

Question 1. What is the current status of women's health in Pakistan? How it could be improved within the available economic resources? Support your arguments with suitable examples.

Question 2: What are the fundamental differences between Gender Studies and Women Studies? Substantiate your arguments with examples.

Question

Status of Women's Health in Pakistan

1. Introduction:

There is a saying of Hillary Clinton which says:

“I wish we were not fighting all the time to protect women's rights, to protect women's health.”

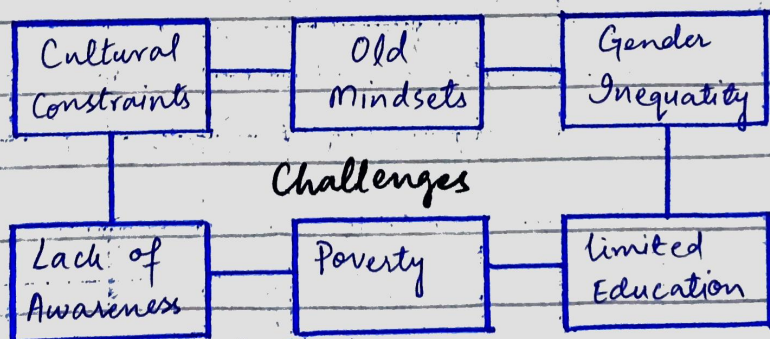
Although there have been attempts by the governments and enlighten groups to elevate the status of women in our society but on average, situation of women's health is not well in Pakistan. The health of families and nations is interlinked with the health of women. The solutions to all the problems faced by women regarding health is that women should be

educated and supported by their families at smaller level and by the government at broader level so that their health state may be improved and they contribute efficiently to the country's uplift.

2. What is Health?

Health is not just the state of physical well-being but it encompasses complete mental, physical and social well-being. It is not the mere absence of disease.

3. Challenges Faced by Women regarding health:



The status of women's health in Pakistan is struggling and women have to face a bulk of challenges even to live a healthy life.

a) Cultural Constraints

In the name of culture, tradition, and religion, women have never given equal status in society. In the early 20th century, some doctors warned women not to go to college because higher education would strain the female brain. It has been estimated that

“48 percent of women in Pakistan have no say in their own health matters.”

(Status of Women's Health in Pakistan, Saddam Hussain, March 2023)

b) Old Mindsets

There is a long list of old conceptions regarding women

such as:

1. Termination of pregnancy after diagnosis of female child.
2. Increased death rate of female infant due to less care.
3. Women are held responsible for giving birth to girls.
4. Young girls face stigma and exclusion during menstruation because "Talking about women's menstrual health is considered a taboo in Pakistani society."

c) Gender Inequality:

Mostly in rural areas, women are prevented from going outside of their homes and they are also not allowed for seeking maternal health guidance from male doctors. Such condition creates complications for conceiving women.

According to the 2019 World Population Report, 178 women out of every

100,000 die while giving birth.

d) Limited Education:

Insufficient knowledge and awareness about menstrual health results in negligence towards certain medical conditions.

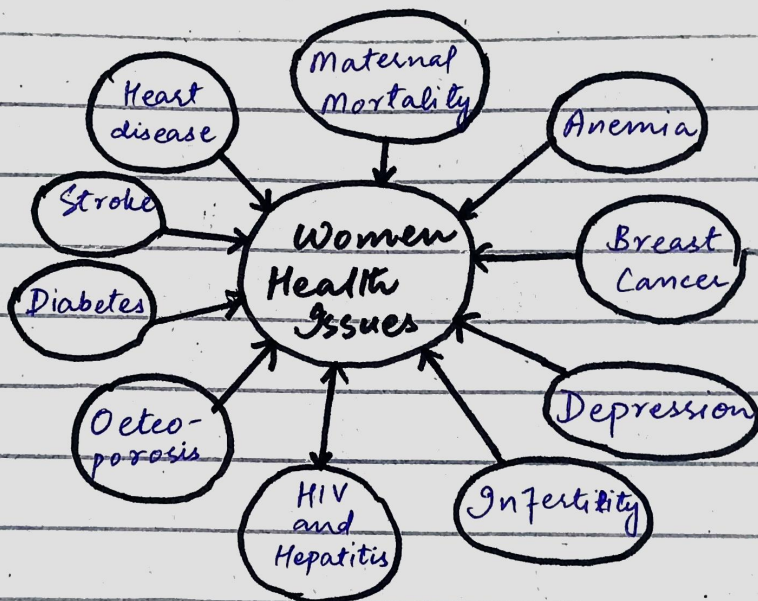
Information about women's reproductive or menstrual health is not embedded in curriculum. In Pakistan, most young girls are deprived of complete knowledge on bodily changes

e) Lack of Awareness

The lack of confidence and awareness hinders women from seeking appropriate medical assistance. Lack of female doctors in the small cities and villages which serve as the cherry on top of the ignorance of women's health issues in Pakistan. One of the reasons is that Pakistan's health-care system does

not accept any of the 85,000 female doctors who have cleared and earned medical degrees. (Women's Health Issues in Pakistan in 2023! Osama Anwar, July 2023).

4. Women Health Issues in Pakistan



Some of these are following:

a) Breast Cancer:

In Asia, Pakistan has the highest rate of breast cancer. It is the second leading cause of death among women. According to the Pakistan Medical Association,

around 83000 cases of breast cancer are reported each year, and approximately 40,000 women die from it in Pakistan. (Status of Women's Health in Pakistan, Saddam Hussain, March 2023)

b) Depression

About 34 percent of women in Pakistan are affected by depression (Status of Women's health in Pakistan, Saddam Hussain, March 2023). One of the most significant risks associated with depression is suicide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 800,000 people die by suicide every year and depression is a significant risk factor for suicide.

c) Anemia

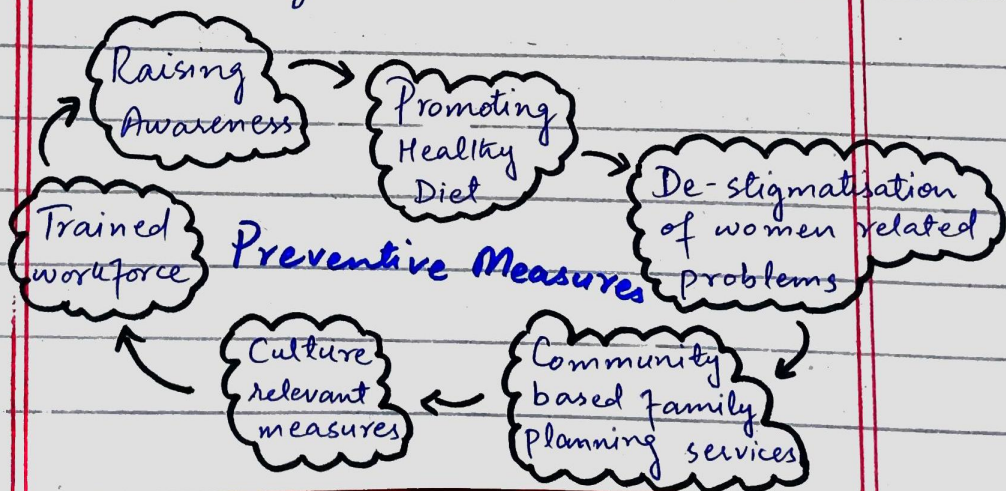
As per the findings of the Pakistan's Demographic and Health

Survey 2017-2018, nearly 44% of women aged 15-49 in Pakistan are anemic. It is also the leading cause of maternal mortality.

5. Steps to Improve Women's Health Status

“It is said that a problem identified is a problem solved.”

In a country like Pakistan which is at the peak of economic crisis, it is important to take some preventive measures that can ensure the improvement of women's health without using much economic resources.



6. Conclusion:

In a nutshell, the health of women in Pakistan is among the worst in the world. Women have the right to live a healthy and pain-free life. Telling them that their suffering is normal is equal to snatching their right to the treatment. So, it is important rather essential to pay great attention to the problems women face when it comes to their health and proper measures should be taken in this regard.

Question

Difference between Gender Studies & Women Studies

1. Introduction:

The concepts of gender studies and women studies are often used interchangeably but that is wrong. Both are different because their areas of study are different. Women studies is an academic field devoted only to the topics concerning women, feminism, their history, health etc. While gender studies investigates the actual gender differences between men and women, but thinks specially critical about what these differences mean in a **socio-cultural** context. Gender studies is not synonymous with women's studies, feminist criticism or queer theory though it may encompass all of these.

2. Definitions:

2.1 Women's Studies:

Women's studies is an interdisciplinary field that primarily focus on women. It focus on the roles, experiences, and achievements of women in society.

Sudra Coyner quotes women studies in one of her articles as:

“The academic arm of the women's movement.”

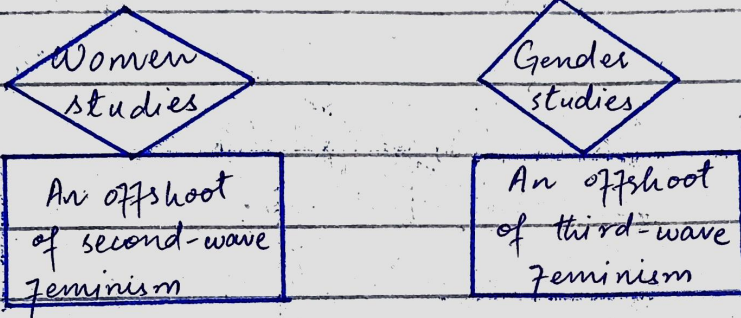
2.2 Gender Studies:

Gender studies is a multidimensional field that focus on women's studies, men's studies as well as queer studies. It focus on the social, political and economic roles and rights, and responsibilities of males, females and LGBT etc.

3 Differences:

Differences between women studies and gender studies on the basis of different aspects are given below:

3.1. Origin:



Women Studies is older than gender studies and is also known as predecessor of gender studies. While, Gender Studies is not ancient one and oppositely it is new to the society. It is also known as the successor of women studies.

3.2. Focus of Research:

Being exclusive, Women Studies merely focuses on

the problems of women (particularly patriarchy), roles, experiences and achievement of women in society. It demands rights for women only. While,

Gender Studies is more inclusive.

It focuses primarily on gender identity and gendered representation as central category of analysis. It focuses on all genders constituted by society.

In the words of an English activist, **Emma Watson**;

“Gender equality, historically has been predominantly a women's movement for women.

But I think, the impact of gender inequality and how it is affecting men has not really been addressed.”

3.3 Nature of Subject:

Women Studies



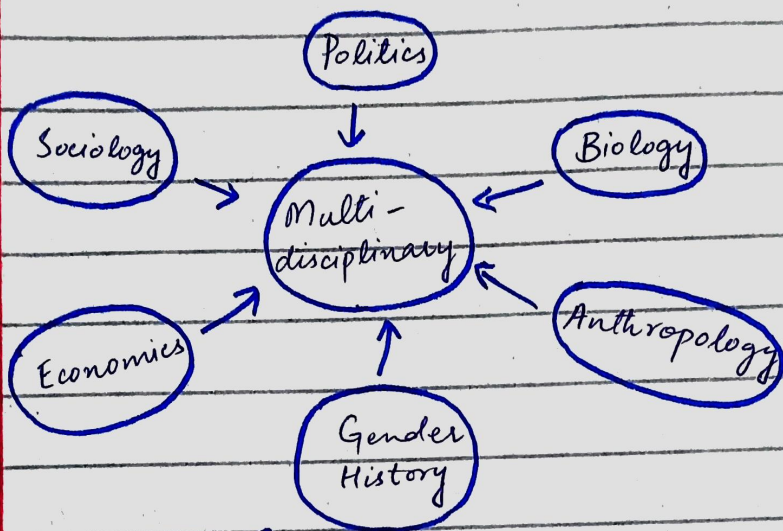
Interdisciplinary

Gender Studies



Multi-disciplinary

Women Studies merely focuses on women while Gender Studies extends its strands to other disciplines of social and biological sciences.



3.4. Area of Study

Women's Studies is the term used to refer to the theory and practice of feminist research and teaching in the academy. Its basic premise is that traditional education is based on a study of men usually upper-class, Caucasian (white-skinned), educated men while other groups of men and all different groups of women are erroneously

subsumed under the category "mankind".

While Gender Studies looks at the manner in which the norms and patterns of behaviours associated with masculinity and femininity come into being. It studies the features of these norms and patterns. For example; which traits are considered to be masculine or feminine? How do stereotypical models of men and women develop? 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.

3.5.

Theoretical Differences

Women Studies

- Feminist theory
- Women and development (WAD) &
- Women In Development (WID) approaches

Gender Studies

- Post-modernism theory
- Queer theory
- Gender and Development GAD approach

Women's Studies revolves around Feminist theory only while Gender Studies is more universal in scope.

3.6. Concept of Homogeneity

Women Studies does not involve the concept of homogeneity in its studies while Gender Studies involves the concept of homogeneity and focuses on the differences between heterogeneous and homogeneous individuals.

3.7. Goal of Studies

Women's Studies	demands equality
Gender Studies	demands equity

Women's Studies demands equality for women. Its proponents want to end patriarchy. According to Renate Klein:

"The main focus of women studies is to make the lives of women better."

Women's studies addresses not only the need for a fuller understanding of women in society but also for a new criteria and methods of assessing the status of women.

While Gender Studies, demands equity. It explains the position of all genders based on class, caste, religion, ethnicity and sexual identity. Politics, education, the family, the labour force, literature and the media are key topics.

4. Conclusion:

In a nutshell, one can say that women studies pondered upon the women's studies,

history of women at this universe
and women struggle for freedom
so that the issues could meet the
debate desk as soon as possible.

The gender studies are the paradigm
shift that how the studies of
men and women differ and are
inter-related.