

**Course title: Gender and education**

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### **Concept of Self-Silencing**

**Self-silencing** refers to the process by which individuals suppress their thoughts, feelings, needs, or desires, particularly in interpersonal relationships, to avoid conflict, gain approval, or maintain harmony. It is often a psychological defense mechanism or coping strategy rooted in fear—such as fear of rejection, abandonment, or negative judgment. Self-silencing is a psychological pattern where individuals suppress their own thoughts, emotions, feelings, and needs to avoid conflict, gain approval, or maintain relationships. This behaviour often involves people-pleasing, fear of rejection, and placing others' needs above one's own. Over time, self-silencing can lead to emotional distress, low self-esteem, and depression. It is commonly seen in close relationships and is more prevalent among individuals socialized to avoid confrontation. This behavior is common in various contexts (e.g., romantic relationships, workplaces, families) and is often linked to gender socialization, trauma, or low self-esteem.

### **Nature of self- silencing**

- 1. Suppressing Emotions and Needs:** in our society, mostly women hide or deny their personal feelings, emotions, desires, or opinions. They avoid expression of dissatisfaction or hurt to prevent upsetting others.
- 2. Fear of Conflict or Rejection:** Self-silent people believe that expressing disagreement or asserting oneself will lead to rejection, abandonment, or conflict. They often driven by anxiety about "rocking the boat" in relationships.
- 3. Over-Prioritizing Others' Needs:** The people who are self-silent, they consistently placing others' comfort, desires, or well-being above one's own. They feel guilty for setting boundaries or putting oneself first.

**4. People-Pleasing and Approval-Seeking:** Such people change their behaviour or opinions to gain acceptance or avoid disapproval. They hardly say “no” or advocate for oneself.

**6. Lack of Authenticity:** Self-silent people feel like one is not being true to themselves in relationships. They often accompanied by the feelings of invisibility or being misunderstood.

**7. Emotional Distress:** Such people tend to have depression, anxiety, resentment, or low self-worth. They may feel isolated or emotionally unfulfilled despite being in relationships.

**8. Difficulty Asserting Boundaries:** People with self-silence nature avoid confrontation or boundary-setting to "keep the peace." They tolerate the behavior that violates personal values or comfort levels.