

Q Write a note on the Status of gender Studies in Pakistan. Give your view on the autonomy versus integration debate in gender Studies

### 1. Introduction

Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that examines the social, cultural, and political implications of gender roles and identities. Despite some challenges, the status of gender studies in Pakistan is promising as evident from the growth of gender studies programs, research on gender issues, activism and advocacy, and encouraging future trajectory. The autonomy versus integration debate in gender studies is a complex and ongoing discussion. Those who argue for autonomy believe that gender studies should remain an independent field of study, with its own academic departments, degree programs, funding, and resources. In contrast, proponents of integration suggest that gender perspective should be incorporated into other fields of study, leading to a more interdisciplinary approach to gender issues.

### 2. Status of gender Studies in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the status of gender studies can be described as follows

#### a. Growth of Gender Studies Programs

Gender studies programs have seen significant growth in Pakistan over the past few decades. Many universities now offer degree programs in gender studies.



including the Lahore University of Management Sciences, Quaid-e-Azam University, and the University of Karachi.

**b. Research on Gender Issues:** Despite the challenges, researchers in Pakistan are coming up with valuable research on gender-related issues. This includes research on topics such as violence against women, gender inequality in education and employment, and the impact of gender-based discrimination on mental health.

**c. Activism and Advocacy:** Gender studies in Pakistan are not limited to academia, but also include activism and advocacy work by civil society organizations. These organizations work to raise awareness about gender issues, advocate for policy changes, and provide support to women and marginalized communities.

**d. Legal Frameworks:** There have been some positive developments in terms of legal frameworks related to gender issues. For example, the "Protection of Women Against Violence Act" was passed in 2016, which criminalizes domestic violence and provides legal protection to victims.

**e. Curriculum:** Gender studies courses are offered at both undergraduate and graduate level in many universities. These courses cover a variety of topics related to gender, including the history of feminism, gender-based violence, gender identity, and gender and development.



f. **Societal Impact:** Gender Studies have had a significant impact on Pakistani Society, as it has helped to raise awareness about gender based discrimination and violence. Many activists and organizations working on women's rights have benefited from the research conducted in this field.

g. **Limited Government support:** While there has been some progress in the growth of gender studies programs, there is limited support from the government. There is a lack of funding and resources for research, and policies related to gender are often not implemented.

h. **Patriarchal Society:** Pakistan is a patriarchal society, where gender discrimination is deeply ingrained in social norms and cultural practices. Gender studies in Pakistan often face resistance from conservative forces who see it as a threat to traditional gender roles and values.

i. **Future outlook:** The future of gender studies in Pakistan is promising, as more universities are introducing gender studies courses and research. It is hoped that this will lead to greater awareness and understanding of gender-based issues in Pakistani society, and ultimately lead to more equitable and just outcomes for all genders.



### 3. **Autonomy versus integration debate in gender studies:**

#### **a. Definition:**

**Autonomy:** institutionalization of Women's Studies or treating Women's Studies as an autonomous/independent department at universities boosts the development of Women's Studies.

**Integration:** incorporation and integration of Women's Studies into traditional development better suits the development of Women's Studies.

#### **b. Field of study**

**Autonomy:** Those who argue for autonomy in gender studies believe that gender studies should remain an independent field of study. They assert that gender studies have unique methods, theories, and research questions that cannot be adequately studied within other disciplines.

**Integration:** Proponents of integration argue that gender studies should be integrated into other fields of study. They suggest that gender perspective should be incorporated into the curriculum of fields such as sociology, psychology, and political science.

#### **e. Academic department and degree programs:**

**Autonomy:** Advocates for autonomy believe that gender studies should have



their own academic departments and degree programs. They argue that this will allow for the development of a community of scholars with expertise in gender issues.

**Integration:** Proponents of integration suggest that gender studies should be taught as a part of other disciplines. They believe that this will help to ensure that gender issues are considered in all areas of study and can lead to a more nuanced understanding of gender issues.

#### **d. Funding and resources**

**Autonomy:** Supporters of autonomy argue that gender studies should have their funding and resources. They believe that this will allow gender studies their research agenda and prioritize the study of gender issues.

**Integration:** Proponents of integration that resources and funding should be shared across disciplines. They suggest that this will help to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated into all areas of study and can lead to a more interdisciplinary approach to gender issues.

#### **e. Ability to challenge dominant paradigms and assumptions:**

**Autonomy:** Advocates for autonomy suggest that gender studies have a responsibility to challenge dominant paradigms and assumptions within academia. They argue that an independent field of study is necessary



for this task.

**Integration:** Proponents of integration believe that incorporating gender perspective into other fields of study can help to challenge dominant paradigms and assumptions within those fields. They suggest that interdisciplinary approaches can lead to new insights and perspective on gender issues.

#### 4. Conclusion:

While there has been progressing in the growth of gender studies program in Pakistan many challenges still need to be addressed. Gender discrimination is deeply ingrained in social norms and cultural practices, and government support for gender studies is limited. However, researchers and activists continue to work towards creating a more gender-equal society, and there have been some positive development in terms of legal frameworks related to gender issues. The autonomy versus integration debate in gender studies is a complex discussion. Those who argue for autonomy believe that gender studies should remain an independent field of study, with its own academic department, degree program, funding, and resources. In contrast, proponents of integration suggest that gender perspective should be incorporated into other fields of study, leading to a more interdisciplinary approach to gender issues.