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Gender Studies in Pakistan; Not Autonomy versus Integration

INTRODUCTION:

The idea of Gender studies, - formerly known as women's studies - came in Pakistan towards the end of second wave feminism in the West. Different stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Women Development, NGOs and universities worked together in the process of creating gender studies a well-versed disciplined field in Pakistan.

For that in the process, centres of excellence were created and educational plans were brought forward. As a result, today, gender studies is a growing subject taught in various universities around the country.

The debate of autonomy versus integration is central to gender studies. It questions whether gender ^{studies} should be taught as an independent subject in the universities or should be integrated with other fields of study. While both have their pros and

cons, integration, should be the final destination while autonomy would be a means to that end.

Centres of Gender Studies in Pakistan

Centres of excellence

In 1989, the Ministry of Women Development which is responsible for emancipation of women created several centres of excellence around the country. The most important and developed was set up in Karachi.

National Association for Women Studies

In the process, PAWS played a key role in ensuring that the introduction of women's studies as a discipline goes smoothly, keeping that vision in mind, it enabled, or rather pressured HEC to create educational policies in line with the goal.

HEC's educational reform

Higher education commission was set to bring about educational reforms to ensure women's studies in keeping to Pakistan's 5 year plan. It therefore, created a

5 year plan for Women Studies

Under this plan, there were several policies decided. The most important one was EPSC's inclusion of Gender Studies in competitive exam. Other than that, funds were to be created, libraries to be made and translation of work on feminism was to be done in Urdu. Impact of efforts for women studies - Gender studies.

Consequently, Gender Studies in an optional subject for EPSC's SS and PMS exam. Many universities today teach Gender Studies as a separate discipline. These include: Alama Iqbal Open University, Quaid-e-Azam University, Durrani University, Fatima Jinnah College, and Sindh University. To name a few.

AUTONOMY VERSUS INTEGRATION

In the field of gender studies, academic often debate about whether gender studies should be taught in isolation of other fields i.e. should it be autonomous, or whether it be stream-lined with other disciplines re, integrated

ACADEMIC FOCUS OF THE 20th

Under autonomy, academics believe that the field is and should be focused on women. Hence, a more interdisciplinary approach is adopted. In contrast, integrationalists believe that the issue of gender is not isolated, hence, a more multidisciplinary approach is needed.

ARGUMENTS FOR AUTONOMY

Central focus on women's issue needed. Throughout history, academic and research was focused on men's lives and issues. This has left research on women far behind. Therefore, to catch up on centuries of progress, a field focused only on women's issues is needed since other fields have and are already focused on men.

More in depth research and development by integrating issues of women would not be studied in as much depth than if left autonomous. About this, Nigro

Said Main elaborates "Gender rather than women's studies would include study of men's gender which means women's issues stereotyped."

Free from external biases of other fields. Different fields have different approaches towards research. For instance, psychology cannot be studied the same way as history. Therefore, gender studies needs to develop independently so a discipline is formed naturally rather than by external influences.

Expertise of researchers on the subject when focus would only be on issues of gender and women, the researchers working on them would be more well-versed than those whose area of expertise lies in other fields. For instance, a history professor whose also teaching gender issues in the process would know little about the complex nature of gender while a teacher that only looks at gender would be able to understand its nuances better.

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Plans in autonomy - see women as

homogeneous

Under autonomy, it is assumed that

all women are the same. This in the

mistake Betty Friedan made in her book

"The Feminist Mystique" assuming all women

experiences are the same as that of white,

Christian upper class women

ARGUMENTS FOR INTEGRATION

Focus on interaction of women with men

and the society

Under integration, the researchers

acknowledge that women are not

an isolated part of the society. To

understand their issues, there is a need

to understand how they interact with

different institutions of the society as well as

with men

More platform and outreach for the subject

it kept in isolation, ~~many~~ very few would be

able to benefit ~~from~~ learning from it. If integrated

more students would be able to learn about

issues of gender. Hence, integration would

broaden the platform for the field.

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~~interdisciplinary~~ of women

students' ability to form links with

other fields and larger society

linking gender studies with other fields

of research would build student's

critical thinking skills. They would be able

to take what they learned outside class and

apply it to other fields and day-to-day life.

better way towards policy making

The purpose of understanding gendered

issues is to emancipate those who

suffer from existing structures. Separating

them would not bring about any positive

outcome. However, studying them with a

field such as politics can bring policy changes

Plans in integration - focus diverted from

women's issues only.

Integration means that issues that have no

relevance towards women are also given

time in class and in regards. There is a

fear of prioritization of other dimensions

of the field ~~over~~ over gendered dimensions.

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Which way to go?

Both autonomy and integrationists present strong arguments. There are multiple options that can be considered to end this debate but they all point towards integration being the end goal. Focus on academia requires autonomy while ⁱⁿ practical manifestation can only work through integration. Since there is a lag in the field of research, for the initial stages, autonomy should be prioritized. Once the discipline catches up with other fields, it should be interpreted. This shows that autonomy is just a means to an end. It is not sustainable in a longer run but a need of the hour. The eventual goal is to bring about change which can only be achieved through integration.

Definition: a discipline within the field of gender studies that focuses on non-conformist and radical understandings of gender, sexuality and ^{need for} change.

What is Queer

The term Queer means something that is awkward or weird. It represents something or someone who does not belong or is not a part of ones mainstream understanding of how society works.

It was initially used as a derogatory term to attack homosexuals. However, it was embraced by feminists in the 1990s.

Famous writers and philosophers of Queer Theory

Judith Butler, the author of The Gender Trouble is one of the main proponents of Queer theory. She in turn was

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Influenced by Michel Foucault. According to him, sexuality has been made a private matter for centuries which in what enabled sexual violence. He believed that sexuality should be celebrated and made a public matter.

What does Queer Theory say?

Idea of heterosexuality challenged. The Queer Theory criticizes the existing norms and understandings of sexuality because it only revolves around other sexuality. Heterosexuality divides society in binaries of men living women and women living men without acknowledging the existence of a spectrum within sexual orientation.

Social construction of sex and gender while classical, debated as well as radical feminism share all reached a consensus that sex is natural

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While gender is constructed, Queer theorists claim that both gender and sex are socially constructed. They believe that the 'nature' decides 'nature' and not the other way around.

Celebration of all sexualities - LGBTQA+ Under Queer theory, over sexual orientation must not be shared, rather it should be celebrated. They propagate for the rights of homosexuals and focus on their liberty to love as they want.

Able towards change - revolutionary Queer theorists do not believe in bringing about change through an evolutionary process rather they want to get rid of the existing social structures all-together.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

Who is Malala?

Malala Yousafzai is a young Pakistani feminist and education rights activist. She is known for standing up against terrorism in just at a very young age and being the youngest Nobel Prize winner.

Context and Background

~~Malala~~ ~~was~~ ~~born~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~young~~

Malala was born in the house of Ziauddin Yousafzai in the valley of Swat. Growing up she saw the changing political and social structures of her hometown as the Taliban took over the area.

She spoke against their act of putting ban on girls' education by writing a journal with the name of Gull Malal which was published in BBC

After peace was restored in Swat, the world, including the Taliban, came to know that the girl behind the journal was Malala.

Consequently, in 2015, Malala was shot in the head by Taliban. She survived and her achievements were celebrated around the world. All of this is captured in her autobiography "I am Malala".

Services by Malala
As a young girl, she spoke out against violence in Swat valley and stood for women's right for education.

Today, she runs a fund called "Malala Fund" that works for girls' education of movement of the Global South including Syria, Lebanon and South Asia.

2 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

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Awards and acknowledgements

Her biggest achievement is to be the youngest Nobel peace prize winner that she held at the age of 16. She also became the US ambassador for peace in 2018. Her speech in the UN General Assembly is relevant even today where she says

"One student, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world"

Criticism towards Malala

Despite her achievements, Malala tends to have a controversial figure since she has been used as a tool for war propaganda against Pakistan.

She is also used by the western media as a symbol of humanitarianism.

Association with her seems to get

many people out of their comfort zone.

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INTRODUCTION

"He who kills one innocent soul it is as if he killed all of humanity" - Quran 5:32

Violence against women has been a prevalent part of patriarchal societies around the world. Pakistan is no exception to this problem. It has seen multiple occurrences of honour killings, rape, and attacks which are the direct forms of violence. However, there are many indirect, covert forms of gender based violence that need an in-depth analysis of the country to be understood. Based on culture and structure, violence is passed through generations. Cultural form of violence is the most destructive in Pakistan and needs immediate attention. Steps such as implementation of SOPs, awareness and involvement of media, religion, and police can be a way to mitigate gender violence.

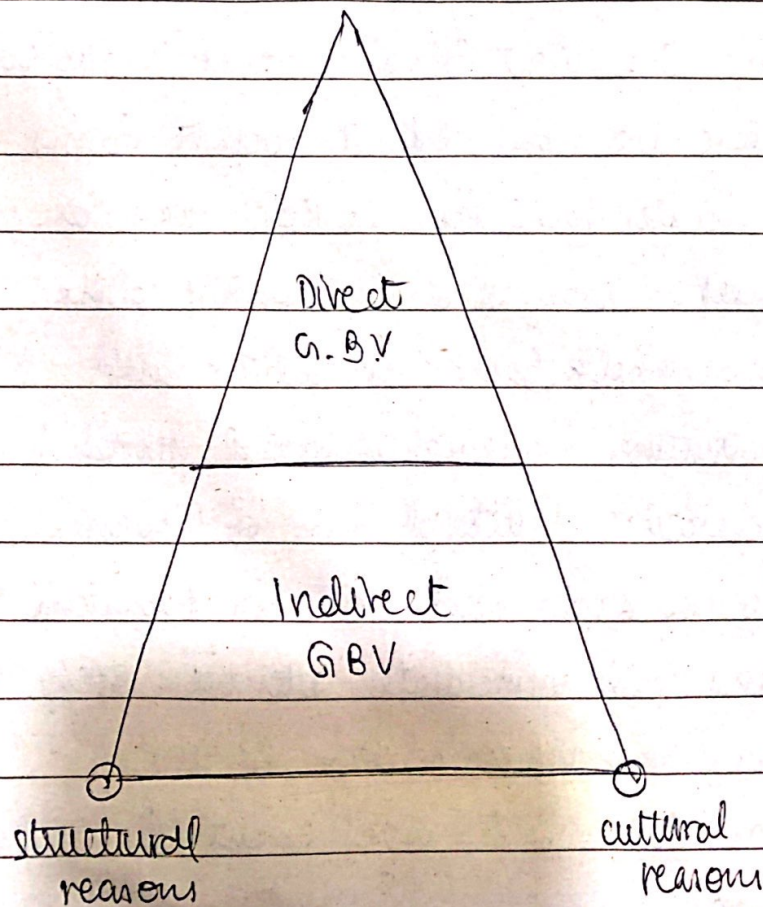
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What is Gender Based Violence?

It is violence committed on an individual based on the gender they identify with. Mostly it is the men who commit the violence against the marginalized genders but in rare cases, men can also be the victim.

Diagram on types of Gender Based Violence



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Direct gender-based violence

Under this, we see acts of aggression that directly affect the victim. They have sub-categories i.e. physical such as domestic violence or acid attacks, sexual such as rape, verbal such as cat calling and psychological such as manipulation and gaslighting.

Indirect gender based violence (IGBV)

~~Cultural~~: Indirect IGBV are not directly visible, nor directly impact the victim. However they are responsible for reinforcing and enabling violence based on gender. It is further categorized as cultural and structural violence.

i Cultural IGBV

When social norms, behaviours, and ideologies of the society enable gender based violence, it is called violence based on culture. For instance, patriarchy allows men to lead and as a leader they have more power over women that allows them to be violent.

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The culture of jirga and panchayat, which are informal forms of law enforcement in rural areas, allow women to be victimised. ~~They are~~ The leaders of such a social set up

Structural Gender-based violence

Cultural norms allow structures

based on those norms to be built

The strict codes of jirga and panchayat

in rural areas are a product

of the patriarchal ideology that

men need to enforce order in their

community such a system allows

women to be victimised as seen

in the rape case of Mulatara

Mai Athera a ^{convict in} jirga ended up in

gang rape of an innocent girl.

Most aggressive form of violence in

Pakistan

Violence based on culture in the

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most destructive in Pakistan. Two reasons being:

The culture enables direct violence

Culture allows room for direct acts

of aggression against 'women',

In Pakistani society 'women',

in a large part of culture which

see justify honour killing of

girls that elope. The families forgive

the killer because it would be

'dishonourable' had he not killed the

girl. (The Tragic life of Saneel Bano by Samina Khatun)

Religious ideologies within culture

also enable gender based violence.

In Islam, the misinterpreted religion,

cultural scholars and writers that

are using religion as a tool to suppress

women has been a part of many

societies where religion holds value.

Culture enables structures

Social and political structures are ~~reflected~~ ~~linked~~ by cultural norms.

Example of social structure would be of the acceptance of honor kill and wrong as elaborated by in 'honour unmarked'

Political structures and institutions including those of law enforcement also allow cultural biases to come in the way of Justice. The Metrosay rape incident where victim blaming was used as a classic trope to hold women accountable in an example of how ideology can shape institutional procedure.

~~Attacking~~ ~~the~~ ~~effects~~ ~~of~~ ~~colonialism~~
Gender based violence

Involving the Globalized world
Colonialism had a huge role to play in the status of women, Pakistan has today.

It would only be fair to hold them accountable and ask them for help Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a great way to start. Their implementation with the help of the Global North can help uplift ~~the~~ victims of GBV

Education and awareness

Education and awareness should focus not only on how victims can protect themselves but more importantly on how abusers can be reformed. Curriculum can focus on teaching respect towards all genders to ensure no resentment towards any gender leads to violence

Role of religious leaders

Being a cultural strongly based in religion, religious empowerment can have a huge impact. Leaders should work together to create discourse and understand the

True meaning of GVA where it comes to respect and dignity belongs men and women. They should be incentivised to share skills a discourse on Friday sermons

Political and legal empowerment structural violence can be mitigated

If more women and marginalized genders had representation in politics Great Reducing barriers of entry for women would lead to them having proportionate representation and can hence to create legal and social change.

Role of media in creating narratives

Many media channels including news and entertainment, sensationalising violence against women. PINK must put an end to this. Moreover according to Nam Chomsky and Ann Oakley, media can be used to spread awareness effectively

CONCLUSION

Gender based violence is prevalent in every society that show gender disparity. It has two different types - direct and indirect.

Indirect GBV is further categorized as structural and cultural based violence that is the most dangerous in the context of public health.

Immediate attention towards GBV is needed to cater to their issue and steps like political empowerment of victim and legal awareness can help in reach there.

Nature vs Nurture

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INTRODUCTION

The nature versus nurture debate is a debate in psychology but has implications for gender as well. There are beliefs in social construction of gender present multiple theories that prove that gender is in fact, a product of nature. On the other hand, more scientific understanding indicates that sex is a manifestation of nature. Both are said to be true at the same time ~~at~~ today, but in the past, this debate led to formation of married theories and arguments.

Social construction of Gender

Functionalism - Talcott Parson
According to this theory, developed in 1950s, gender roles are important in a nuclear family

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These roles enable division of labour that allows a smooth functioning of society. According to Parson, the father takes on leadership role while the daughter learns care giving from the mother. Hence the unit of family creates gender roles

Gender Performativity - Judith Butler
Judith Butler believes gender to be nothing but an act of performance. She elaborates that femininity performance makes you female and masculine performance makes you male

Masculine - Masculine Culture - Heffstein
He believed that cultures can also be said to have genders. Culture that values individualism and materialism like in the West are said to be masculine while those that value community based care

also in the East are said to be feminine cultures.

Gender Roles

According to this theory, every action is gendered. From changing the light bulbs to gardening and from cooking to paying bills, all are seen as roles that need to be performed. However, does a feminine role in a female and vice versa.

Doing Gender - West and Zimmerman

This theory expands on gender role saying that gender is done by actors, who perform a role as indicated by the scripts.

Gender Schema - Sandra Bem

This theory indicates where the script for gender role comes from. She elaborates on the role of

culture that has on our understanding of gender. Accordingly, factors that influence gender are:

- 1) Family
- 2) Peers
- 3) Education
- 4) Religion
- 5) Media
- 6) Politics

ROLE OF NATURE IN DETERMINING SEX

Anatomical features

The hereditary and genetic makeup of any individual categorizes him/her from their sex.

Gene	Sex
XX chromosome	♀ Male
XY chromosome	♂ Female
XXY chromosome	Intersex

External and internal physiological

Features

For a male, physiologically, one would have penis and urethra while for female, these body parts are replaced by vagina and vulva. For intersex, there can be both, or more.

Hormonal differences

~~Female~~ have an abundance of estrogen and progesterone that gives them emotional qualities. ~~These~~ male, on the other hand, produce testosterone, that makes their aggressive side come out. Imbalances in these can appear in intersex.

Reproductive organs

For ~~the female~~, ovaries play the and uterus play a key role of human reproduction process while for male, it is testes and penis. Ambiguity in these organs leads to an intersex.

Changes during puberty

At puberty, the hormones of each gender bring different changes. ~~Male~~ start to produce facial & body hair and their voices deepen. ~~Female~~ starts to menstruate and her voice softens.

CONCLUDING THE DEBATE

Analysing whether sex or gender influenced behaviour is an on-going research while biological sex is determined at birth, social gender is dynamic and keeps on changing with the changes in society.