioning some key thinkers of postmodern feminism so this study has chosen to focus briefly on French writer, philosopher Jacques Derrida's deconstructionism and influence of the thought of feminist thinker H el ene Cixous's writings. The matter of purpose is to link up theory to find appropriate lexical items and guide the whole discussion from postmodern feminist view.

### *2.3 Derrida's 'symbolic order' and Cixous's 'binary opposition'*

'Mechanism of Symbolic order' is one of the best concept given by French theorist Jacques Derrida (1967) which means the series of signs, texts, roles, rituals and customs interrelated and maintained in a society. A child being the member of a community internalizes all these ascribed things to perform. Society reproduces the chain of symbolic order through intersectional components like- race, gender, class etc. Henceforth, early thinkers of postmodern feminist thoughts found a 'binary opposition' belongs in writings and literature which work as sets of meaning one is superior and another is inferior, Derrida argued about the binary oppositions and stated 'these bipolar/coupled sets of meaning must be resisted from manifestation' (Tong, 2012 : 274). To

liberate this symbolic order of the society and thoughts of 'no singular' or 'pointless' meaning of words in literature, philosophy, social, historical, political texts, philosophical concept 'deconstruction' has been defined by Derrida at France in the late 1960s. 'Deconstruction' denotes as strategy of critical assumptions regarding contradiction in philosophy and language. Derrida defined 'deconstruction' as textual practice which aims to demonstrate interactions among and between both terms and its meaning. He suggests to challenge dominating biases in language by literary criticism, and linguist feminists adapt this philosophical method to enrich pro-woman literary.

Later French feminist and writer Hélène Cixous had inspired by Derrida's works. She was very conductive with her views in the establishment of postmodern feminism as a philosophical thought. To be more specific Cixous narrowed down Derrida's works on that, generally men's writings are biased with patriarchal binary oppositions but women's writing on the other hand more jotting, tale about women's experiences and life's demand. She also relates sexuality and power relations through language. The concept of binary opposition is important because when we are talking about such paired words together or separately, it seeks a hierarchical meaning itself and requires defining culturally dominant and subordinate sides, one of which is 'always being privileged over other'. These words are often reflecting the pairs metaphorically man as 'Self' and woman as 'Other'. The theoretical assumptions of postmodern feminism and lexical investigation embedded into some counsels to lead this study, such:

- 1) Basic lingual sources (dictionaries) are sexist that deeply reflect heterosexuality;
- 2) Binary oppositions in lexical items are frequently found, and finally;
- 3) Language plays the role as patriarchal institutions to transfer gender roles, culture, norms to generation to generation.

### **3. Review of Relevant Researches**

Women's representations in Bengali language and literature as well is enormous but so far knowledge goes there was no effective research made on 'gender stereotyping or sexism in dictionaries' ever before. Reason follows that observation on this topic over different language

found sexism in dictionaries. Hence, out of those researches a few precise along with its further instructions has been denoted in this article.

Kahn (1975) conducted a research titled 'Sexism in everyday speech'- on English dictionary and course book for language learning, where she found that 'binary polarization' of meaning stands for male superiority — men are noble and women are grossly presented as mother, wife or heavily involved in household chores. Findings are closely relevant with Tenorio's (2000) research titled- 'Gender, Sex and Stereotyping in the Collins COBUILD English language dictionary' that studied on the possible gender stereotyping and biasness of lexicography in defining sexes. Tenorio mainly focused grammatical attributes and component analysis of words. Findings shows among 820 words 29.75% have no gender marked but reproduce many stereotypes(e.g. doll, virgin); 5.9% example are not associated with gender rather used sexist example to clarify its meaning (e.g. racist, attractiveness) (Tenorio 2000)!

Previous mentioned studies have been focused on selected language on limited data sources in representative way. Nevertheless, several connate articles appeared in recent research that sexism in monolingual and bilingual resources should differently analyze. There are some folk phrases, traditional terms, customized naming which may not represents same figure in other society. Thus a research supported by Gershuny (2001) showed rigid verbal sense of masculinity and femininity not used only to describe but also judge to polarize the phenomenal world into superior/ inferior. Gershuny's work was on dictionaries and texts that found — behaviour is define with words but social context particularly shape it up to behave 'gender wise' e.g. men don't cry girls don't scream reproduces the sense of 'un-manly' or 'un-feminine' that ultimately indicate socially expected stereotyping. Similarly, Mucchi-Faina (2005) emphasizes how language influences thoughts and changing attitudes in society to impose reforming words. She offers two ways to achieve reformed language: 1) One should use inclusive word that refers both sexes- 'Chairperson' instead of exclusive words such: chairman or madam chair; 2) Visibility should be increased to establish that women exist in public sphere by generating suitable terms (Mucchi-Faina, 2005 : 194). In the light of these research articles and books present study has conducted a bilingual analysis and set parameters for further analysis.

#### 4. Methods

This study has followed a qualitative method with very available and fixed resources like dictionaries. In order to examine the presence of gender stereotyping this study examined three renowned dictionaries namely: English to English: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2000); Bangla Academy English to Bengali Dictionary (second reprint June, 2010) and Bangla Academy Bengali to Bengali dictionary (twelfth reprint, January, 2010). In addition, some categories followed from Samarin's (1967) model for the word list (a list of 100 words given in appendix) which have been yielded and compared through two parameters: lexical attributes and social contexts by using post modern feminist view as a tool. This research has been conducted on the usage and expressions of Bengali native speakers including both Bengali and English dictionaries as data sources, because being Bengali native speakers English becomes also the most widely used official language for them in every social institutions like education, legislation administration etc. Over all, it is a primary stage of lexicographic study covering with small data range and obviously further study on this issue is still required. The main Research question is:

To what extent lexicographic representation of sexes reflect sexism and gender stereotyping in leading Bangla and English dictionaries?

#### 5. Research Design

This study is a qualitative study and inspected fixed contents. A words list has been prepared by adapting Samarin's (1967) category of obtaining and collating ethnographic data process. Samarin described a few categories to make corpus, such as parts of human and animal body, artifacts, culture, professions, food, clothing, and religious objects etc. This study includes some of these categories to select hundred words for analysis from lexical attributes and social contexts through post modern feminist view. In addition, some words have been selected purposively from day to day life uses, courtesy titles, cultural terms and attitudes oriented to reveal the sexism in lexical entries. In Bengali context Morshed first included Samarin's category of collating words, in his book *Adhunik Vashatotto* (1997). This research finds a way to adapt Samarin's model. It is a bilingual study where three dictionaries has been selected as fixed resource of data collating; English and Bangla both dictionaries have been consulted also to

complement two different culture. Limitation of this study is penury of data range and unrepresentative but it may sow the seed for further research and look forward gender sensitive lexicographic contribution.

## 6. Settings of research parameters

Research parameters are the summary of some attributes to find relationship between or among the data sets. Similarly in this study two parameters have been set to analyze the findings:

Parameters	Factors
A) Lexicographic attributes	Grammatical and lexicographic rules, collocation, suffix/affix, and gendered words.
B) Social context	Different socio-cultural tradition and custom

Table 1: Research parameters

- A. Lexicographic attributes : Lexicographic attributes is a projection of rules and semantic combination of words where dictionary's frame (macro/micro), structure, social context, traditional usages, cross referencing, importance of collocation, phrases, examples systematically followed (Nielson, 2008). Hence, lexical attributes affirms a total package of principles not only to compile a dictionary but also govern the relations among lexemes and grammatical rules and to generate new lexicon.
- B. Social context in compiling dictionaries : Social context influences in compiling a dictionary by referring time period, interactive relations, social structure and traditions. No dictionary is compiled without forethought and planning and includes current colloquial, slangs and taboo words that have owned in vocabulary already. After all these selections are made upon the existing practices and chosen by target language coverage (Jackson, 2002).

Postmodern feminist view is considered the accumulated variations of feminist theories stressed upon literal and philosophic expression of androgyny so in this study it helps to understand the role of lexicographer compiling a dictionary. Postmodern feminist perspective has been applied as a tool of discussion for above mentioned parameters, suppose Ashatee (অসতী) the word in Bangla used to mean characterless woman in Bengali social context but its lexical attributes (opposite gender pair) means different thing (Oshot = dishonest) that's why combination of parameters and tool is applied for analysis.



## 7. Sexism in Dictionaries and Sexism through Dictionaries

### 7.1 Lexicographic attributes

Lexicographic attributes aims to profiling the intended users' demands and also depicts the process of organizing lexemes in a dictionary. In this section data discussed on grammatical, lexicographic rules, collocation, suffix/affix, and gendered words.

#### 7.1.1 Man and Woman as gender binary

Lexical entries are arranged as opposite gender pairs by adding gender markers and lexical features such: -ess, -ine, -ette, -er, -groom, -man, -wife, -woman, he-, she-, -boy etc. in English and in Bangla common markers are -ika (ইকা), -ini (ইনি), -ni (নি/নী), -li (লী), -mohila (মহিলা), nari- (নারী). Grammatically it is not only gender pairs sometimes become gender binary by slipped lexicography. In English lexicons male entries are profoundly dominant and considered standard (self) opposed to female (other) entries. One of the most obvious evidence of sexism is affixes which mean female term as derivation from a male term when masculine one is changed by adding feminine suffix such as -ess. Author, for example, defined as- a writer of a book, article when attached to feminine suffix-es becomes authoress with the meaning of a female author, these tendencies often attaches a meaning of lesser status or dependence to male term.

Male	Definition: example	Female	Define as	Comment
Author	A <b>writer</b> of a book: " <i>He is the author of several books...</i> "	Authoress	A <b>female</b> author,	Derivates from author and as author mean both sexes so no need to mention authoress.
Host	A <b>person, place, or organization</b> that holds an event to which others are invited	Hostess	A <b>woman</b> who receives or entertains guests	Lesser focused and misleading
Actor	A <b>person</b> whose <b>profession</b> is acting on the stage, in films, or on television.	Actress	A <b>female</b> actor	Compare that similar to a actor

Poet	A person who writes poems <i>"He is more poet than academic because of his gift for language"</i>	Poetess	A <b>female</b> poet "She's not really all that mean, just a brooding poetess"	Man famous while woman struggling to
Bariwala (বাড়িওয়াল)	Male owner of the house	Bariwali (বাড়িওয়ালি)	<b>Female</b> owner of the house	But in etymological usage it means wife of the owner of the house
Daktar (ডাক্তার)	Specialist in medical science	Daktarni/ Mohila (ডাক্তারনি/ মহিলা ডাক্তার)	A <b>female</b> doctor	Etymologically mean doctor's wife'/ derivatives from Doctor. Though these two terms have two different social contextual pragmatic values.
Natak (নাটক)	Drama, stage show	Natika (নাটিকা)	A <b>short</b> drama	Means not having complete characteristics. Though it does not mean female at all in Bengali but above mentioned feminine markers (-ika) usually added to mean 'female term' as well and the categorization degraded by our subconscious mind.
Nāt (নট)	Actor, Dancer.	Nāti (নটী)	Lexical meaning <b>female</b> dancer	But the etymological meaning turn this word to a slang which is badly used to mean slut or whore.
Khemta-wala (খেমটাওয়াল)	Folk singer and main singer of the group	Khemta-wali (খেমটাওয়ালি)	Dancer, Ballerina, slut	Changes dignity of profession. (Though this example is from Sangsod Bangala Ovidhan (2000) 24th edition- 184)

Table 2: Opposite Gender Pairs and Gender Binaries in Dictionaries

In Bangla gender markers added to indicate ‘female professionals’ as well as ‘his wife’ (Daktar (ডাক্তার/ ডাক্তারনি); whether it should be a unisex term (Such: doctor, engineer, author, poet etc). In some extents female term refers comparatively degrading and same word changes its meaning negatively when it comes to describe woman. Let us compare the Bangla word *Khemtawala* (খেমটাওয়াল) means Folk singer and main singer of the group while *Khemtawali* (খেমটাওয়ালি) means Dancer, Ballerina, slut leads to the negative identity of feminine words (Sangsod Bangala Ovidhan (2000), 24th edition, p-184). Nevertheless having accurate grammatical and lexical principles words are etymologically changing over time from origin. It would not be problematic or confusing if these terms remain unisex but gender biased divisions of these terms socially reinforces sexism in language. Above definitions and examples clearly present an absurd ‘self/other’ gender binary through gender pair words.

### 7.1.2 Definitions, Usage and Examples

In a dictionary defining a word or set the examples are the crucial tasks for lexicographers. In fact examples are better than definition since, when knowing the reader is able to see a word in context. Usage means labeling some sense of words with respective aspects which may relate with time, dialect, folk phrases, culture, formality, status etc. On the other hand, example connects definition and usage all together to give an illustrative meaning. Study found some unusual sexist examples and usages in dictionaries for example in Bangla Academy (Bng-Bng) Dictionary words like — *Oshot* (অসৎ) means the dishonest men defined only ethical aspect but the female form *Oshotee* (অসতী) focuses socially unexpected promiscuity and characterless woman! Again, *Kadachar* (কদাচার) refers misbehavior but example put in the dictionary as ‘husband beat off her wife’. Decorative words shown to represent woman- such as — *Apsara* (অপ্সরা), *Kaminee* (কামিনী), *lolona* (ললনা), *ruposhee* (রূপসী), *gunobotee* (গুণবতী); the word *boyostha* (বয়স্থ) means simply adult woman but example given-‘father is anxious about his adult daughter’s marriage’—all these shown how vulnerable women are. In Bangla Academy (Eng-Bng) and Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary – *Adventuress* means woman who fraud for favor; *Ambiguous*: she gave~ smile; according to the dictionary scholars are man only because example given: ‘a scholar young man’, all these referred sexist explanations.

### 7.1.3 *Parallel construction*

Lexicographically very rarely studied, is Parallel construction which refers different things depending on whether speaking of a woman or a man. It means some lexicon has grammatically a gender form (Master-Mistress) and another usual meaning (Master means expert). We cannot use the gender form instead of usual meaning. In English we have such dichotomy between the theoretical parallel 'Master/Mistress' and in a perfectly acceptable sentence such — 'She is a master at chess' but not 'She is a mistress at chess' and the different meaning of 'Master/Mistress' in household reference; or even 'governor' in more powerful sense controls in public and 'governess' in private one! Similarly, 'King' size is widely used to mean standard or big size but we never use 'Queen' size.

### 7.1.4 *English and Bangla dictionary: a conclusive analysis*

Results found Oxford Advanced Learners' dictionary is more updated and sensitive than Bangla Academy dictionaries. Regarding definitions and examples most of the selected data detect man as normative form or as doer in Bangla dictionary. Scholar personality both man and woman presented in English dictionary but woman as scholar are missing in Bangla dictionaries. Of the sample: abrasive; brave, ambiguous, doctor, engineer, professor, police, worker, slave offer itself gender neutral but examples or definitions illustrate its meaning sexist or define socially expected masculine/ feminine attributes. Over all, research corpus found woman is often depicted as attractive; fraud; motherly; subordinate; rude; unlucky meanwhile man is described as self made; brave; hardworking; scholar; authoritarian and have professional manner.

### 7.2 *Social context in compiling dictionaries*

From baby's babble to adult's argument vocabulary is inherently accumulated by socialization and dictionary meet up the immediate needs to communicate in formal or informal aspects. (Apresjan, 2000). This study found some rare social customs and culture bound lexical entries wherein a bilingual dictionary never matched, so social contexts is essential to compare different languages at once.

### *7.2.1 Wasteful use of marital status in Courtesy titles*

Equable use of courtesy titles and terms of address for both man and woman is another serious aspect of feminists' linguistic activism. Results found some usage of courtesy titles unnecessarily mentioned by marital status for women. In English use of Mrs. Miss depends out of the marital status of woman but not for man! For man Mr. describes without any reference of his marital status; Mrs. and Miss are intended to tell women's marital status although this never going to work for a woman who become divorced! On the other hand in Bangla Begum for naming practices of women widely used to mention 'aristocrat honored upper class married' women in literature and uttered practices. Though change began in application it has been seen that in Bangla courtesy title in official usage jonab is applicable for both men and women. However, it will not be entirely acceptable until the lexical sensibility and obviously societal mentality changed towards the distinction of honor regarding marriage.

### *7.2.2 Degrading words for women*

Consciously or unconsciously degrading or slangs has been used for women in every language as a means of humiliation. Slang or folk phrases has unique acceptance of connecting people and culture quickly. These colloquial are used more frequently on social context and consciously/unconsciously reproduce the culture of gender inequality. Research found English words like — abrasive, beautiful, bossy, curvy, sassy, slut, shrill and whore have female traits centric informal use to mean women in irritating manner, sexually exposed, promiscuous and flattering working women etc. Again while searching in Bangla lexicon, some words like – Gonikā (গণিকা), beshya (বেশ্যা), potita/māgi (পতিতা/মাগি) mean prostitute in profession; Āpayā (অপয়া-Unlucky), Daini (ডাইনি- Witch) are widely used to connote woman negative, inferior and degrading. Many of these have no respective pair term for male, if exist then most of those connotations are positive. Even the stereotypes also become for socio-political hierarchies by which one sex is expected to dominant and other is subordinate.

Male	Connotation	Female	Connotation	Comment
Wizard	Positive	Witch	Negative	Connotations were made considering the usage, context and examples of each word. Besides, these examples also hold some grammatical and etymological aspects.
Bachelor	Superior	Spinster	Inferior (Ex: A Governor rules the broader administrati on whether a governess mean to maintain the households!)	
Master		Mistress		
Governor	Promiscuity in Sexual power	Governess	Promiscuity negative and degraded	
Lord		Lady		
Pati(পতি/ Husband), Nor(নর/ Man), Debota (দেবতা /god)		Patni (পত্নী/ wife), Nari (নারী/ woman) Debi (দেবী/goddess)		
Virility/ Male chauvinism Purushali/ Pourush (পৌরুষ) Man Businessman	Successful	Slut/whore Prostitute Meyeli  Beauty/ Slender/ Shy Curvy/Shrill/A brasive	Decorative, glamour	

Table 3: Degrading connotations for woman

The concluding note addressed that both Bangla and English dictionary have some degrading terms reserved only for women. At least half of the slang for woman connotes decorative, inferior and about sexual appeal like scolding (ex: bastard) but with the name of his/her mother or sister just to humiliate a woman. On the other hand, for man connotations are superior, successful and positive attributes.

### 7.2.3 Invisible women and girl

In evaluating these three dictionaries in English lexicon some words found that ignore girls and women including words like 'man' (as mankind, manmade, man-eating, brotherhood, instead of common word 'human') and other pronominal generalization (everybody should obey 'his' parents rather 'her'). Same thing happens to some phrases also like — 'Men only', 'Men is born free', 'men are equally created' but women is included as 'other'. It assumes that having these lexicon around a child or new learner will grasp 'man' the word has distinction! From the list a study found most of the examples depict men

everywhere 'present' in office; 'eat' in hotel and hold many other professions (Doctor, engineer etc.) but women are totally absent. Another invisibility shown in use of third person singular number pronoun (he, his, him, and himself) to designated both sexes. 'reformed language' or 'gender inclusive' words like 'one'/ 'their' (plural form)/ 'human'/ 'person' can be used in response to eliminate this invisibility.

#### *7.2.4 One-sex-referent lexical entries*

The most important finding of this study is to have a few one-sex-referent lexical entries which basically depend on male dominant social ideology; patriarchal hierarchy; degradation of woman and religious/ cultural focused practices. The male referents are means to large range of job possibilities, authority, and physical strength, attitudes and outside of private sphere (ex: lord, bishop, statesman, foreman, scoutmaster, workman, gladiator, governor, virile, male chauvinism and adventurer) on the other hand female referent are attached to inside households/ private sphere activities that deals with care giving, household responsibilities and sex dependence (i.e. governess, mistress, housemaid, housewife, nurse, prostitute, slut, whore and belly-dancer). Exceptional one found: 'Henpecked' which degraded for man only for being obedient to his wife'. In contrast, 'obediency' is a requirement for woman in the society. There are many words establish on marital status of woman and also on husbands' life or death! (ex: first lady, widow). They are described out of virginity and by marriage (ex: maiden, spinster, virgin, Miss, Mrs.). Also in Bangla lexicon words found female sex referent to define woman's identity by marriage like: Anurha (অনূঢ়া-Unmarried woman), R(n)arh (রাঁড়-Widow/prostitute) and Naborha (নবোঢ়া- Newly married woman) solely based on traditional practices.

#### *7.2.5 Gender roles representation through lexicon*

In this segment finding set on few frequently used words whose definitions might be expected to gender role stereotyping. Some of these are traditionally been used to describe 'sex oriented jobs' and domestic roles. Few words are biased in defining the status woman holds in society these more associated with domestic sphere and reproductive roles (like: mother, wife, cook, housewife etc.) rather in earning professions (Policeman, Workman, Foreman; Fireman; Gunman; Businessman etc.) and attitudes associated with glamour

(pretty, slender, chick, blonde, shy etc.). Some professions are defined to be a man; though Oxford dictionary defines 'Householder' as owner of house neutrally but Bangla academy dictionary mentioned as male owner or house husband. In contrast words such Housewife/ Gharani (ঘরনী); Garhasthya (গার্হস্থ্য-Household); Garvabati (গর্ভবতী-pregnant); homemaker; sewing, cooking and nurse express woman's involvement in domestic chores and care giving occupation which have no monetary return. Consequently, feminine forms of human nouns need careful compiling by a lexicographer because woman can be a chairman (read chairperson) or a landlord (read landowner)!

## 8. Conclusion

Dictionary is an open-ended source of lexical items in Chomsky's words it has flexible scope of culling, creating and generating words. It creates a lexicon in learner's brain which connects one's surroundings and judge the situation for further application of specific words (Azad, 2009). The study aimed to identify the representation of woman and existence of sexism in three dictionaries. For this study, dictionary turns into a social instrument and seems to be a mirror what is happening in Bangla and English society because society has developed some stereotyped which linguistics usage itself reinforces. The analysis revealed sexism in dictionary from two aspects. Lexicographic attributes found few male/female related terms shown as binary category; lexemes' definitions, usage and examples in some extents reflects subordinate representation of women in society and parallel construction creates 'self/other' dilemma amongst some male/female words counting man as obvious standard. In terms of social context findings were male dominated like deciding marital status in courtesy titles for woman. Some words connotation for man seen as positive, successful, superior but on the other hand same words' female forms are found negative, decorative and inferior. Language and gender expert Gershuny identified inherent discrimination in dictionary and said- dictionary often lag behind when the language revises itself- so as gender stereotyping found at profession related terms woman are sought to be in private sphere and gender roles oriented but man defined and exemplified widely in fields of education, business, medical, politics and engineering which completely ignored women's status in changing society. The obtained data have shown few terms which is one sex referent and have no male/female counter term; most of these are socially biased and rituals focused. The



study demonstrates Oxford Advanced learners' English dictionary is organized and informative that can avoid sexism in compiling a dictionary. But Bangla Academy dictionary (Eng-Bang) does not provide enough information regarding gender equal lexical entries. In every dictionary few words of the list developed for this study require more scientifically and biologically explain rather social biasness. This research based on selected database, results are not generalizable so further studies should be conducted conveying a message that sexism exists in dictionary and guide how to equip lexicographers roles and also follow postmodern feminist views to deconstruct or rewrite these dictionaries towards gender sensitive manner.

### Notes

1. Third wave feminism refers manifolds of feminist thoughts which started to accumulate in early 1990s. Feminist Rebecca Walker coined this term first to define various group of women and contemporary feminist thoughts. Although it shares many interests of previous two waves. It can be said as the response and backlash initiatives of second wave feminism of 80s which mostly focused on sexuality, prostitutions and reproductive rights. Besides, third wave were more diversified and ambiguous to define 'women of multi colors, cultures and contexts. Third wave feminists believed that pro women legal rights and institutional initiatives would be successful by appropriate portrayal and language of defining women.
2. Gender roles mean a set of expected behaviours, attitudes and norms by society that based on one's biological sex. It dictates not only male/female's social construction of personality but also divides responsibilities of productive and reproductive issues.

### References

- Ali, M. (eds.). (1994). *Bangla Academy Bengali-English Dictionary*. (1<sup>st</sup> edition) (28<sup>th</sup> reprint, 2010)
- Azad, Humayun. (2009). *Arthobiggan*. Dhaka: Agami Prokashoni.
- Apresjan, Juri. D.(2000). *Principles of Systematic Lexicography*. Moscow Russia: Russian Language Institute.
- Bhagwat, V.(2004). *Feminist Social Thought: An Introduction to Six Key Thinkers*. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawar Publications.
- Carney, Janet. (1977). *The Language of Sexism: Sugar, Spice and Semantics*. Journal of Reading, Vol. 21, No. 1.
- Delmar, R. (1986). What is feminism? In J. Mitchell & A. Oakley (Eds.), *What is feminism?* New York: Routledge.
- Doyle, M.(1995). *The A-Z of Non-Sexist Language*. London: The Women's Press.

- Gershuny, H.L.(1977). Sexism in dictionaries and texts: omissions and commissions, AP Nilsen et al. (eds) *Sexism and Language National Council of Teachers of English Urban IL*:pp.143-159.
- Ghatage, A. M. (2000). Lexicography And Lexicology. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Journal, Vol. 81*, pp. 227-236.
- Gibbon, D. (1998). Lexicography, lexicology, Lexicon theory. Rterived from the online website: <http://coral.lili.uni-bielefeld.de/Classes/Winter99/GSdictionary/CompLex/node2.html> [Accessed on: 16 May, 2015. 12:45 PM]
- Haq, M.E.(eds.)(1992).*Bangla Academy Beboharik Bangla Ovidhan*.(2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (12<sup>th</sup> reprint, 2010)
- Hornby, A.S. & Wehmeier, S. (2000). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (6<sup>th</sup> edition)
- Holmes, J. & Meyerhoff, M. (eds). (2003). *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Germany: Blackwell Publishing.
- Islam, M. (2002). *Naribadi Chinta O Nari Jibon*. Dhaka: J.K. Press and Publications.
- Jackson, H. (2002). *Lexicography: An introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kahn, L.G. (1975). Sexism in Everyday Speech. *Social Work*, Vol.20, No. 1, pp. 65-67.
- Lakoff, R. (1972). Language and Woman's Place. *Language in Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Apr., 1973), pp. 45-80.
- Moi, T. (1985). *Sexual/ Texual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. Pp.91-126. London and New York: Routledge.
- Morshed, Abul Kalam Monjur. (1997). *Adhunik bhasatotto*. Kolikata: Noya Udyog.
- Mucchi-Faina, A. (2005). Visible or Influential? Language Reforms and Gender (In)equality. *Social Science Information*, Vol. 44: 189-215.
- Nath, Mrinal. (1999). *Vasha O Shomaj*. Kolikata: Noya Udyog.
- Nielsen, S. (1994). *The Bilingual LSP Dictionary*. ISBN 978-3-8233-4533-6
- Nielsen, S. (2008). The effect of lexicographical information costs on dictionary making and use. In *Lexikos* (AFRILEX-reeks/series 18), pp. 170–189.
- Samarin, William. J. (1967). *Field Linguistics: A guide to linguistics field works*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sarantakos, S. (2012). *Social Research* (4th ed.) pp. 53-62. Palgrave Macmillan Publishers.
- Siddiqui, R.Z. (eds.). (2002). *Bangla Academy Bengali-English Dictionary*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). (33<sup>th</sup> reprint, 2010)
- Simpson, P. (1993). *Language, Ideology and Point of view*. London: Routledge
- Tenorio, E. H. (2000). Gender, Sex and Stereotyping in the Collins COB UILD English Language Dictionary, *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, Vol. 20, No. 2.
- Thorne, B. and Stacey, J. (1993). The missing feminist revolution in sociology. In Kauffman, Linda (ed.) *American Feminist Thought at Century's End*, pp. 167-188. Cambridge, MA: Black well.
- Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist Thought: A more Comprehensive Introduction* (Third ed.) pp. 284-289. Boulder: Westview Press.

## List of words

Bengali Dictionary (Conventional words) ব্যবহারিক বাংলা অভিধান (প্রচলিত শব্দসমূহ)	English –Bangla & English - English Dictionary	
1. Adhyapak/ Adhyapika (অধ্যাপক/ অধ্যাপিকা-Professor)	1. Man/ Woman	41. Fireman
2. Apaya (অপয়া- Unlucky)	2. Author/ Authoress	42.Governor
3. Aputrak (অপুত্রক- who has no son)	3. Master	43.Sewing
4. Gharani (ঘরনী -Housewife)	4. Husband/Wife	44. Doctor
5. Apsara (অপ্সরা-Apsara)	5. Lord	45.Engineer
6. Anurha (অনুঢ়া-Unmarried woman)	6. Actor/Actress	46.Policeman
7. Grihakarta (গ্রহকর্তা- Householder)	7. Mother/ Father	47.Workman
8. Ashat/Ashati (অসৎ/অসতী- Dishonest)	8. Host/Hostess	48.Sun /Moon
9. Aprasuta (Obsolete) (অপ্রসূতা-Childless woman) (অপ্রচলিত)	9. Miss. /Mrs./ Ms.	49.Flower
10. Kadachar (কদাচার-Misbehaviour)	10. Henpecked	50.Cooking
11. Kamini (কামিনী -Woman)	11. Abrasive	51.Sports
12. Garhasthya (গার্হস্থ্য- Household)	12. Brave	52.Sassy/bossy
13. Kulata (কুলটা –Characterless woman)	13. Poet/poetess	53.Slender
14. Natak/Natika (নাটক/ নাটিকা- Drama/short drama)	14. Gladiator	54.Witch
15. Begum/ Bibi (বেগম/বিবি- Title for woman/someone's wife)	15. Bitch	55.Slave
16. Thakur (ঠাকুর- God/respected)	16. Lady	56.Pretty
17. Debata (দেবতা- God)	17. Prostitute/whore	57.Slut
18. Swami (স্বামী- Husband)	18. Foreman	58.Shy
19. Daini (ডাইনি- Witch/ woman who does black magic)	19. Gunman	59.Glamour
20. Beshya (বেশ্যা- Prostitute)	20. Bastard	60.King (size)
21. Nāt (নট)/ Nāti (নটী) (Actor, Dancer)	21. Scout-master	
22. Bariwala (বাড়িওয়াল)/Bariwali (বাড়িওয়ালি)	22. Cowboy	
23. Pati/Patni (পতি/ পত্নী- Husband/wife)	23. Mistress	
24. Purush/Purushali/ Pourush (পুরুষ/ পুরুষালি / পৌরুষ- Manly)	24. Housemaid	
25. Meyeli (মেয়েলি- Girly)	25. Call girl	
26. Shundori (সুন্দরী - Beautiful woman)	26. Male Chauvinism	
24. Khemtawala/Khemtawali (খেমটাওয়াল/খেমটাওয়ালি- Singer/ dancer)	27. Businessman	
28. Garvabati (গর্ভবতী-pregnant)	28. Household	
29. Bahupatnik (বহুপত্নীক- Man who have many wives)	29. Beauty	
30. Biratwa (বীরত্ব -bravery)	30. Virgin	
31. Naritwa (নারীত্ব- womanhood)	31. Mankind	
32. Straina (স্ট্রেইন- Henpecked)	32. Nurse	
33. Daktar/Mohiladaktar/Daktarni (ডাক্তার/মহিলা ডাক্তার/ডাক্তারনি -Doctor)	33. Adventurer/ Adventuress	

34. Bidhoba (বিধব- Widow)	34. Abduct (example)	
35. Shat/Shati (সৎ/ সতী –Honest/ a chaste or faithful wife)	35. Menstruation	
36. Lajja/ Shorom (লজ্জা/ শরম- Shame)	36. Bishop	
37. Ganika (গণিকা- prostitute)	37. Statesman	
38. R(n)arh (Obsolete) (রাঁড় - Widow/prostitute) (অপ্রচলিত)	38. Authority (example)	
39. Adhaba (Obsolete) (অধবা – Husband forsaken) (অপ্রচলিত)	39. Ambiguous	
40. Naborha (Obsolete) (নবোঢ়া- Newly married woman ) (অপ্রচলিত)	40. Virile	

### Samarin's Category of Obtaining Lexical Items

- 1) Parts of human and animal anatomy
- 2) Clothing and personal adornment
- 3) Artifacts, tools ,utensils, weapons, machines, conveyances, furniture
- 4) Occupational and professional terminology
- 5) Geographical and astronomical items : directions, winds, types of weather, phases of the moon, seasons of the year, constellations
- 6) Flora and fauna\*
- 7) Foods and methods of food preparation
- 8) Measurements of time , space, volume, weight, quantity\*
- 9) Diseases, medicines\*
- 10) Games, amusements
- 11) Religious objects, beings
- 12) Etiquette and tabooed words, insults ,curses and attributes
- 13) Colors, textures ,shapes
- 14) Systems of enumeration :counting money, telling time ,and so on\*
- 15) Classifiers:"bunch, ""flock, ""handful, ""piece of, "and so on\*

(\* These categories are purposively skipped to lock the boundary of data and in addition different adjectives /attributes gathered for analysis)