

Q) Discuss the difference between Gender Studies and Women Studies. Also discuss the importance of integration and autonomy debates for the growth of Gender Studies.

Ans) **Defining Gender Studies (GS)**

"Gender Studies" investigates the (physical and biological) differences between men and women, and critically analyse how these differences translate in a socio-economic context. Gender studies in other words studies the manner in which norms and patterns of behavior associated with masculinity and femininity come into being.

**Defining Women Studies (WS)**

First introduced in the 1960s, women studies is an interdisciplinary field devoted to topics concerning women, feminism, gender, and politics. Its major focus was to highlight the discrimination, acts of violence and ~~the~~ <sup>other</sup> problems faced by women within the social fabric of society.

**Differences between GS and WS**

**Interdisciplinary vs Multidisciplinary**

Gender Studies (GS) is a multidisciplinary field as it studies all gender; ~~male~~ <sup>men</sup>, women and third gender. Gender is studied all aspects whether it be social, economic or political.

However, Women Studies (WS) is an interdisciplinary

academic field that studies only women in all aspect of social, economic or politic framework.

### Visible vs Resolve

Women Studies focuses on simply highlighting the problems faced by women.

However, Gender Studies not only studies the differences between gender but also proposes solution to those problems.

### Shallow vs In-depth knowledge

Women's Studies investigate and reveal shallow or limited information, e.g., problems faced by women. However, it does not reveal the socio-economic causes behind these problems.

Gender Studies on the other hand, carries out an indepth research about the causes behind, each problem faced by, each gender in society.

### Liberation vs Mannerism

Women's Studies was a means to liberate the women from the social constraints and expectations attached ~~to the~~ <sup>with</sup> females. It played an important part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of feminism, by creating awareness and providing literary support.

Gender Studies, <sup>studies</sup> ~~how~~ <sup>how</sup> the world became gendered, meaning the norms and expectations associated with masculinity and femininity came into being.

## Autonomous vs Integrationist debate

For many years researchers have debated over whether to keep the discipline <sup>of GS</sup> ~~at~~ independent or not, within the field of study in university and colleges. Those who ~~identify~~ wish to keep the discipline independent from other fields of study are known as separatist, and those who wish to integrate Gender Studies into other field of study are known as integrationists.

## Argument for Separatists

→ Undermine Gender Studies and its goals

If the discipline is integrated into other fields of research than it would be undermined, as it <sup>would</sup> ~~is~~ ~~would~~ lose its importance. For example, if one's majors is in sociology ~~then~~ and Gender studies is offered as a course, then it wouldn't be given much importance, and be overlooked.

→ Integration will impose constraints

This means that when gender studies is integrated, then its scope of research and study would become limited. ~~This~~ For example, the amount of specialized researchers would be reduced. When a specialized researcher carries out a study then it is better researched and its quality is greater, then when compared to a person who does not specialize in gender studies.

→ Best means of creating new knowledge

By keeping the discipline ~~it~~ autonomous, new knowledge can be created, as researchers can focus on studying gender more specifically and in detail. Specialized research can create new knowledge about different topics, and different problems etc.

## Argument in favor of Integration

→ Exposure to masses

Rather than keep Gender Studies a separate field, it should be integrated into other fields of study. By doing so, more students would be able to study it as a course and this would create awareness in society at a larger-scale.

→ Test the waters

In a society like Pakistan, where gender studies, or rather gender-inequality isn't considered a serious issue, integrating it into other fields would allow to test how the society responds; ~~to and~~ There<sup>by</sup> allowing those who are interested, to pursue their knowledge relating to gender studies.

## Conclusion

Though, many integrationists still argue about it, the fact still remains that in order to grow gender studies, ~~as it~~ <sup>it must</sup> be kept autonomous. Only through specialized curriculum and research can Gender Studies grow.