

# GENDER STUDIES

## QUESTION NO. 06

### SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A GENDER

#### A. INTRODUCTION

Gender is a socially constructed phenomenon. Societies construct gender by assigning gender specific tasks, roles and start gendering the individuals from birth. The gendered division of labor, families, religion, cultures are the main institutions which construct gender. In the same way, the perspectives of masculinity and femininity are formed in the society. When girls are taught to be soft, caregiver and nurturer while men are taught to be strong, emotionless, and aggressive. Therefore, gender is a socially constructed phenomenon irrespective of biological determinism which can not be declined.

#### B. Social Construction of a Gender

Many theorists of the field of gender

studies worked on the social construction of a gender and emphasised that society constructs gender.

### 1. Gender Role Theory by Judith Butler

Judith Butler a renowned name in Gender Studies worked on the social construction of gender. She emphasizes that gender is not biologically determined but socially constructed through performativity. Butler highlights that-

#### "Gender is What We Perform"

The performative nature of human constructs gender. For example, in Pakistani society, gender roles are constructed by assigning the indoor and outdoor tasks specified to men and women, which ultimately constructs the gender.

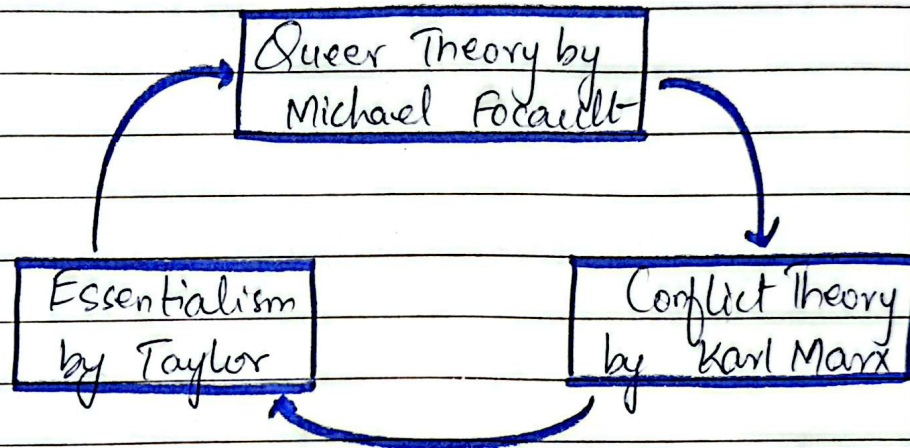
### 2. Functionalism by Talcot Parson

Talcot Parson emphasizes on social construction of a gender in such a way that traditional gender roles emerged because they were functional for society. He said,

**"The goal of constructing something is to make it functional"**

For example, women are considered natural caregivers while men are considered to lead as they are dominating and aggressive in nature - as perceived.

### **3. Other theories Explaining Social Construction of Gender**



All these theories largely emphasized on the social construction of gender and roles are significantly played by families, religion, culture, schools, media, art, literature, language, and many other aspects of a society.

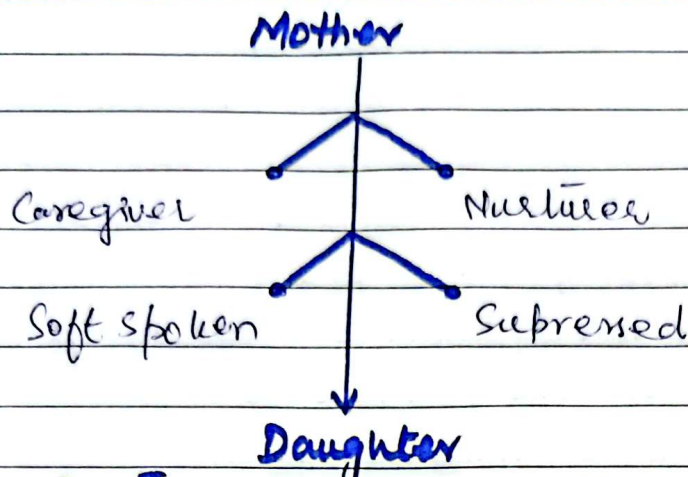
### **B. Theoretical Perspectives On How Masculinity and Femininity Are Formed In Society**

Masculinity and Femininity and the concepts created specifically for men and women on the basis of their roles assigned to them by societies. Masculinity reflects the aggressive, dominant, strong, and emotionless traits of men assigned by societies. However, femininity reflects soft, nurturing, oppressive, caregiving traits of women. Many theoretical perspectives described these traits of masculinity and femininity.

## 1. Doing Gender Theory

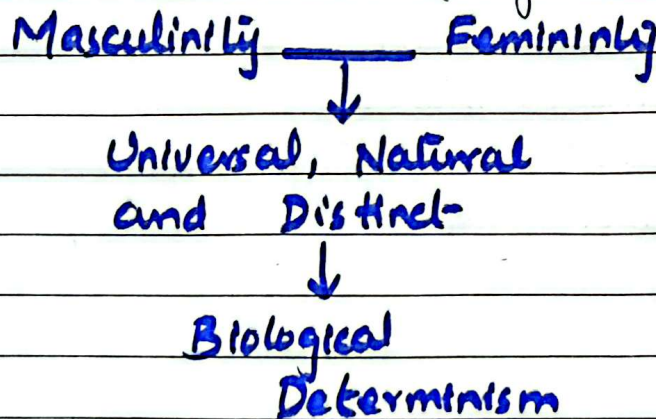
Doing gender theory describes how males and females get used to of the habits they are continued on doing by noticing their mothers or fathers or other members of society.

For example, in domestic household in Pakistan, daughters see their mothers doing household activities, so they perceive the same role for themselves as well. Meanwhile, sons watching the dominant behavior of their father perceives the same attitude.



## 2. Essentialism by Taylor

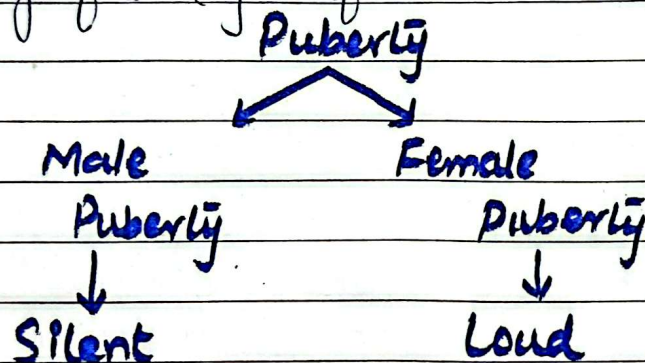
Taylor argues that humans are born with essential forces. He emphasizes on the psychic unity of mankind. Taylor focused on the concept of biological determinism regarding masculinity and femininity. As men are born assertive, while women are born fragile.



For example, by birth women are calm and fragile as in Pakistan, people notice it during pregnancy on the basis of pregnant woman's attitude, whether it will be a boy or a girl.

### 3. Role of Cultures

Moreover, many cultures specify roles for men and women. In Pakistan culture, the concept of **Private Public Dicotomy** is very common which restricts women to stay in Chaddai Chae Deewari, and prevents them from engaging and participating in society, most significantly after achieving puberty.



Women reaching the stage of puberty is very 'loud' in many societies while male puberty is silent which prevents women to engage ~~un~~ socially in earlier age.

### D. CONCLUSION

On the way of conclusion, gender is a socially constructed phenomenon and masculinity and femininity are the roles assigned to men and women to perform. In this aspect,

Simone De Beauvoir said, "One is not born rather becomes a woman". Hence, gender is not biologically determined. Instead, it is socially constructed.

## QUESTION NO: 02

### GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

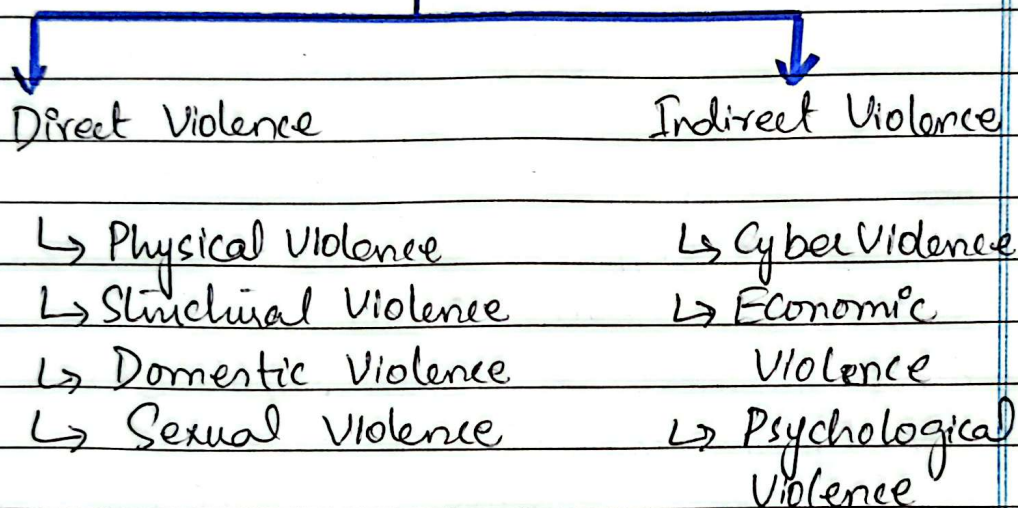
#### A. INTRODUCTION

Women all around the world suffers from gender based violence suffers at least once in their lifetime. GBV refers to any sexual, physical or emotional harm to women or other genders which disrupts the dignity of life. According to UN definition of violence against women, "Any act that cause physical, psychological or emotional harm to a woman, any act of coercion, prevention from liberating in gender based violence". There are certain direct and indirect forms of violence in Pakistan which needs to be prevented through a purposeful and policy oriented strategies in the Pakistani society.

### B. Gender Based Violence - An Overview

Around 1 in 3 women in the world face gender based violence from their intimate partners. Gender based violence in Pakistan is categorised in two types either direct or indirect violence.

#### Gender Based Violence



### C. Direct Violence In Pakistan

#### (i) Physical Violence

Any violence that inflicts physical harm to women. Most commonly reported in married couples. According to Pakistan Demographic and Health Institute **33% women** face physical violence from their intimate

partners.

### (ii) Structural Violence

Structural Violence is also a type of direct violence that prevents women from basic life necessities. Workplace violence, restriction to attain education, and basic life facilities. According to Aurat Foundation Report, **40% women** in Pakistan lack basic life necessities.

### (iii) Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is the most common form of violence in Pakistani societies. Almost every woman in Pakistan has suffered domestic violence in its lifetime. Most commonly from their intimate partners. According to Aurat Foundation, **200% increase in domestic violence reported during COVID-19.**

### (iv) Sexual Violence

The last but not the least form of direct violence in Pakistan and around the world is sexual violence. Sexual violence is done through forced sex, rape, marital rape, harassment and in many

other forms.

## D. INDIRECT VIOLENCE IN PAKISTAN

### (i) Cyber Violence

Cyber bullying or cyber violence is the most common form of ~~direct~~ violence that does not involve any physical harm but emotional or psychological harm. Posting inappropriate pictures, nonconsensual sexting and doxing are all forms of cyber violence and reported highly in Pakistan.

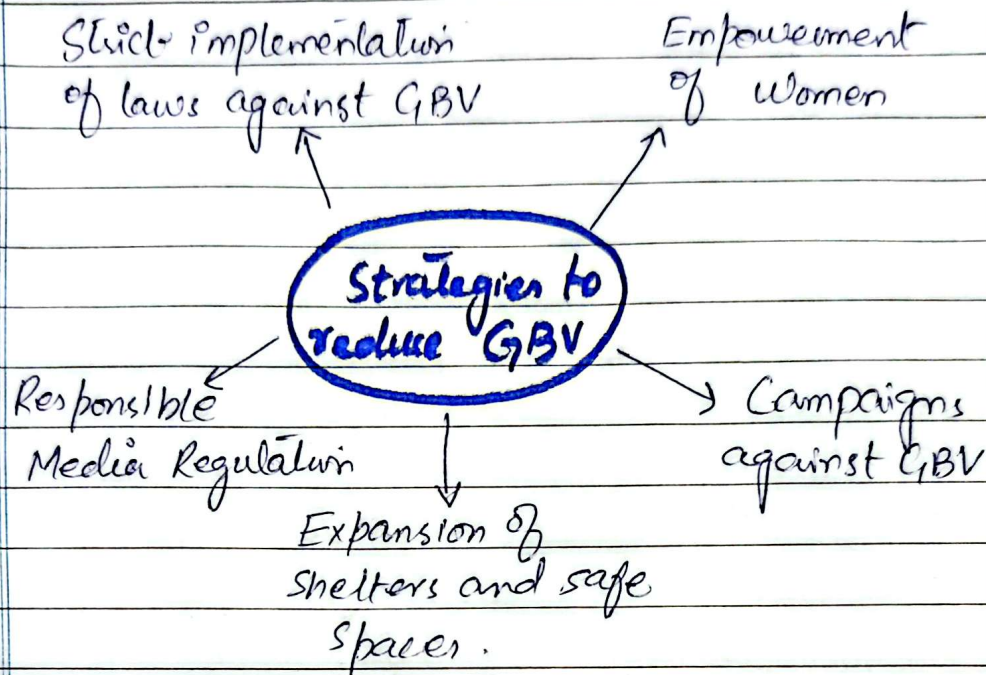
### (ii) Economic Violence

Economic violence includes fraud, online thefting against women because she is a woman. According to FIA, **35%** increase in economic violence reported via online sources mainly from women accounts.

### (iii) Psychological Violence

Psychological violence inflicts psychological harm to women while torturing them continuously without causing any physical harm. It disturbs the mental health often lead towards increase in suicide rate in Pakistan.

## E. Practical and Policy Oriented Strategies to reduce GBV in Pakistani Society



### (i) Effective Implementation of Existing Laws

Pakistan already has laws that need to be strictly implemented to reduce GBV in Pakistani Society. **Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010**, needs to be implemented. A shift from law-making to law-implementing is the ultimate need of the time.

### (ii) Establishment of GBV Monitoring Cells at District level

The establishment of GBV monitoring

cells at district levels to monitor the violence in households and providing the immediate shelter to women facing violence along with arresting the dominant and inflicting heavy fines to counter GBV.

### (iii) Campaigns Against GBV

Campaigns against GBV at all levels are necessary. From school level to workplaces to media, everyone should be aware about GBV and legal procedures the law of Pakistan provides to act against GBV.

### (iv) Responsible Media Regulation

Institutions should maintain check and balance on media and dramas, movies or shows they are publishing that are justifying violence should be banned. PEMRA should take serious actions to ban violence promoting dramas and movies in Pakistani societies.

## E. CONCLUSION

Gender Based Violence is the most

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

DAY: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

concerning problem of Palestinian society which is carried out in various ways including direct and indirect violence. Hence, the ultimate need of the time is to counter GBV through practical and policy-oriented strategies including the implementation of laws, women empowerment, awareness campaigns to protect women from physical, emotional and psychological harm.

---