

Q. Differentiate between gender studies and women's studies. Discuss in detail the multidisciplinary nature of gender studies. (20)

① Introduction

Gender Studies and Women Studies are two academic fields discussing the issues faced by men and women along with other socially developed genders. These theories talk mostly about the rights of every gender with regard to discrimination in class, colour, race and ethnicity. Women Studies is an interdisciplinary study of women in a society. Whereas, gender studies is a multidisciplinary study focusing on men, women, LGBTQ and other forms of social genders. The question at hand will discuss the major differences between gender studies and women studies, along with discussing the scope of gender studies in our society.

## ② Difference between gender studies and women studies.

Gender studies and women studies are mostly considered as one theoretical concept, however, it is completely different. Both disciplines deal with different area of study, though both do merge in few points. The major differences are the following:

### a) Evolution of Gender studies and Women studies.

Women studies was first officially initiated by San Diego University, USA in the year 1969. However, the debate on women dates back to many years, from women fighting for rights and then fighting to eliminate discrimination. Through time line, women studies found new dimensions and then men's studies took dominance as mentioned by

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Michael S. Kimmel in his book (Men and Masculinity).

Later on another concept of Queer, gender came into development. Queer theory defined another form of gender socially constructed which is not accepted by the cultural society. Famous author and sociologist Michael Foucault in his book "Gender Trouble" considers the formation of Queer Theory as a new vital discipline of our society. These newly constructed theories led to the formation of Gender Studies in the early 2000's. This theory defined the roles and issues faced by all the genders in our society.

### b) Focus of Both studies :

Women study merely focuses on the objectives of women. This study defines the roles of women in a society, household and discusses the issues and challenges faced by them solely. This form of study

discusses discrimination faced by women in a society and segregates the role of men to as a cruel patriarchy model. Gender Studies on the other hand focuses on every gender irrespective of their gender or sex. Gender studies focus on the rights of men, women, queer, lgbtq and other socially constructed genders. This study segregates both the genders roles defining them equal rather than focusing on a single dominance.

### c) Women studies interdisciplinary approach

women studies mostly focus on women only. This exclusive approach still roots to every discipline separately. Whereas, gender studies on the other hand is a multi disciplinary concept focusing on every aspect of gender and is related to history, sociology, and anthropology.

## d) Societal approach of gender studies and women studies.

Gender studies is an academic based theory defining the role of women, men and other genders in the society. This form of study does not support any activism. However, on the contrary, women studies focuses the role of feminists in history and promotes their movements and waves.

## e) Political ideology on both studies.

Women studies focuses on a strict activist approach as also seen in history through; first; second; third and post modern wave of feminism. Gender studies mostly discusses role of women as equal representatives for politics.

### 3) Multidisciplinary nature of gender studies and its purpose.

Gender studies focuses on many disciplines as it leads to the ideology of equality with the following disciplines:

#### a) Gender Studies in Sociology

Sociology as a discipline focuses on every aspect of society and role of individuals.

Gender studies in sociology deals with socially and cultural developed genders and defines the role of genders in order to research on inequality, gender based violence, work issues and gender based harassment.

#### b) Gender Studies in scope of Anthropology.

Anthropology defines roles of genders as different across cultures and historic



of gender, class, race or ethnicity. Equality for representation in the parliament is also another scope of politics as defined by John Stuart Mill in his work "Subjection of Women."

4)

### → Conclusion

In short, the study of gender and women is a debate for rights of women and rights of all individuals. In this debate gender studies tilts towards favor. Gender study and its vast scope of multidisciplinary nature makes it significant for society to pursue in. The equality before society defines the actual purpose of scope of gender rights. Whereas, women study is an inclusive solely body on rights of women while ignoring any other form of gender being worth it to discussion. As once said by famous feminist how equality before anything is the actual peace.

"Virtue can only flourish among equals"

- Mary Wollstonecraft