

# GENDER STUDIES ~~Ques~~ (Question no 1)

- Gender Studies can be defined as :

"Academic discipline which analyzes constructions of gender in society, often with reference to class, race, sexuality and other sociological characteristics -"

In Other Words :

" It is an Interdisciplinary field that examines gender as a Social and Cultural construction. It Investigates the Actual (physical and biological) gender differences b/w women and men, but thinks especially critical about what these differences mean in socio-cultural context.

# History And Status of Gender Studies in Pakistan.

## Origin of Gender/Women Studies :

According to Rubina Saigol, Gender/Women's discipline as a social discipline, arose within Women's Movement and feminist struggles that raged across the globe over the last 2 centuries - Although the discipline as a field of study has only been established in the last three or four decades - but it has history that goes back much further. Women have been expressing their wants, needs, sorrows, desires, joys, love and hate ~~thru~~ for centuries, through the oral traditions of storytelling, singing and lullabies. However, systematic studies of women in relation to the world go back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enlightenment era.

## Early Milestones : 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Century -

The Publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's book is often taken as a starting point of Women's formal entry into public, political and intellectual discourse.

- In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, feminism as an intellectual discourse as well as Political Activism developed

rapidly, and various School of thoughts emerged, which contributed immensely to the understanding of Women and their relationship to social, cultural, economic, political and ideological structures.

### Theory and Practice Interaction:

As gender/Women Studies developed within an interaction of theory and practice, there is a unique and special emphasis in the discipline on the relation b/w Action and Reflection - It is generally held that action gives rise to theory which in guides and limits further actions., and in turn action refines, challenges or changes the theory - Gender Studies, is therefore not simply about Academic discourse or struggles for rights and justice - It is about both, each contributing to an understanding of another.

### - Feminist Movements / Struggles in Pakistan.

• Historical Context: In Pakistan, feminist struggles have been ongoing for a long time, but a significant turning point was during Zia-ul-Haq period / Rule in 1970's when discriminatory laws were passed, negatively affecting women. These laws, called Hudood Ordinances, raising concerns about the status of women and the direction country was taking.

• Impact of Islamization: Zia-ul-Haq's Regime also aimed to Islamize various aspects of society, including judiciary, education, and media based on specific interpretation of Islam. This threatened to create a state by religious leaders harming women's rights and religious minorities.

→ Transformation of Feminism: During this period, International funds started coming in for women's development leading to the emergence of New discourse called "Gender and development". However, this new discourse shifted the focus from Political Activism and genuine struggles to superficial and technocratic approach. Concepts.

→ Gender Mainstreaming: It became popular which means integrating gender concerns into all policies and programs. While it sounded good in theory, it often led to tokenism where women's presence in various spheres was merely nominal, without any real change in their status and power.

→ Gender training - Another approach, called gender training relied on party games and superficial exercises, and it lacked a deeper understanding of gender struggles and real world issues - This approach undermined the importance of Political Activism.

→ Impact on Feminist Movement. The emphasis on feminist technocratic approaches and integration weakened the feminist Movement's passionate and Political Nature, replacing it with a focus on individual behavior change rather than addressing systematic issues. Despite the dominance of technocratic ideologies, some feminists and organizations continued to focus on the political approach, combining research and activism to bring about real structural change.

→ Government Response: The government of Pakistan tended

to adopt a conservative and cautious approach, lagging behind the demands of feminist movements. However, the movements' activism could still lead influence the government's attention to women's issues.

## STATUS-

In Pakistan, nowadays, the field of gender studies is expanding in all its colours.

### - Creation of Ministry and Departments:

In response to the demands of women's movements, the government of Pakistan established the (MOWD), Ministry of Women's development at federal level and Women's Development Departments at provincial level. These institutions were meant to ensure that gender concerns are integrated into all policies and programs of various ministries -

Vision of MOWD: It aims to achieve

- gender equity and equality.
- empower women socially, politically, and economically.
- Create a just and democratic society.
- Promote Economic Prosperity through Sustainable development
- Aims to improve women's literacy rates, increase girls and women's educational attainment, and make existing curricula more gender sensitive.

- Establishment of NCSW: To monitor women's empowerment and rights, the NCSW was established in 2000  
(National Commission on Status of Women)  
Its Role is to suggest and review the changes in laws, policies, projects and procedures that hinder women's development or violate their

## Rights according to International Obligations and National Plan of Action

### GENDER STUDIES IN HIGHER AND ACADEMIC EDUCATION:

- **Pakistan's Commitment to CEDAW:** Pakistan agreed to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), but with some Reservations due to Country's Islamic character and cultural Norms. Despite these Reservations, the government still shows a Commitment to the Overall development of Women, including Education.
- **National Plan of Action (NPA)** The NPA, endorsed by the government in 1998, recommends the promotion of gender/Women Studies as an interdisciplinary field in public and private educational institutions. It also calls for strengthening Research focused on Women's Issues especially research that can inform Policy making.

### Gender/Women Studies at Universities

The action recommended was that the funding of Gender/Women Studies Centers at 5 Universities should be ensured through Ministry of education and UGC (Now called HEC). These centers were established in 1989 by Ministry of Women's development with the following objectives:

- Raise awareness and encourage discussions on Women's Issues.
- Develop Introductory Courses in Gender/Women's Studies.

- Promote Academic and Action Oriented Research on Women in development.
- Redefine, University, College and high School Curricula to include knowledge About Women and contributions by female scholars.
- Identify, replicate and translate other Relevant materials from other languages into National language.
- Examine and challenge Concepts, theories and methodologies that exclude or Overlook Women in Scientific Research and development.

Wide Scope

- MA Programs - Many Universities Now offer MA Programs, Mphil and PhD degree in gender studies with faculty members having diverse Academic backgrounds, and some have received their education from Abroad - Now students of Gender studies / programs often find employment in NGOs, Research Institutes, and government departments.
- Research and publications.

Different Centers and Departments have conducted Research on gender-related issues including Women's development, education, health, Violence, and economic empowerment. Some Research studies have been Published, while efforts to Publish more are ongoing. Some Institutions have published journal while others plan to launch their publication.

(PAWS)

Efforts by Pakistan's Association for Women Studies - PAWS was established to promote the discipline of Gender / Women Studies in Pakistan.

PAWS has organized seminars, published journals and developed



links with grassroot Organizations - Currently, in Pakistan at the University and doctoral level, Women's and gender Studies are flourishing swiftly. Many local and government Universities are offering gender Studies to let people know about the problem of other genders and figure out the solution - Some of the Universities that offer are -

- Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad
- Fatima - Jinnah Women University
- University of Sindh Tamshero
- University of Punjab
- University of Balochistan
- Quaid-e-Azam

## Question no 2

~~Q2~~ The autonomy Versus Integration debate started in 1980s - Bas  
While deciding how to deal with Women's problems and the question of Sub-ordinate Position of Women in Society, two streams of thought emerged in Society - These are the concepts of Autonomy Versus Integration - The thoughts had opposing views on how to approach studying Women's Issues. It was an imp discussion about whether Women's Studies organizations should be Independent units at universities or whether they should be Incorporated into the Conventional discipline

→ Opening the debate on the concept of autonomy of the gender Studies.

Autonomy in gender Studies means keeping the discipline an Independent field of Study in University and Academia. The Proponents of autonomy present staunch arguments for keeping gender Studies in the autonomous field of Study.

• Study Women in Isolation.

The advocates of the autonomous School of thought focused entirely and solely on the Study of Women - They believed that by Studying just Women

and bringing their problems to light, they will be more successful in empowering women. For them, studying women's issues through the lens of already existing norms and values is to diminish the importance of the predicaments faced by women.

### - The only way to Progress

According to the proponents of the gender studies, autonomy basically fosters the concept of Separatism. They are of the stance

"They We can Progress only if we keep the field autonomous and free of other disciplines."

They think that by being free from the influence of other subjects, they will progress in a better way.

### - The Way towards Radical tendencies

The proponents of the autonomous school of thought have the perspective to harbour radical tendencies in their arguments. This is because the autonomy perspective calls for the complete isolation of women's problem and complete end to Patriarchal Norms. Thus, they demand a complete change in the way Society operates.

- One would better examine the problems of all genders. Proponents of the autonomy debate argue that by studying gender for all years, one would be able to observe all gender steps and daily life routines. This one would better examine the problems and difficulties associated with all genders.

## - Development of Professional Identity:

The autonomy of gender studies will create a professional identity for the students. They will be able to make independent decisions - An independent decision making body is thought to be important for legitimizing feminist scholarship and guaranteeing its future.

## - Integration with other subjects means constraint on Gender equality.

Autonomy will allow gender studies and feminists to focus all of their energy on gender studies teachings and explaining a new concept - In the case of integration the focus will be diverted and constraints imposed on the field and work of feminists.

## - Autonomy will give more meanings.

Autonomy will give more meanings as if one would integrate the gender studies with other disciplines it will lose track and for gender studies that was basically started. Autonomy will give direction to the studies in order to progress in the real meanings.

## - Increase in the Research Culture on the Subject

The autonomous school of thought among feminists argues that people will be able to do more research on gender studies. The vision of feminist scholarship should be increased if gender studies are treated as autonomous subjects.

Women Studies - treated as a separate discipline.

Since the autonomy Perspective Wants to focus Solely on Women they endorsed the discipline of Women Studies - They believe that studying Women's history and Society through the lens of discrimination against Women, they will be able to elevate the Status of Women. Women's Studies programs are able to focus all of their energies on teaching and Scholarship about Women.

## ✓ Opening the debate on the Concept of Integration of the gender Studies.

Integration means Incorporation. It means combining gender studies as an equivalent Subject with other Subjects. Proponents of gender Integration studies present several arguments to make their stance strong.

### • Greater Outreach of the gender Studies .

The Proponents believe that by Integrating the subject, the subject will have greater Outreach - A wide range of students will read it, and students from various Academic fields will be exposed to gender issues.

- Incorporation of more means the Incorporation of big changes.

According to the Proponents of Integration, there is a need to bring about big changes in Society relating to gender and gender based issues. This change can only be brought by Integrating gender studies into other major disciplines.

- Understanding of a gender issues by number of people-

The Incorporation of gender studies in all the discipline would let the other people to know or study the problems of a different gender. <sup>alot</sup> like living, earning etc.

- Best Inlay to Compel the Policy makers.

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

- Will Pave for Students to do higher Studies in gender -

Studying gender studies along with other subjects will be an option for students to do their higher degree in gender. They can pursue M.A, mphil or PhD in gender studies. It will be easy for them to do.

- Students Will inculcate gender studies into different Subjects

Students will be able to Infuse the gender studies into different subjects and shapes. as they study the behavior of different genders in present, past and future.

- Integration means Integration into social fabric.

The advocates of the Integrating School of thought talk about how women should be made part of society by integ becoming integrated in the school at social, economic, political and cultural spheres. It Profounds the view that women are part of society and should be treated as such.

- Sensitize the masses About gender discriminatory Practices-

The Integration Perspective believes that by Women's Problem can be dealt by Creating Awareness about the rampant discrimination that takes place against Women. They believe the fact that dichotomy b/w genders has been practiced for centuries, and Elimination of these practices require an understanding of why such Women possess a Sub-ordinate position in Society.

### Point of Critique

At present, most of the other disciplines are studied as separate disciplines and also, at and simultaneously they are also integrated in other fields. So, autonomy and integration can co-exist together. It would be a choice for students and easy for them that they want to study as a whole or just want to go through <sup>whether</sup> the major issues confronting gender in Society.

"It is both a discipline and interdisciplinary field."

(Jan Fox O'Barr)

### Conclusive Remarks.

Though the autonomy and integration debate originated in Women's studies and from there entered gender studies the Arguments of both specialists and interactionists make it an integral concept of gender studies itself. Both present their strong arguments and it is imp to take them into their consideration before taking any steps. Since the arrival of autonomy, the status of Women has changed since

it was more than just a feminist viewpoint - so, both perspectives must be viewed critically from ground up. In the current age and time, there is a due need not to only integrate gender studies in other disciplines of social science but also to introduce it as an optional subject to enhance the status of gender studies in Pakistan.



## Question no 4

The Social Construction of gender is a theoretical framework that posits that gender is not an inherent or fixed attribute but rather a product of social and cultural influences. This perspective suggests that societies create and assign gender roles, norms, and expectations, shaping how individuals perceive and express their gender identities.

## Theories

Several theories contribute to the understanding of social construction of gender. Here are more prominent ones.

### 1- Structural functionalism

The functionalist approach sees society as a complex system. This approach looks at society through a macrolevel orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole and looks at both social structures and social functions.

- The functionalist approach of gender <sup>in</sup> equality was most robustly articulated in 1940s and 1950s, and largely developed by Talcott Parsons' model of the nuclear family (husband, wife and their children)

- A Structural functionalist view of gender inequality applies the division of labour to view predefined gender roles:
  - Women take care of the home while men provide for the family.

## 2. Conflict theory:

According to Conflict theory, society is defined by a struggle for dominance among social groups that compete for scarce resources.

In the context of gender, Conflict theory argues that gender is best understood as men attempting to maintain power and privilege to the detriment of women - Therefore, men can be seen as the dominant group and women as sub-ordinate group while

- Conflict theorists argue that the only reason these roles persist is that the dominant group naturally works to maintain their power and status.

- According to conflict theory, social problems are created when dominant groups exploit or oppress subordinate groups. The conflict b/w the two groups caused things like the women's suffrage movement and was responsible for social change.

## 3. Gender Performative theory:

Judith Butler, a philosopher and gender theorist introduced the concept of gender performativity in 1990 in her book "Gender trouble".

Judith Butler argued that gender is socially constructed

- She argues that being born male or female does not determine

behavior. Instead, people learn to behave in particular ways to fit into society. The idea of gender is an act, or performance.

### - Social learning theory.

It explains behavior through observation and copying. A child may exhibit gender-specific behavior due to copying role models of the same sex such as their older siblings.

Bandura went on and described five processes that took part when gender was developed through social learning.

- Observation: For social learning to occur, the behavior must be observed.
- Attention: Then the individual needs to pay attention to his/her role model's behavior.
- Retention: Then the individual would need to encode and retain the gender appropriate behaviors.
- Reproduction: The individual would need to replicate gender appropriate behavior.
- Motivation: Lastly, some kind of reinforcement would need to take place for the individual to be motivated to continue the behavior.

→ Cognitive Development theory: It states that gender typing occurs when children think of themselves as boys and girls. Once they consistently conceive of themselves as male or female, children prefer activities, objects and attitudes consistent with their labels.

Step	Knowledge Acquired	Example
1- Gender Identity	Labeling self as male or female	I'm a girl
2- Gender Stability	Knowing your gender stays the same across the time	"I will always be a girl even when I grow up."
3- Gender consistency	Knowing your gender stays same across situations	I am a girl even when I am in boys' clothes or play with my brother's toys.

### → Feminist theory

feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical discourse. It aims to understand the nature of gender inequality, and examines women's social roles, experiences, and interests.

- Radical feminism, in particular, evaluates the role of patriarchy in perpetuating male dominance. In patriarchal societies, male's perceptions and contributions are considered more valuable, resulting in silencing and marginalization of women.
- Feminism focuses on the theory of patriarchy as a system of power that organizes society into a complex of relationships based on the assertion of male supremacy.

→ Queer theory. It challenges traditional views of gender and sexuality, exploring how these categories are socially constructed and not fixed. It questions the

idea of binary understanding of genders (male/female) and emphasizes the fluidity and diversity of gender identities

## Conclusion.

These theories all contribute to the understanding that gender is not determined by biology alone but is deeply influenced by societal norms, cultural practices and interpersonal interactions. The social construction of gender recognizes that gender roles, expectations, and identities can change over time and vary across different cultures and societies-

## Gender Based Violence (Question no 7)

Violence against women and girls is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights violation

International Human rights law documents provides the following definitions of violence against women and GBV

"It is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations b/w men and women, which have led to the domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement.

Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.

# Theories of Violence against Women

According to NCHR, policy brief released on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 stated that 63000 women were subjected to gender based violence over past 3 years in which 4000 were in first half of 2020 when lockdown was imposed to prevent Covid-19.

Basically there are 4 theories which explain the reasons for Gender based violence:

- 1- **Evolutionary Approach theory:** It examines how gender roles and relationships have evolved over time. • Fredrick Engel in his book: "On private



property, state and ~~development~~ "Society" explored the historical development of family and the relationship between gender roles and economic structures. In ancient times, women dominated the agriculture. They were involved in various aspects of farming but then with the rise of private property, patriarchal structure developed which led to the marginalization of women.

## - Neurophysiological theory

This theory exposes the biological and neurological aspects that contribute to gender based violence. According to this theory there are structural and functional differences in the brains of individual assigned male or female at birth. Hormones also play a role in shaping the brains of both - for example; If a woman is being victimized then there are certain medical reasons for that for example higher testosterone and low serotonin - for this reason, he does more violence. John Kaspar Lavater claimed that person's character or personality is based on facial features - However, this physiognomy has been widely discredited as lacking scientific validity. Also, Sheldon theory says that there is a connection between body types and personality as person who has more mesoderm would commit crime.

- **Psychopathological:** According to this, there are certain psychopathological factors like anti social personality disorder which can lead to aggressive behavior and may cause gender based violence - Or certain mental issues or experiencing trauma can lead to violent behavior.

- **learned helplessness theory:** It suggests that when individuals perceive a lack of control over their environment

and outcomes. they may develop a sense of helplessness which can lead to feelings of depression and anxiety

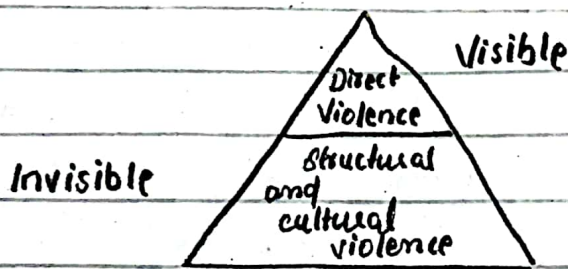
### 5. Social learning theory:

Individuals learn behavior, including violent ones through observation, imitation and reinforcement

This theory suggests that exposure to violence in one's environment such as witnessing domestic violence during childhood can lead to gender based violence.

### Forms of Violence

John Galtung divided gender based violence in 2 types i.e direct and indirect violence.



**Direct Violence:** physical acts of aggression such as man striking his wife, bullying in schools, acid attacks, physical violence, killing in name of honor all are classified under direct violence

**Indirect Violence:** The use of political culture or economic power to inflict violence on a person or particular group of people is referred as indirect violence e.g forced and child marriages, culture of sexism, Denial of rights of inheritance, trafficking of women and girls.

## Prevalent

### Form of violence in Pakistan:

In Pakistan, domestic violence is prevalent. In other words, we can say in Pakistan, direct violence is prevalent. Among those, domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, honor killing are quite common.

- **Physical abuse**: One of the famous incident for this is Noor Muqaddam case - She was assaulted, beheaded and murdered by Zahid Jaffer in Islamabad.
- **Sexual violence**: Rape and sexual assault falls in this category for example, Mukhtaran Mai case 2002 - she was sexually assaulted and gang-raped by one of the clans of her village (Mastoi clan) - she was raped as punishment due to his brother's alleged relationship with the women of that clan.
- **Honorkilling**: One of famous example is Dandeel Baloch case of 2016. She was asphyxiated by her brother Waseem and she was put to death after strangling in Multan in the name of honor.
- **Domestic Violence**: Madina case of 2020 - She was 22 year girl who was put to death after she was doused with petrol and then set on fire - Her only crime was that she was unable to provide a motorcycle for his husband in dowry. Also Asma Aziz case of 2019 - She was psychologically tortured by her husband - She was beaten by her husband besides shaving her head for not dancing in front of his husband's friends -

## - Ways to eradicate the Violence :

1. Social awareness : In the book : " Manufacturing consent : " The political economy of the mass media " 1988 by Noam Chomsky - He argues the media is the most effective and powerful ideological institution - We should change programs through social media and make people aware.
2. Film Industry : films like "Gangubai, lakshmi bai who speak against cruelty and support women should be promoted - so they shape perceptions of people."

"There has to be a shift in the culture - We have to have conversations about systems that are in place that allow sexual violence to flourish.

Tirana Burke -

- Proper Balance : Role of women in political and social affairs should be promoted - There should be socialization.

- SDGs The biggest goal of SDG7 was to promote gender equality so they should be properly implemented also.

- Religion : It should be interpreted in true manner - Ulemas and religious scholars should be taken on the board to endorse the true meaning and status of women in Islam.

### Other ways :

- Take a stand against aggressive forces .
- Mobilize the youth to fight harmful practices .

- Parliamentary debate should be there for removal of gender based violence.
- Stop considering domestic violence as private affair
- Ensure that women must know their rights and raise their voices against their exploitation.
- Address the stereotypes and equality of women must not be considered taboo.

In Pakistan, violence against women is illegal. Despite the fact that nation has laws to protect from violence, the state appears to have relinquished its duty to uphold them. Men have their own ways of exploitation of women in Pakistan. The dilemma of the society of Pakistanis that men consider themselves as sole owner, earner and sole ones responsible to eradicate the liberty of women. It have also ranked 142 out of 148 in global gender gap parity index. State have provided the rights to women, but it fails to put these laws in to effect and take step. Therefore, there is a strict need for workable and practical strategies to combat any form of violence so that women can enjoy the same status as granted by Islam.