

Q Define and discuss the discipline of gender Studies and also differentiate between Women Studies and gender Studies.

### Introduction

Often gender Studies are mixed with Women Studies; however, there are some striking differences between these two disciplines. Women's Studies, since its inception in around the mid-20th century, was the study of particular issues about women. It concerned itself with the problems and struggles women used to face. Such studies led to development programs like Women in Development in the 70s. Gender Studies on the other hand studies the relationship between both men and women, and also their relationships with their societies as a whole. How they are conceived and shaped, how they presume their identity, and their roles within those identities. It is a much more diverse type of study than Women's Studies. Moreover gender study is a multidisciplinary subject and has its strands extended into sociology, anthropology, psychology, gender history, politics and biology. People read the world through gendered glasses, and media, institutions, families, social networks, and many other arenas construct gendered distinctions and norms for "proper" gendered behaviours and appearances.

## 1. Defining Gender Studies

A field of interdisciplinary study dedicated to gender identity and gendered representation as central categories of analysis.

(Contem (Susanne Moore))

An inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary academic field devoted to various aspects of identity and representation across societies and cultures (Kugebwa, Jeffrey 2020)

Gender Studies investigates the actual (physical and biological) gender differences between women and men but thinks especially critical about what these differences mean in a socio-cultural context. Gender is a classifying principle in society and culture. It is a remarkable discriminating tool in the distribution of labour, care, possession, income, education, organizational qualities and diseases.

## 2. Understanding Gender Studies

Gender Studies looks at the manner in which the norms and patterns of behavior associated with masculinity and femininity come into being. It studies the features of these norms and patterns - which traits are considered masculine, which feminine, and why? How do stereotypical model of men and women developed? How do they change over time, and what factors contribute to changes? Also, and

very importantly, what impact do such stereotypes have upon actually existing men and women?

### 3. Development of Gender Studies as a Discipline

#### a. Academic Study of Gender:

The academic study of gender has a relatively short history. Its emergence can be dated as recently as the late 1960s and its development triggered by second wave feminism. Along with developing a critique of gender inequalities in both personal relationship and in social positioning, second wave feminism began to draw attention to the ways in which academic disciplines and sets of knowledge acted to exclude the experiences, interests and identities of women. **For example**, prior to 1970s the social sciences in general, and sociology in particular, largely ignored gender.

### 4. Multidisciplinary nature of gender studies

Several disciplines contribute to different areas of research in gender studies

#### **Sociology:**

Sociology is one of the fundamental disciplines of gender studies, providing insights into how gender identity is shaped by social structure and power relations. Sociological research on gender covers a wide range of

topics, including gender inequality, gender based violence, gender and sexuality and gender work.

## **Psychology**

Psychology Contributions to gender Studies by examining how gender identity is formed and the psychological processes involved in gender socialization. Psychologists also investigate the mental health implications of gender-based violence and gender discrimination.

## **History**

Historical research is an important aspect of gender studies, providing insight into how gender roles and expectations have evolved. Historians examine the historical roots of gender inequality, the contributions of women to historical events and movements and how gender has intersected with other forms of identity, such as race and class.

### **According to Joan Wallach Scott**

"History is not simply what happened in the past. It is the ongoing process of making sense of the past to understand the present and shape the future. Gender is a crucial category of analysis for doing this work because it has shaped and been shaped by the ways power operates in societies over time."

## 5: Difference between gender studies and Women Studies

Although a lot of people consider Gender and Women's studies as one subject and treat them alike, both have differences. Some of them include

### Historical roots

Women's Studies emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the feminist movement's call for greater recognition of women's contributions to society and their struggles for equality. Gender studies on the other hand developed in the 1980s and 1990s as an expansion of women's studies to include the study of gender identity and sexuality beyond the binary of male and female.

### Focus

Women's studies focuses primarily on the experiences, histories and cultural representations of women. It examines the social and cultural construction of femininity and how women have been oppressed and marginalized throughout history. Gender studies on the other hand, focuses on how gender is constructed, performed, and enforced in society, and how these constructions affect all individuals regardless of their sex.

## interdisciplinary Approach

Women's Studies is typically rooted in the humanities and social science including fields such as history, sociology, anthropology, literature and cultural studies. Gender studies, on the other hand, draws from a wider range of disciplines, including biology, psychology and philosophy.

**Scope** Women's Studies tends to focus more narrowly on the experiences and struggles of women, whereas Gender studies employs a broader approach, examining how gender intersect with other social categories such as race, class and sexuality.

## Terminology

Women's Studies tends to <sup>use</sup> focus more the term "women" as a central category of analysis, whereas Gender Studies employs a broader conceptualization of gender that encompasses not only women but also men, transgender individuals and non-binary individuals.

## Objectives

The main objective of the women studies is to understand and document the experiences and contribution of women, with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality. The

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main objective of Gender Studies is to understand the complex interplay between gender identity, social structures and power relations to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures.

### **Conclusion**

While there is overlap between the two fields - Gender Studies takes a broader approach than Women's Studies, focusing on the social construction of gender and its intersection with other social categories. While Women's Studies centers on the experiences and struggle of women. Furthermore, Gender Study is a multidisciplinary field that draws on insights from a range of disciplines to understand a complex intersection with social, political and economic system.