

# From Antagonism to Acknowledgment: Development of Gender and Women's Studies as Academic Discipline in Pakistan

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## Abstract

*This paper aimed to analyze historically the development of Gender and Women's Studies as a separate academic discipline in Pakistan. We employed to the secondary data resources that included archives, official gazettes of the Government of Pakistan, notifications and, organizational records for data collection. The historical analysis with the feminist research method focused on the evolution of the discipline. The research revealed that gender and women's studies on an academic discipline have been established in different public sector universities after international pressure and the struggle of Pakistani women's movement. Further, the research documented the discipline's voyage from resentment to an acknowledgement of gender studies as academic field. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a potential for transformation in the everyday lives of the students and teachers, nevertheless braced with limitations, challenges, and prospects for the growth of this as a discipline. Although discipline does reflect a commitment to the contribution towards the society concerning to the subject matter, these are; however, not rooted in feminist ideology. There are bigger questions rather than concluding thoughts that require additional research related to discipline, its scope, and local knowledge production and so forth. Besides, it requires sincere efforts from a policy planning perspective to generate research and theory on gender issues in a local context.*

**Keywords:** Gender Studies; Academic Discipline; Development; Pakistan.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Emergence of Discipline: Global Perspective

The need for insight into women's studies as a subject arose within a framework of women's movement and struggle which arose exponentially throughout the world during the last two centuries. But, the WGS discipline has grown widely during three to four decades. Although, this discipline needs more flourishment since it's the need of the hour to study such the neglected issues related to women. In addition to the formalization of the discipline; women had an alternative way in the form of oral tradition to express their desires in many forms and hues. Since the 18th century, this discipline started its journey with global scope.

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The publication of the monumental book “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (Wollstonecraft, 1792), is quoted as an initial point for women’s official entry into communal, administrative, and academic realm. During the 19th and 20th centuries, women’s movement as the discipline and broader political movement set a new path with the emergence of several schools of thoughts within it. Further, it has addressed the socio-cultural and economic roles of women’s invariant social landscapes such as during imperialism and philosophical arenas. Initially, this discipline made its strong footings within humanities disciplines including philosophy, literature, and history but later on, it widespread to the social sciences domain which ultimately made a significant role in advancing it.

The growth of WGS as a discipline varies significantly across cultures. The discipline has emerged in Great Britain between the 1970s and 1995s to register the voice of women across the various fields. This expansion as a separate discipline within humanities and particularly in social sciences has contributed to the emancipation of women in economic, socio-cultural, and political spheres. Broadly, the discipline grew in Europe since 1980s and matured during the 1990s. The roots of the discipline can be traced to the second- wave of feminism during the 1960s-1980s (Davis, 2006). During this time, evidence-based studies were conducted to point out the issues faced by powerless women.

The political scenarios gave a birth to the discipline of WGS during the mid-1970s. This discipline also entered in the USA just to raise an awareness about the issues faced by women by that time: there was no separate discipline designated to stimulate the emancipation of women. The development of women’s studies as a separate discipline in Europe and the USA further lead to the feminist movement growth as by that time ; it was considered as the academic arm of the movement, and this contributed significantly in voicing against the miseries faced by women (Jaschik, 2009).

The discipline actions as a catalyst for promoting and reinforcing gender restructuring through teaching, research and field investigation (Hemmings, 2006). It anticipates designing a theoretical underpinning for the analysis of various aspects of women’s position in the progressive agenda. Therefore, women’s studies contribute to grasping in various areas, understanding the women’s disenfranchised position in the society and speculate perspectives that give an insight to a dimension of empowerment. The most realistic application of the subject could be the creation of unconventional concepts and an idiosyncratic way of looking at the globe and the basis of inquiry. It creates methodologies and theoretical patterns to contextualize and review women and gender as a variable into a broad academic framework of social sciences. The discipline has also contributed substitute spaces to academics of social sciences with a feminist lens (Louise, 1990).

## 1.2 Literature Review

### 1.2.1 Historical and Political Milieu of Pakistan

However, it is very vital to discuss the Pakistani scenario and role of the Government of Pakistan as to how they voyaged from traditional thinking to a more enlightened one, maybe under a global pressure. They launched a new branch of social sciences discipline which posits challenge to traditional disciplinary boundaries, and how they thought to introduce the WGS as a discipline. The Government of Pakistan signed the various international commitments to uplift the status of Pakistani women such as Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women (CEDAW), ratified and signed by the Government of Pakistan in 1996. Under the rule of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971 to 1977), status for women improved intensely. It was during this period that the equality of citizens was perceived in law just because the volume of women's participation in national forums was developed manifold. The national commission for women in Pakistan was recognized in July 1976, eight months after its creation, in addition, a report was presented on lawful changes. But, it was never sanctioned by the National Assembly nor did it see the light of the day.

Towards the end of the 1970s, Bhutto's fame started to dwindle, essentially in light of the disappointment of his government's economic approaches, and he used religion as a tool this time to the detriment of minorities, specifically the Qadiyanis. With the promotion of Zia-ul-Haq as Army Chief in 1977s, which resulted in the toppling of Bhutto's government, the various rights that had been allowed to women since independence was undermined. Eventually, Islam was manipulated for attaining political purposes related to women and minorities (Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps forward: One Step Back*, 1988). Zia had vowed to re-establish in Pakistan "the ethical virtue of early Islam" and to come back to "the holiness of the within four walls (Chardivari). During the time of martial law (1977 to 1985), Zia suspended the essential rights settled in the constitution, including the rights ensuring to equity of people under the steady gaze of the law. Besides, the section of enactment, for example, the Hudood Ordinances, the Law of Evidence, and the bill concerning retribution (Qisas-e-Diyat) added to the decay of the low position of women in Pakistan (Weiss, 1993).

The emergence of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto in 1988, raised the expectations of Pakistani women. Denied of a majority in the National Assembly, fundamentally required for enacting legislation, Bhutto's (PPP), had to make the bargains, with the unfriendly opposition, within the ambit of strict religious code that represented Zia-ul-Haq's right-wing elements. As the progressive movement accelerated, WGS as a new field first emerged in Pakistan in 1989 under Benazir Bhutto's premiership (Zubair, 2016). Some of the women's rights advocates were skeptical that the ascent to intensity of Nawaz Sharif in 1990, would additionally undermine the status of Pakistani women. In May 1991, the Sharif government enacted Islamic law, the incomparable law of the land (USIP, 2012). Albeit a condition in the constitution ensuring the privileges of

women had been consolidated into the Shariah; women were of the views that this measure would not ensure the rights procured through the family law modifications which are not part of the constitution.

The administration under General Pervez Musharraf, President of Pakistan has made the numerous strides during his tenure for the women of Pakistan. Among them, was the plan of the primary national strategy for advancement and strengthening of women that was embraced into institutional setup, and it also increased the number of seats for women in the local government system and national assembly, on March 2002. After General Pervez Musharraf's resignation in 2008, the various elements, including an international view of Pakistan, brought women's purported privileges, extraordinarily condensed by General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization venture, to the fore. Generally, basic among the advancement to women's rights during this period was the culmination of 2006 amendments to the Hudood Laws, bringing about the Protection of Women's Act. On March 8, 2002, Musharraf laid the foundation of a self-sufficient Commission for Women 'National commission on the Status of Women (NCSW)' and offered that with the progression of time, Pakistan was destined to expand in the figure of intended seats for women in the national assembly and local governments (Weiss, 2012).

### **1.2.2 Institutional setup for Gender Integration at Pakistan**

The government of Pakistan generally remains committed to an integrationist liberal perspective rather than a radical transformation of social structures. The women's movements also played an important role as a lobby to uplift the status of women in Pakistan. Although a government may often engage in lip services and tokenism and they are free to accede to more urgent demands by the social movements. In compliance with the one of the demand of the women's movement the government established the ministry of women Development (MOWD) at the federal level, coupled with women's development departments at the provincial levels as the basic institutional framework for women's development at the district levels no separate EDO was created to serve women's needs. The main purpose of the institutional structure was to ensure that gender concerns are integrated into all programs and policies of the ministries such as health, education, and agriculture. One of the key features of MOWD was to mainstream gender issues through gender integration into all sectors of national development.

The vision of MOWD includes the achievements of gender equity and equality, the social, political, and economic empowerment of Pakistani women at all levels. The goal has been set to empower Pakistani women irrespective of their caste, class, creed, and religion, or other considerations for the realization of their full potentials in all spheres of life. Although it was in contradiction with our Islamic way of life as it is written in the constitution. The government was acceding with the international covenant on gender quality like CEDAW with some reservations. Since cultural and moral

relativism was often used to deny rights, this has been an issue for many states including Pakistan as well.

It is also important to note that while the state is a responsible for creating the environment for women's development, the state has agreed on the CEDAW and they were the responsible to the UN for its progress, and women's movement is much larger than the state. It has constantly exerted itself to influence the state to continue its commitments. The state's actions are constrained by a number of political considerations. However, in 1998s, the government of Nawaz Sharif endorsed the National Plan of Action (NPA) made by the MOWD, thus committing the state to take action in various fields including the law, violence, media, human rights, and girls' education (Saigol, 2006).

A long standing demand of the women's movement was to establish the independent commission on the status of women (NCSW). In 2000s, the independent commission was established through an ordinance. Its aim was to monitor the progress in women's rights in compliance with the obligations of CEDAW and NPA. The MOWD was implanting agency and the NCSW role was as watchdog. Therefore, some conflict is likely, because there is some overlap of functions and roles. It was aim of the MOWD to substantially enhance the women's literacy rate, improve attainment level of girl's and women's at all level of education to both academic and professional to reduce the gender gap and to reorient the existing curricula by making them gender sensitive. Thus, there was a policy commitment to higher and academic education under which women's studies would fall. The commitment to research and analysis is also included among the roles and functions of NCSW, which states, that to encourage and sponsor research to generate information on women's and gender issues to provide knowledge and awareness for national policy and strategic action. Both institutions were created for the development of women and; thus integrally related to the state of the discipline of women's studies. It is not purely academic discipline, but is also about action and implementation. The national plan of Action (NPA) endorsed by the government in 1998s, also recommends the promotion of interdisciplinary field of women' studies in the public and private educational and training institutes and strengthen the action -based policy research on women's issues.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework**

We employed the different theoretical propositions in this article. Moreover, the feminist research has three activities including, explanation, understanding, and disruption. We are following the explanation and disruption which is a genealogical or postmodern approach; which is also historical, working to denaturalize categories and question claims to knowledge by asking how does it come to be? Sandra Harding (1987) pointed out the question of method, methodology, and epistemology intertwined in both feminist and traditional research discourse. However, Haraway (1991),

focused on the partial perspectives and subjugated knowledge. The reason why we referred here is that because she said in a partial perspective you do not detach from your subjectivity, but you tell exactly where you are located and where knowledge is contested. Linda Smith describes decolonization as “a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power (Smith, 2012). This article is an effort to highlight the process of creation of gender studies as a recognized academic field in the Pakistani context where it is otherwise, very eccentric to accept it wholeheartedly. Lastly, decolonizing gender is an applied mission that Lugones (2010), calls “a lived transformation of the social. The existence of this discipline in the Pakistani context is lived example of a transformation of social sciences disciplinary boundaries.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the article**

- I. To highlight the growth of the WGS as an academic discipline in Pakistan.
- II. How does it voyage from opposition to acknowledgment as recognized discipline?

#### **2. Research Argument of the study**

We think it is the relevant and direst need of an hour to engage with the history of gender studies discipline, emergence, development, and the current state of the discipline at the various universities. Generally, the published literature is scarce on gender studies as a discipline in Pakistan. We have embedded our research problem into the decolonial critique, and we are charting the journey from opposition to acknowledgment in Pakistani society having even educated people who wonder what women’s studies are for? What would you teach in WGS? Is it an academic discipline? Why is it an important to have a WGS? Being academics, it is our role to trace the roots of the discipline, its emergence, and the challenges; it faced to reach the present status. We are trying to document and reconstruct the history of the presence of this as a discipline in Pakistan through a decolonial lens.

#### **3. Methodology**

We have used the secondary data resources including the archives, official gazettes, notifications and Acts for the purpose of data collection. We have employed the critical feminist research method. It is the important to state that WGS is an interdisciplinary. One of the drivers of successful interdisciplinary research is a shared politics of progressive social change; and feminist epistemology validates how collective doctrines allow disciplines to oppose and co-operate, through the subjective experiences of the researchers (Jackson, 2006). Feminist research is informed by politics because it revolves around the perspective of those who have less representation. The construction of knowledge is already androcentric in traditional social sciences research. Feminist research concedes that particular political persuasions stimulate its

survival (Hawkesworth, 2007). One of the essential things about feminist methodologies is that they are supposed to be in terms of teaching style, dissemination of knowledge, they are participatory (Saigol, 1993).

#### 4. Findings and Analysis

##### 4.1.1. Historical Emergence of Women's and Gender Studies in Pakistan

In Pakistan, higher education institutions were mainly backbones of beliefs that endorsed thirty years of dictatorship and lots of feminist scholars started an institute of women's studies autonomous of the formal structures, in particular the Institute of Women's Studies Lahore (IWSL), established in 1986s. IWSL counts on core staff and the several of visiting instructors for its different resident course offerings. Nevertheless, over the last few years, WGS courses are now being offered in the different universities in Pakistan. Further, Master, M. Phil and Ph.D. programs have started at the different places.

In 1989s, a concerted effort by some academicians from the different disciplines led to meetings at federal government level to discuss the possibility of formally introducing women's division that drew up a project aimed at setting up of five Centers at the major universities of Pakistan. In past 15-years women's studies have culminated in Pakistan. As in other nations women's studies in Pakistan emerged because of the strong political movement and very political trepidations (Bari, 1993). In 1989s, the Ministry of Women's Development originated the centers for Women's Studies at five universities in Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar and Lahore.

##### 4.1.2 Gender Studies as Academic Discipline in Pakistan: Mapping the Institutions

The below mentioned are the details of location, university, year of establishment, program(s) offered, faculty strength, journal published etc.)

Location	University	Year of establishment	Program (s) offered	Faculty strength	Journals/et c.
Islamabad	Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU)	1989	M.Sc. and M.Phil.	7	Nil
Rawalpindi	Fatima Jinnah Women University	2005	BS & Master	3	Biannual Journal of Gender and Social Issues
Lahore	Department of Gender Studies at The University of Punjab	2001	BS, Masters, M.Phil. and Ph.D.	8	Journal of Gender and Development
Karachi	the Center of Excellence in Women's Studies	1989	BS, Masters, M.Phil. & Ph.D.	10	Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies
Jomshoro,	The Institute of	1994	Bachelors, Master &	3	The Women

<b>Sindh</b>	Gender Studies at University of Sindh		M.Phil degree program		Annual Research Journal
<b>Multan</b>	Bahauddin Zakarai University		BS,MSc & M.Phil.	2	N II
<b>Peshawar</b>	Gender Studies Department	1998	BS &MA	7	Nil
<b>Baluchistan</b>	Gender and Development Studies	1998	BS, MSc&M.Phil.	8	Nil
<b>Khairpur Sindh</b>	Shah Abdul Latif University	2013	Two year M.S degree	7	Nil
<b>Lahore</b>	University of Management and Technology (UMT)		BS & M.Phil. in Gender Studies	2	Nil
<b>Islamabad</b>	Gender and Women Studies program at Allama Iqbal Open University	1997	MSc and Postgraduate Diploma	4	Nil
<b>Lahore</b>	Gender and Development Studies, Lahore College for Women University	2004	BS & MS in Gender and Development Studies	10	Journal of Gender and Social Research (started in 2108)
<b>Lahore, Chuna Mandi</b>	government Fatima Jinnah College for Women affiliated with Punjab university	2004	M.Sc.	6	NA
<b>Quetta</b>	Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University	2016	BS (4 years)	Nil	NA
<b>Bahawalpur</b>	The Islamia University of Bahawalpur	2019	MS.C	Nil	NA
<b>Swabi</b>	Women University Swabi	2019	BS in Gender Studies	Nil	NA

#### 4.1.3 Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies (Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad)

In 1989s, the University Grants Commission issued a letter to the planning and Development Division of Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) to establish the Women's Study Centre. Simultaneously, the similar letters were issued to the University of Karachi, University of Punjab, University of Peshawar, and University of Baluchistan. The Centre at QAU has been established under the Centre of Excellence Act 1976. The Centre is an autonomous entity working



through its Board of Governors (BOG) chaired by sitting Vice Chancellor of QAU, and is funded by the Government through the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC). The Centre of Excellence in Women's Studies was renamed as CEGS at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad by the Government of Pakistan and Ministry of Education through a notification issued in 2004. In 8th April, 2002 the Ministry of Education held a meeting regarding the conversion of Women Studies Centers into a regular department of Women's Studies. This center initially had offered the certificate courses. The courses were interdisciplinary in nature and content. It was established through the efforts of Dr. Farzana Bari who is a known academic, activist, and practitioner in gender studies.

Currently, the center is offering Masters and M.Phil. Programmes in Gender Studies, it's the only center that offers M.Phil. in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. It has seven regular faculty members who have a strong academic background in the different interdisciplinary fields. The Centre had also piled out the initial issue of periodical of the women studies centered on the theme, 'Women and the Family' in 1994s. The subsequent volume of a journal has not yet been published due to a shortage of resources related to stipends for authors, despite the fact that papers for the second issues were collected and preserved. Likewise, the center has printed a trimestral newsletter, which was obsolete in 1997s due to limited resources. (Bari, Women's Studies: a cause betrayed, 1996). Indicative of its spread, gender studies have now introduced as one of the optional subjects which can be opted for the subject for the aspirants of the Central Superior Services Examination (CSS). The curriculum for the (CSS) was prepared by the CEGS at Quaid-i-Azam University, but the disseminated material in the market is not published and monitored by the academicians of the gender studies. The central library has a collection of more than 6000 latest books related to the field of gender studies.

#### **4.1.4 Department of Gender Studies (The University of Punjab, Lahore)**

This department was established in 2001. It also aims at preparing a stimulant group of educated graduates who can invent and vigorously participate in sustainable activities with a strong pledge for human rights and women's rights issues, a conviction in the potential of women, complementarily of gender roles, and reciprocal gender respect. This department also offers M.Sc. M.Phil and Ph.D degrees in gender studies. It also publishes a journal entitled "Journal of Gender and Development" on regular basis. It has two professors and six lecturers.

#### **4.1.5 Centre of Excellence in Women's Studies (University of Karachi)**

The Centre was initiated as a part of the project in 1989s by the Ministry of Women and Development (MOWD), Govt. of Pakistan. For the last 21 years, Centre has had a distinct plea for pupils from across Pakistan. The first Master in WGS in Pakistan originated in 1996s at the University of Karachi (UOK).

In 2002, the Centre introduced M.Phil./Ph.D. programs. From 2004 the discipline of WGS was announced as a minor course at the First Year level. From 2007 BS (Hons.) program was propelled and from 2010, Master (Evening) program has also commenced. Advanced degree programs and colloquia offered at the Centre, and research directed here, aims at producing a practical skill base graduate with the determination of recognizing hitherto under-utilized and abandoned workforce for nationwide development. This center has a larger pool of faculty comprising of three full Professors and five Ph.Ds. and two lectures as well. Dr. Tahera Aftab is also working as a professor there. She managed the journal, named "Alam-e-Niswan." It has one journal which is widely distributed and covers themes of Gender and Women Studies. The journal's name is "Pakistan journal of Gender Studies" managed by Professor Dr. Nasreen Aslam Shah. The Center of Women's Studies at Karachi has several publications with donor support. The library of CEWS has about 4000 books, encyclopedias, journals, bulletins, reports, indexes, and other certified documents.

#### **4.1.6 Gender Studies (The University of Peshawar)**

This department has one full professor, one Assistant professor and four lecturers. Being interdisciplinary the department of gender Studies look at the various disciplines in ways in which discrepancy of gender and socio-political inequalities are demarcated and discussed at length. The Department also offers research inquiry and training opportunities not only to students, but to government and private sector professionals to excite appraisal of contemporary development methods and plans as they affect gender dynamics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular and the nation at large. This center was started by Dr. Lalabha. She was Dean of Social Sciences and has also been given the responsibility to set up a women's studies Centre in Peshawar. She lamented that there is a number of constraints, but the main problem is a lack of funds. The current head of department is Dr. Anoosh Khan (UOP, 2020).

#### **4.1.7 Gender and Development Studies (University of Baluchistan, Quetta)**

It has total nine faculty members including three professors, and offers a Master's program in gender and development studies. M.Phil. and BS programs have also been launched. The method of the Centre at Baluchistan appears to be presently focused on gender and development-related activities and degrees. Previously, it also used to offer and conduct gender sensitization workshops and seminars.

#### **4.1.8 Integration versus Autonomy**

Moreover, the danger of establishing the separate departments for Women's Studies as the similar to the creation of non-functional departments. The key figures who struggled for establishing this subject as a discipline in universities have apprehensions that by creating non-functional departments,

universities administration have merely appeased women, and succeeding as well as dealing of such departments in terms of knowledge dissemination and administrative support is that of a stepchild. Such departments within universities are frequently observed as redundant and spending on them is regarded as extravagant. Generally, there are limited resources being available for the women's studies departments from the Government of Pakistan, under the circumstances, they are often impoverished and cannot provide well-paid scholarships to eager or deserving students (Saigol, 2006). Integration as per the definition of (Klein, 1983), is an integration of knowledge about the general curriculum on women. Only one university Fatima Jinnah Women University of Rawalpindi" (FJWU), has added one course titled, "Women and Development" for all degree programs offered at FJWU. All of the other's universities having separate departments including Fatima Jinnah as well (FAJWU, 2017).

Similarly, in Pakistan, both scenarios exist where centers on the one hand, are autonomous and departments, on the other hand, are like other social sciences departments. In Pakistan, an example of integration can be seen in the form of a separate function a department. WGS as a subject is deeply rooted within other social science disciplines has produced an argument about whether it is better to have a distinct WGS department in universities or to adjust women's studies with other social disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. The purpose was to include feminist understanding into numerous parts of knowledge within existing sections of social sciences. The gain of the separate and autonomous departments is that radical perspective would not be vanished or depoliticized about other apprehensions. Rather, such a perspective would conduct and disseminate research and training in all fields.

#### **4.1.9 Conceptual and Methodological Challenges**

Since its origin, WGS has faced and encountered about its validity as a field of study and research and its capability to produce graduates who will secure work through evident skills. "What can you do with an interest in women's studies?" is a question frequently raised by students, parents, the general public; and even some teachers. While this is not a novel spectacle, economic recessions, as well as changes in the legal and political scenario, contemporary ongoing obstacles to women's studies faculty and students alike. It can be said that after data collection through the secondary resources have shown that universities have to follow the approved schemes and courses as designed by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC, 2017). A closer look at the work carried out by the Women's Studies centers reveals the conceptual and methodological problems not only due to the external influences, but also within their framework. The pedagogical and teaching practices vary where the academicians have a lens of theory and activism to add the experiential knowledge during the classroom discussion. Otherwise, it's a very abstract form of content that is being taught at the most places.

It is a commonly held notion that action precedes philosophy which leads and confines more actions and in order, the action improves, encounters, or changes the notion. WGS therefore, is not merely about an educational field or struggle for virtue and impartiality. It is about both affairs; each is subsidizing to an understanding of the other. Sabeeha Hafeez highlighted the action and replication, which is a crucial to an apprehension of feminism and women's studies. In Pakistan, this is certainly not true about all departments. Ever since the realization that women's knowledge about the world in a way that is occasionally drastically different from men's ways of knowing and looking at the world, women's verbal antiquities, uttered testaments, and individual narratives, qualitative researches have played an essential role in the expansion of feminist approaches that are used in the Women's Studies (Centre for Women's Studies, 1993).

Since WGS as a course of study deals with conceptualizing and reinterpretation the world from the different standpoints, it is not about women as is universally understood. The key variation from other social sciences fields, which also includes any area of social concerns, and such the discipline would glance at the gendered aspects of the topic being studied. This is due to the ultimate foundation on which feminists work, namely that social realism and construction of knowledge itself are gendered phenomena. Besides bridging these gaps, the understanding of the native gender standpoint is also very decisive for the active application of these policies (Haque, 2008).

#### **4.1.10 Comprehensive View of Intersecting Gender**

The centers and departments were primarily able to construct a more comprehensive view of how gender manifests itself in their lives and affect their behaviors through offered courses. There is a possibility of strength and self-confidence to challenge the traditional gender roles. It expanded their intellectual and scholastic assets and capabilities to influence, participate and hold accountable the social institutions defining the gender roles through the active engagement with the communities. The discipline offers the opportunity to gain a critical understanding of the position and representation of gender in society. It has given a framework on what is happening in society and our lives. The concept of gender and gender-based discrimination is reflected in our day-to-day life experiences. It draws the sights, perspectives, and understanding of cultural contexts, representations, negotiated positions and so forth. Most social sciences degree programs taught in Pakistan do denote Western theories and ideas. But if we analyze classroom teachings, women and gender studies provide much greater space to contextualize such the hypothetical intuitions than any traditional disciplines. In interdisciplinary courses and seminars, the contents of courses deal with the critique of universal development prototypes and bring in human resource development as the main apprehension. It also contains deliberations on the landscape of political participation and women's issues, politics of identity; and marginalization of various groups. The emergence of GS as a discipline is a

vital response to this need. The taught courses are comprehensive enough to give a brief overview of gender with other intersecting themes.

#### **4.1.11 Current State of the Discipline**

The current state of WGS in Pakistan is a consequence of numerous edges connected with wider political streams in national history and the continued evolution and impact of women's movements, both nationally and universally. Setting up WGS was the women's rights group an endeavor to play a dominant part in the academia: to challenges and convert androcentric and orthodox male-created structures of knowledge economy. While connections exist among its foundations and specialists, diversity in skills and positions nevertheless symbolize the antiquities and the contemporary state of WGS in Pakistan. Lastly, there are big questions on the discipline which is part of a forthcoming research project like the current state of the production of gender knowledge in Pakistani academia and whether similarities and differences within Pakistan in the different departments and centers in the dissemination of gender knowledge is part of the larger picture, but still in the process of exploration. Further, the mismatch between Western theories and local knowledge and how the discipline still exists with certain contributions. The aim of these departments and centers was to redesign the syllabus and inform policy with an understanding to incorporate the perspective on gender issues which unfortunately still need to materialize (MoET, 1979).

### **5. Conclusion**

WGS is a new discipline gaining fresh stimulus in Pakistan. The practical realization is that the issues are abundant, but there is a lack of native, research, opinionated perspective, and versatile approach. The social and cultural fragmentations in Pakistani society pervade the individual lives, families, works structures, politics, education, legal and judicial system, and religion, etc. It is a system of enabling those with less supremacy or no power at all, and the class hierarchies in the society exist not only in opposition to the differences of gender, caste, and ethnicity but rather, in and through them. It is also still suffering from lack of funding and always performance indicators likewise other social sciences disciplines are used to measure the progress which is one step toward squeezing the gender agenda at the national level. The discipline philosophy itself is to establish the gender just society which is long term and continuous struggle. The WGS as a discipline poses challenges to traditional knowledge and leads toward social change. It predominantly accents on the different principles, transecting meanings of gender, race, ethnicity, and class and ranges over disciplines, nations, times, and cultures. But writing our history can renew our reflexivity about our changing conditions. Writing our history is a vital to feminists in education because we need to let the younger generation in the field including the recruits in the teaching discern about past gender politics within academia and the current streams of erudition.

Moreover, there are issues related to its scope and why it is a different from other mainstream social sciences. Sometimes, it has been mentioned by different feminists that women's and gender studies should drive its questions and its main concern from women's movement or from the general aim of developing knowledge that will benefit women. This is better than the sum of discipline approaches, but it may not produce consensus, since we have many types of feminism. The centers and departments for gender and women's studies hold a great promise for women's development in Pakistan. Given the needed support, gender studies departments and centers can play an important role to fill the gap between theory and practice.

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