

Q - Write a note on Colonial and capitalistic perspectives of gender.

### 1) Introduction :-

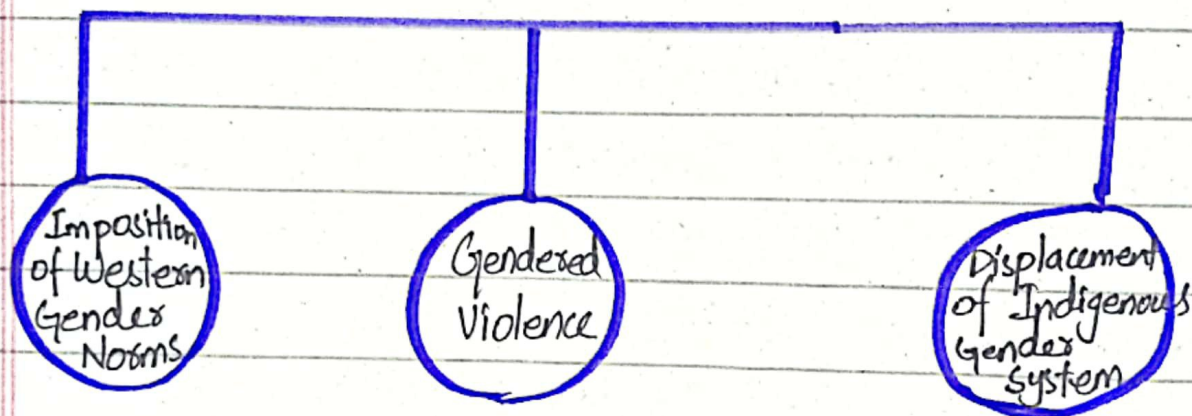
The perspectives of gender in colonial and capitalistic contexts are integral to understand the historical and ongoing structures of oppression, exploitation and resistance. The colonial and capitalistic perspectives have reshaped gender relations, contributing to the subjugation of women, as well as the construction of gender identities in ways that have profound and lasting effects on societies. The colonial perspective of gender refers to how colonial powers imposed gender norms that often disrupted pre-colonial systems, while the capitalistic perspectives analyzes how economic systems contribute to shape and exploit gender roles.

### 2) Colonial Perspective of Gender :-



The colonial perspectives of gender examines how colonial powers - particularly European empires - introduced new norms and systems of governance that impacted the lives of colonized peoples.

## 2.1) Key Features of Colonial Perspective:-



### a) Imposition of Western Gender Norms:-

Colonial powers often viewed indigenous cultures as "backward" or "primitive," particularly with regard to gender roles. Western ideas of binary gender system were imposed, which disregarded indigenous understandings of gender diversity.



## b) Displacement of indigenous Gender Systems:-

In many societies, colonized peoples had gender systems that were more fluid or non-binary.

e.g. many Native American cultures recognized Two-spirit people, who embodied both masculine and feminine qualities.

## c) Gendered violence:-

Colonialism was often accompanied by the systematic violence against women, especially through practices like sexual violence, forced labour, and the suppression of women's roles in leadership or economic production.

## 2.3) Example of Colonial Perspective of Gender:-

In many African countries before colonialism, gender roles were often more egalitarian. Women participated in leadership, economic activities and rituals. However, colonial powers like



British, French and Belgian empires systematically undermined these roles.

e.g.

British in Kenya reinforced male authority by creating legal and political structures that excluded women from formal leadership roles, leading to the erosion of matrilineal and egalitarian traditions in certain communities.

## 2.4) The Case of Sati (Widow Immolation):-

During British colonial rule, the British sought to "reform" Indian society by banning practices like sati, which they condemned as a symbol of backwardness. However, this reform was often seen as a tool for the British to assert moral superiority over colonized peoples.

## 2.5) Critical Analysis:-

Although the British criminalized certain



certain practices they deemed oppressive, they simultaneously failed to address deep structural issues, such as women's lack of property rights and education. This paradoxical stance contributed to a continued patriarchal framework that persisted even after the colonial period ended.

### 3) Capitalistic perspective of Gender:-

It explores how capitalist systems of production and economic organization create, reinforce and profit from the gender inequalities.

#### 3-1) Key Features of Capitalistic perspective of gender

- Gendered division of Labour
- Commodification of women
- Exploitation of female labour



## a) Gendered Division of Labour:-

Capitalism maintains distinct gender roles by relegating women to unpaid domestic labour or dom low-wage work. This division is fundamental to capitalist need for a reserve labor force that can be paid less and offers flexible, often exploitative labor.

## b) Commodification of Women:-

Capitalism commodifies women's bodies and labor, transforming them into objects of consumption in the market place. The advertising, beauty and fashion industries profit from sexualization and objectification of women.

## c) Exploitation of Female Labour:-

Capitalism's need for cheap labour has historically meant the exploitation of women's labour whether in the factories, in domestic settings, or in



the global south.

### 3-2) Example of Capitalistic Perspective of Gender:-

The Industrial Revolution and Women's Labour:-

During the industrial revolution in Europe and North America, many working class women entered factories. However, their labour was undervalued and underpaid.

**e.g.** In Britain, textile factories employed a large number of women and children but they were paid a fraction of what men earned, reinforcing the capitalist need to exploit gendered labor.

### 3-3) Women's Role in Garment Industry of Pakistan:-

Pakistan's garment industry is a key example of how capitalism exploits gendered labor. Despite women's essential



role in the production process, working conditions are given very poor for long hours and with low wages.

### 3.3) Critical Analysis:-

Capitalism has opened some doors for women in the workforce, it also exploits and reinforces patriarchy, making the structural inequalities between men and women both persistent and entrenched, and limiting potential for meaningful gender equality without significant systemic change.

### 4) Conclusion:-

The colonial and capitalist perspectives on gender have shaped modern understandings of gender relations and hierarchies. But understanding the historical forces helps contextualize ongoing issues of gender inequality and provides insight into how they might be addressed.