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Write a note on status of gender studies in Pakistan. Give your views on the autonomy Vs integration debate in gender studies.

Ans. The women plight and their struggle has remained the same throughout the world. Their struggle has brought some positive changes in lives of millions of women across the globe. The status of gender studies in Pakistan, officially dates back to Pakistan's commitment to the UN, convention on elimination of discrimination against women - 1975. The historical development and current status of gender studies as defined below:

1. CEDAW, Beijing 1975: Fourth conference on women, held in Beijing in 1975 proved to be a landmark change in women development. Convention on Elimination Against Women, is a convention that was adopted by 189 countries. This convention was designed to promote 12 critical fields involved in the development of women, education being the leading one, Pakistan was also signatory of this convention, but due to political changes in Pakistan the major development was at halt till the Government of Benazir Bhutto.

2. Emergence of Gender Studies as a Subject:

Primarily, the studies about women and their related issues was initiated in 1989 with the creation of Sycees program for women studies by Women Development Division. Further, Women Development Studies and Center for Excellence of women studies was created at

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Karachi University. It is the first University to initiate Bachelors, Masters and M.Phil, PhD Program, in 2002 and 2004 respectively, in Pakistan. Transition from Women Studies to Gender Studies Gender studies as proper field of study emerged in 1995. In Pakistan the pioneer of Gender Studies is University of Punjab. After its full fledge introduction as a discipline, the Gender studies was introduced in multiple exams and as a Subsidiary course in Degree Programs.

3. Curriculum Revision Committee and recommendations:

With efforts of multiple women associations a curriculum revision committee was set to recommend possible changes to mainstream gender studies. The curriculum committee suggested following recommendations.

1. Gender Studies be made part of competitive exams.
2. Material and resources of subject should be translated in local languages.
3. Funds for such endeavours of translation and research.

4. Result: Gender Studies is part of most of Academic Disciplines as a minor subject of Degree Program. Gender Studies is taught as an individual subject as well, therefore fulfills the desire of both, the integrationists and autonomists. Gender Studies, now is a qualifying optional subject for competitive exams elevating its formal status and acknowledging its importance for human life specially for development of women.

Autonomy Vs Integration

Autonomy Vs Integration is a debate that proved to be a bedrock for the propagation of feminist idea throughout the world. Both ideas, though differ in the mode of propagation of idea, but have the same goal: to aware people of the rights and shared of women and different genders in society.

1. Autonomy:

The supporters of this idea, believe in the isolationist behavior and propose Gender Studies to remain as an individual discipline. Their belief; that individuality will provide the support and preserve essence of stance, is no doubt a correct approach, but has its own limitations. These isolationist tendency of a subject will never garner attention from the people. The only one who is interested to take this ideology as a profession; to advocate rights of women will take this subject under the influence of autonomist ideology. It hinders the wide propagation of feminist idea and lacks public awareness about this subject, involving some critical problems women are facing in their lives.

2. Integration:

The integrationist view reinforces that there should be gender mainstreaming. Instead of promoting to autonomist view and creating isolationist image of Gender Studies, it needs to be made part of curriculum as general, so every individual can have

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access to the knowledge involving their life. This approach, indeed is well placed and proposes a better opinion. But Integrationist view completely opposes the autonomist view and presence of Gender Studies as an individual discipline or Degree program.

3. The middle way Approach:

To these extreme approaches, each having its limitations, can only one thing bridge and minimize the limitations. The middle way approach. Gender Studies is a subject that is important in both of its forms; as autonomist demand it to be, as an independent discipline, and as integrationists demand it to be part of other courses. Therefore, middle way approach is suggested as retaining both of its forms, as a discipline and a subsidiary course as well. This will help an ordinary student inst interested in science subject to have atleast awareness about gender issues and will groom the individuals who are passionate to ^{as} advocate rights of women and secure their social status in society.

