

Q#02. What are the differences between

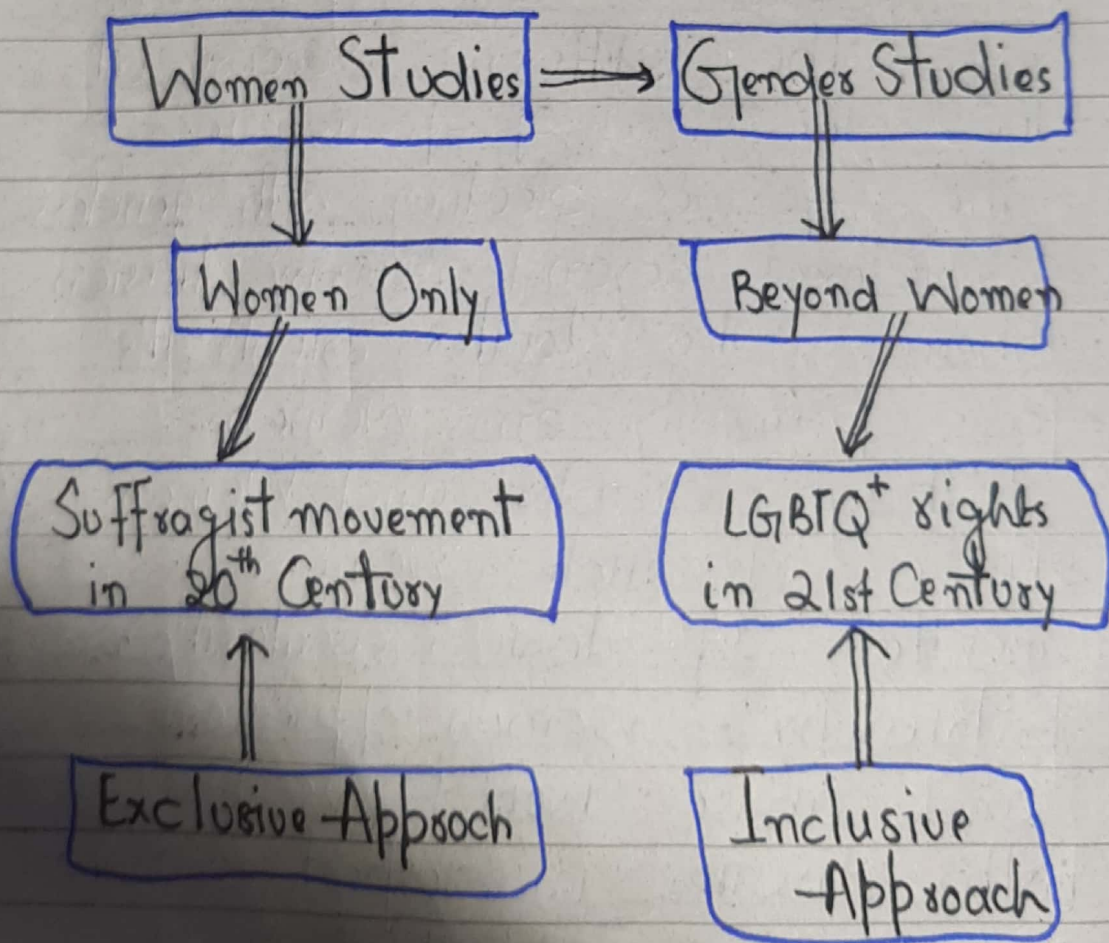
Gender Studies and Women's Studies?
Substantiate your arguments with
examples. Highlight the current
status of women studies in Pakistan.
(2018)

INTRODUCTION:

- The subject matter of both Gender studies and Women's studies in general is a living human being. The difference occurs at the level of focus - i.e., the former dealing with genders considered beyond binary division whereas, the latter orients its focus primarily on women.

Although Gender and Women's studies include women, matters of toxic masculinity, patriarchy, women oppression and abuse would be part of both studies in respect to impacts on women. To put it simple, men's studies as social crises pertaining

to men would be part of genders studies, not women's. On the other hand, the status of women's studies in Pakistan seems optimistic. Most of departments in higher education are converted into fully fledged Genders studies departments. Women's rights activism, child abuse and labours, academic research publications are other factors strengthening women's role in society in particular.



01)

DIFFERENCE IN TERMS OF SCOPE:

A)

WOMEN'S STUDIES:

In terms of scope, the primary difference between Women's and gender studies emerge. Women's studies focuses its understanding upon socio-political and economic situations of 'only' women. Women that from birth to death experience social reality of world with opportunities and challenges are its sole concerns.

B)

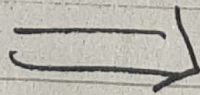
GENDER STUDIES:

Gender studies, on the other hand, extends its focus beyond women or better say beyond

conceived binary division of genders which in itself a social construct. Its scope includes men, women, lesbians, gays, bisexual, trans persons, Queers and others.

EXAMPLES:

The movement for women's right to vote or political participation of women known as suffragist movement in early 20th century falls in scope of G women's studies. Whereas, LGBTQ⁺ rights movement and against hyper-masculinity activism falls in the scope of Genders studies.



02)

DIFFERENCE IN TERMS

Of Approach/Roots :

A)

WOMEN'S STUDIES :

The rise of Second wave of feminism in 1960s in America played a crucial role in strengthening approach of Women's studies. It takes its approach from the literature produced during 2nd wave based on feminist perspective.

" One can be optimistic in terms of future awaiting for women, the 2nd wave at least empowered authorities to accept Women's studies as a discipline."

— Simon de Beauvoir in
debate with J.P. Sartre

B)

GENDER STUDIES:

However, the approach of Gender studies remain all-encompassing. It approaches the complexities of Gender from multiple perspectives i.e., sociology, anthropology, politics, psychology, philosophy and among others. This inter-disciplinary nature of subject makes it more objective and less biased.

EXAMPLES:

In women's studies, issues like women's role / inequality in businesses would be countered by going through literature based only on feminist perspective. Whereas, in gender studies the subversion experienced by transgenders in patriarchal society would be challenged through multiple perspectives like sociology, medicine and economics.

03)

DIFFERENCES IN TERMS

OF LEVEL OF INCLUSIVITY:

A)

WOMEN'S STUDIES:

As mentioned already that prime objective of w. studies is women only. Its role, contributions, association and character in a society defines its identity.

One can say when it comes to analysis of genders, women studies hold an exclusive approach, not an inclusive one.

B)

GENDER STUDIES:

There is no room for doubt what previous analysis on gender studies shows us that it goes beyond women in general.

and binary division of genders in specific. Without a pinch of question, we can say genders studies hold an all inclusive approach. Furthermore, this can be stated that Genders studies is more flexible and capable to evolve than women's studies.

"Gender equality is not about women's rights only, it is about everyone's rights". — A. Lorde

EXAMPLE:

The movement for political participation of women in US' senate house and Presidential house focused solely upon allocation of seats on quota for women is a prime case of women's studies. Whereas, the movement for equal gender rights in Pakistan led PMDC to issue admissions and licences to transgender doctors is a prime example of gender studies.

II)

STATUS OF WOMEN'S STUDIES IN PAKISTAN:

The status of women's studies in Pakistan has evolved over the years. Following are some essential highlights:

01)

EMERGENCE AND GROWTH:

Women's studies emerged after the second wave of feminism in West. In Pakistan, during 1970s women's issues and challenges emerged that led to formation of Centres of Women's studies in Pakistani ~~Za~~ universities in 1989.

02)

ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM:

Since 1989, women's studies programs have empowered women to advocate for women's rights and counter challenges like violence against women, discrimination, etc.

03

CONTINUITY OF CHALLENGES:

These happens to be persistent challenges faced by women in Pakistan despite progress made by women's studies. Gender-based violence, misogyny, male chauvenism, unequal access to education and other such issues which women's studies seek to address every now and then.

CONCLUSION:

To put in a nutshell, the subject matter of both women's and gender studies with their scopes, approaches and level of inclusivity have assisted women and other genders to counter social challenges they experience. There could have been no gender studies in 1990s if women's studies had benefitted from and wave of feminism. On the other part, women's studies programmes in Pakistan in late 80s paved the way for contemporary feminists to make state authority realize women's oppression in a patriarchal society.

"Women's rights are human rights."

— Hillary Clinton