

Gender Studies

Introduction to Gender Studies

1. Introduction to Gender Studies:

a. How did Gender Studies emerge as an academic discipline discipline?

i. Second Wave of Feminism (henceforth SWF)

1. The academic study of gender emerged in late 1960s. It was triggered by the second wave of feminism. The second wave of feminism focused on how personal relationships and economic and political roles of women in the society were suffering from inequalities.
2. As women were not represented in the political arena and they were usually financially disadvantaged SWF also focused on how the academic disciplines and sets of knowledge¹ excluded the interests, experiences and identities of women. [Sociology particularly ignored females pre 1970's time]

ii. Women's Studies as a discipline

1. Sociology and women's studies: In sociology differences between men and women were observed and explained.

¹ This is the progression of depth and breadth of knowledge.

Depth: How well (how detailed) do you know a subject? Breadth: How much do you know about it?

*Male bias*² had left certain gaps in the knowledge about women and this was focused upon by sociologists, especially women sociologists. They then focused on the experiences and issues that these women faced such as male violence.

2. Women were also more concentrated in the humanities compared to other fields. (effect of the gendered logic of the workplace³) So women studies was an interdisciplinary subject and has strong roots based on English, History and sociology.
3. In the late 1960's (USA) and mid to late 1970s (UK) women's studies emerged as a separate discipline. First course in Cornell University 1969 and first Program in San Diego State University 1970. First MA was offered by University of Kent in 1980.
4. Conscious raising of women was also an important aspect. Many women's studies courses contained a consciousness raising (CR) component where the experiences and identities of the students themselves determined the dynamics of the classroom.⁴
5. It was also closely associated with women activism as the teachers and scholars were often found beyond the academy, in women's liberation newsletters, at conferences and generally networking with like-minded thinkers.

² Also called Androcentrism which means placing a masculine point of view as the centre of the world view and disregarding other views such as views and issues of females. Please use this terminology for higher marks.

³ Meaning that men were more concentrated in STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)

⁴ "Going around the room and talking" about issues in their own[student's] lives to help them think about inscribed as women or feminine etc.

iii. Men's Studies as a discipline:

1. It was formed in response to the men's rights movements of 1970's. Those who held pro-feminist politics began to theorise about men and their identity as 'men'.
2. Men considered the idea of masculinity in the same way as women considered femininity. In late 1980s and 1990s men's studies emerged as an area of academic interest.
3. Men's studies programs are part of either a gender studies program or as a subject associated with women's studies. It is not taught on it's own.
4. Books (both popular and academic) on men and masculinity became very popular in the 1990s, to the extent that 'men's studies' is now recognised as a specialist area of academic focus.

2. Difference between Gender and Women's Studies

S/No	Gender Studies	Women Studies
1.	Gender studies begins from the critical position established by women's studies in order to look more broadly at gender as a phenomenon. (as mentioned before 1970's there was no in depth study of different genders and their phenomenon. Male bias was inherent)	Women's studies arose from a feminist, critical and women-centered view of society, politics, power, etc. It is built from women's voices. Women of the past and of the future.
2.	Gender studies' is also seen as more inclusive than 'women's studies', taking in men and women	Women studies focuses merely on women and their issues.

	as well as those who identify as neither [LGBT]	
3.	<p>It is more universal in scope; thus it is broader in scope.</p> <p>Focuses on; psychosocial as well as psychoanalytical theories, poststructuralist, postcolonial studies, critical studies of masculinity, queer studies and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer) critical race, critiques of whiteness, ecological feminism and materialist feminism and technoscience studies.</p>	<p>Focus is only on women's feminist theory, women's history, social history, women's fiction, etc..</p>
4.	<p>It has a very multidisciplinary nature. Gendered nature of economics, biology, etc is considered.</p>	<p>Women's studies is interdisciplinary in nature.</p> <p>It is centred around the social sciences, arts and humanities rather than the physical sciences and related disciplines such as engineering and medicine.</p>
5.	<p>Men's studies, women's studies and the study of sexuality are the basic strands of gender studies.</p>	<p>Women's studies is the only concern.</p>
6.	<p>Consciousness raising is not an aspect of Gender Studies.</p>	<p>There is strong focus on consciousness raising of the students.</p>
7.	<p>No feminist activism as it is based on the study of gender..</p>	<p>Intertwined with feminist activism.,</p>

3. Multi-disciplinary nature of Gender Studies

It is the critical study of assumptions on gender and sex effect the ideas about men, women, LGBTQ individuals in the cultural, social and political

hemisphere. People from any background, social or natural sciences, can study Gender studies as a minor. It also takes a multidisciplinary approach to understand problems faced by different genders.

Sociology; It is used to understand the structure of the society and how it is affecting gender discrimination.

Anthropology; It is used to explain ideas about gender and how they evolved.

Psychology; It is used to understand the human nature and the nature of human sexuality.

Biology; It can differentiate the biological differences between different genders (I think you get the point)

4. Autonomy vs. Integration Debate in Gender Studies

The great "Autonomy vs. Integration Debate" was born out of alarm on the part of some Women's Studies scholars about the increase of curriculum integration projects for their subject.⁵ In 1982 discussion surfaced at the annual National Women's Suffrage Association (henceforth NWSA) and in the Women's Studies Quarterly about strategies for women's studies in higher education.

Should gender studies, or women's studies, be offered and studied as a separate field? Or should it be merged in other subjects e.g in political science a chapter about contribution and behaviour of women in politics.

⁵ What this means is that there was an increased effort to connect women's studies to other subjects and this alarmed some women study scholars.

You must also remember that for these women, at least a majority of them, women studies was not just an academic subject it was feminist activism and sentiment. They had 'revolted' against the social sciences and their male bias and they were afraid that if women's studies were to be integrated into other subjects such as Sociology etc their voices would again be silenced. This is why this is an important debate that continues on today as well.

The debate concerned whether or not the limited time and funding available to feminist academics should be devoted to revision of the mainstream curriculum or the development of autonomous women's studies programmes.

Those who supported autonomy believed that feminists should work in isolation and try to focus on problems of women particularly instead of focusing on their issues as part of a 'bigger picture'. They believed integration within the academic fields (and within the society as well) would lead to feminists being steered away from their main goals.

Integrationists that integration would help reach the people who can influence the society and change things or women. They also believed that change is a slow process and it requires actors working within the system to change it. They would not be just theorizing about change like the autonomists, they would be attempting to actually do so. They were afraid of 'ghettoizing' women studies as trying to transform the academia would lead to a bigger and wider change.⁶

5. Status of Gender Studies in Pakistan

Gender Studies, first introduced as a five-year project in 1989 by the Women's Development Division, Government of Pakistan, has now developed into a well established discipline across the national universities of Pakistan.

The purpose to introduce Gender Studies was to make women visible and to develop or create alternative concepts, approaches, and strategies for national development with an active participation of women.

The Curriculum Revision Committee of Women's studies also made certain recommendations on how to encourage interest in this subject which is at its nascent state in Pakistan. One of the most relevant recommendation is that Women's Studies should be introduced as one of the qualifying subjects in the competitive examinations (CSS, PCS) and this recommendation was implemented by FSPC. Other recommendations included:

- Active collaboration between the various departments, centres and institutes teaching Women's Studies in Pakistan with the purpose of sharing expertise.

⁶ This means that women's studies would only reach a specific kinds of people like in the ghettos only a specific kind of people interact with each other.

- Translations in Urdu (or any other language of Pakistan) of key-texts in Women's Studies.
- Anthologies consisting of texts written about women or by women in different languages in Pakistan should be prepared and translations of the same should be made available in Urdu and English.
- Special funds should be made available by the HEC for those prepared to undertake this arduous exercise.
- Efforts should be made to develop the research and teaching capacities of the faculty of Women's Studies.
- Special grants for library development in Women's Studies should be instituted.
- Concentrated efforts should be made for introducing Women's Studies at undergraduate level.
- An effort should be made to incorporate Women's Studies perspective in the preparation of textbooks at school and college level.
- Academic linkage programmes with centres/ programmes of Women's Studies in the developed countries should be established.

The Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies (CEWS) at the University of Karachi should also be mentioned. It is the leading centre in the field of teaching and research in Women's Studies in Pakistan. It was established as a project in 1989 by the Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan

In 2002 Centre initiated M.Phil / Ph.D programme.

In 2004 it introduced Women's Studies as a subsidiary course at First Year (Hons.) level.

Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies; Alam-e-Niswan: It is published twice a year by Pakistan Association for Women's Studies. The first issue was published in 1994.

Some Programs of Women's Studies and Gender Studies in Pakistan

- Institute of Women Development Studies—University of Sindh, Jamshoro 1994
- Women's Studies Department—AIOU 1997
- Women's Research and Resource Center—FJWU, RWP
- Women's studies center—University of Balochistan, Quetta.
- Department of women's studies—Punjab University, Lahore
- Department of women's studies—Peshawar University

Women's studies and Gender studies programs are funded by the Ministry of Women Development, the Higher Education Commission and NGOs such as UNICEF etc.