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Q:- Write a note on status of gender studies in Pakistan. Give your views on the autonomy versus integration debate in gender studies.

Introduction:-

The status of gender studies in Pakistan is currently growing day by day. The efforts of the government of Pakistan by introducing "The center of Excellence for Gender Studies (CEGS)" in 1989 has paved way for many women to excel in different fields. The autonomy integration debate is one of the most important features that shape feminist studies and refers to the strategies for promoting feminist scholarship in the academia. In general autonomy means independency i.e. to keep the discipline an independent field of study in university and colleges whereas integration means to mix up with each i.e. to merge gender studies with other subjects.

2. Status Of Gender Studies In Pakistan - A Holistic View -

In Pakistan women issues got much public attention in 1970s due to sincere efforts of some committed feminists of that time. To introduce the discipline in the country, "the Centre of Excellence for Gender Studies" (CEWS) was established as a project in 1989 by the Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan, in five public universities. The first M.A in women studies in Pakistan began in 1996 at the University of Karachi. In 2002 centre initiated M. Phil / PHD program. In 2004, the discipline of Women's Studies was introduced as a subsidiary course at first year (Hons) level. The Pakistan Association for Women's Studies (PAWS) has also been working very active since its inception in 1991. Currently, in Pakistan, at the university and doctoral level, Women and Gender studies are flourishing swiftly. Many local and government universities are offering Gender Studies to let people know about the problem of other gender

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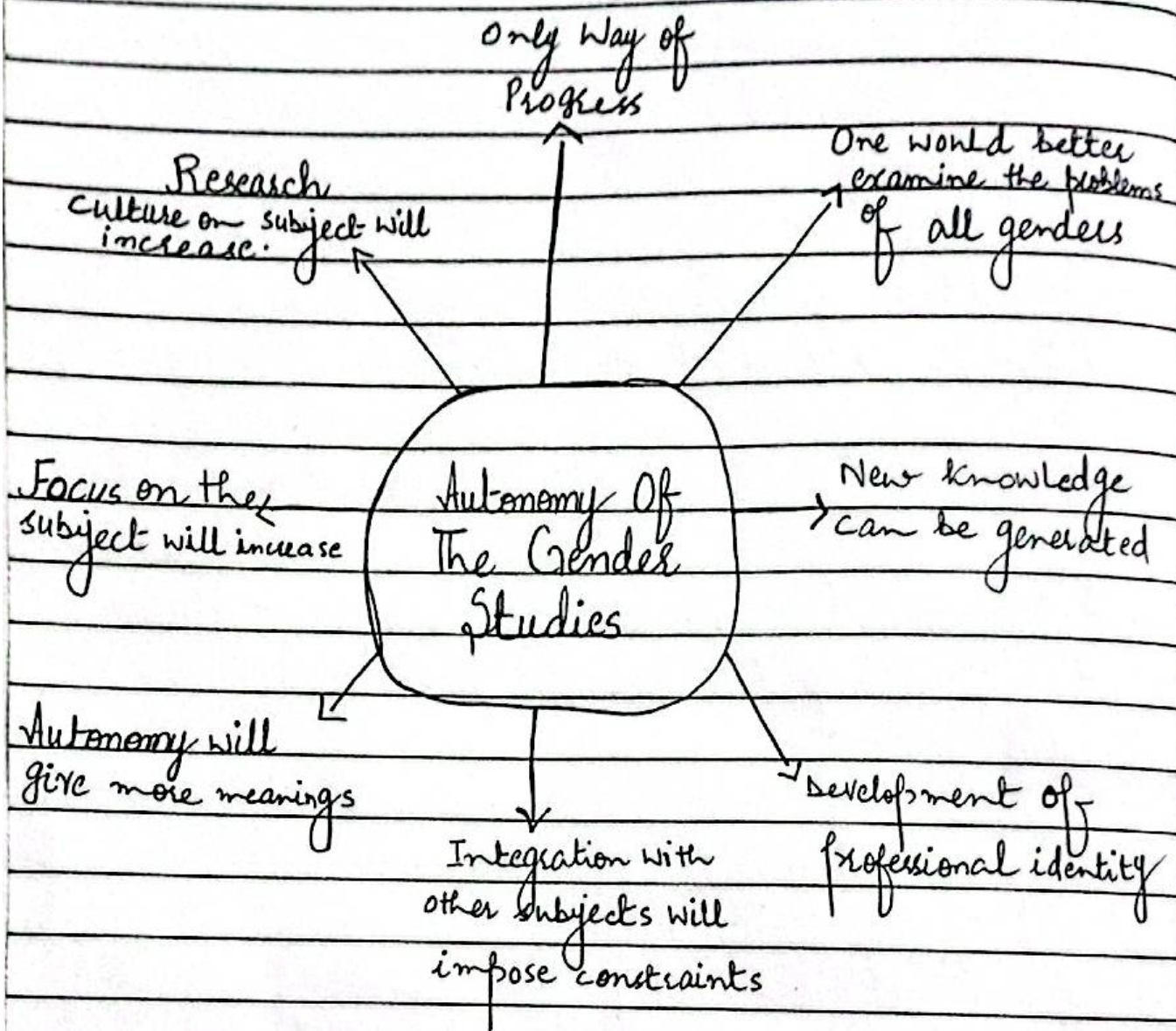
and to figure out the solution. Some of the universities which offer gender studies as a subject are as follows:

- Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad
- Fatima Jinnah Women University
- The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
- University of The Punjab, Lahore etc.

3. Autonomy Of The Gender Studies - The Understanding Of Debate In Real Meanings :-

Autonomy of the gender studies means keeping the discipline as an independent field of study in universities and colleges. The proponents of autonomy presents the following reasons for keeping the gender studies an autonomous field of study.

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3.1 Only Way Of Progress:-

According to the proponents of gender studies, autonomy also known as separatists. We can progress only if we keep the field autonomous and free of other disciplines influence. They think that being free from the influence of other subjects, they will progress in a better way.

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3.2 One Would Better Examine The Problems Of All Gender:-

The proponents of autonomy debate claim that by studying gender in all the four years, one would be keen to observe the steps and daily life routine of all the genders. Thus one would better examine the problems and difficulties associated with all the genders.

3.3 Best Means Of Generating New Knowledge:-

According to the separatists

Autonomy of the field is the best means of generating new knowledge through the interaction of like-minded people."

They believe that students will be more focused on one dimension and will try to find solutions of the question.

3.4 Development Of Professional Identity:-

The autonomy of the gender studies will create a professional identity in

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the students. They will be able to make independent decisions. An independent decision making body are thought to be important in legitimizing feminist scholarship and guaranteeing its future.

3.5 Integration With Other Subjects Will Impose Constraints:-

Autonomy will also help gender studies and feminists to focus all their energy on the teachings of Gender Studies and explaining new concepts, as in case of integration the focus will be diverted and constraints will be imposed on the field and work of feminists.

3.6 Autonomy Will Give More Meanings:-

The autonomy will give more meanings as if one would integrate gender studies with other subjects, it will lose track for which Gender Studies was basically started. Autonomy will give direction to gender studies for progress.

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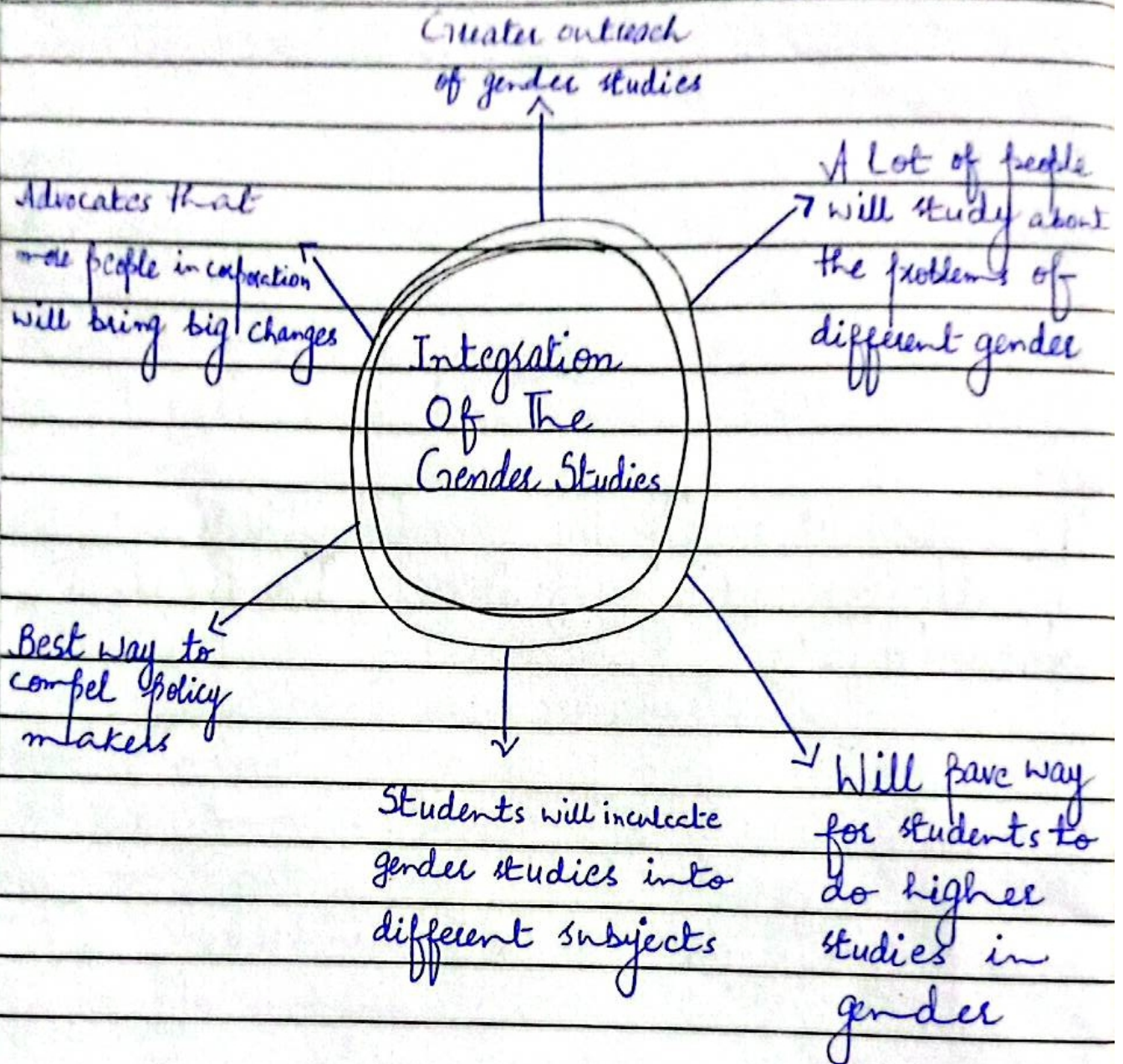
3.7 Research Culture On Subject Will Increase:-

People will research more on gender studies. Different articles, thesis, books etc will be published and a better understanding of issues and solutions of all genders will be distinguished.

4- Integration Of The Gender Studies - The Understanding Of Debate In Real Meanings:-

Integration means incorporation. It means to combine gender studies as an equivalent subject along with other subjects. Proponents of the Gender integration studies present the following reasons for integration as listed below.

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4.1 Greater Outreach Of Gender Studies:-

The proponents believe that by integration, the subject will have greater outreach. A wide range of students will read it, students of different academic fields would have exposure to gender issues.

4.2 Incorporation Of More People Will Bring Big Changes:-

According to the proponents of integration there is a need to bring big changes in society related gender and gender based issues. This change can only be brought by integrating gender studies in any other major discipline.

4.3 A Lot Of People Will Study About The Problems Of Different Gender:-

The inculcation of gender studies in all the disciplines would let a lot of people to study the problems of different gender.

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They would come to know the problems associated with living, earning etc of different genders.

4.4 Best Way To Compel Policy Makers:-

Interactionists also argue that incorporation of Gender studies in any other major discipline is the only way to compel policy makers to keep in mind gender while formulating a policy.

4.5 Will Pave Way For Students To Do Higher Studies In Gender:-

By studying gender studies along with other subjects, it will be an option for students to do higher studies in gender. It will be an ease for them to do masters, MPhil, PhD in gender studies.

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4.6 Students Will Inculcate Gender Studies Into Different Subjects:-

As students will study gender studies along with Chemistry, Sociology, Biology, Anthropology etc so they will inculcate gender studies into different subjects and will have an ease to study the behaviours of different gender in present, past and future.

5. Critical Analysis:-

At present most contend that autonomy and integration can co-exist. There are many other disciplines which are studied both as a complete separate discipline and also merged with other discipline. It will be a choice of students whether to study it as a complete discipline or just to overthorough it, but at least they would get to know the major issues of all genders in the society. As it was concluded as:

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It is both a discipline and interdisciplinary field."

- Jan Fax O' Bass -

6- Conclusion:-

Though autonomy and integration debate originated in woman studies and from there it entered in Gender Studies, but the arguments of both separatists (autonomy) and interactionists (integration) makes it an integral concept of gender studies itself.

Both separatists and interactionists have their strong arguments and it is important to take them into consideration before taking any steps.

The status of women has been changed since the arrival of autonomy because it was more than the just feminist view, so both the perspectives must be seen critically on ground view.

"In the current age and time, there is a dire need to not only integrate gender concerns in established disciplines of social sciences but also to introduce it as an optional subject at secondary, intermediate, and bachelor's level."