

Research in Women's Studies and Gender Studies

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Structure of Presentation

1. Why Women's Studies/Gender Studies Research – Defining WS/GS
2. Genesis of WS in India and Contribution of Institutionalization of WS
3. Research in Women's Studies/Gender Studies
4. Discussion

Self introspection of WS Researchers

- WS- long and stable history, and can no longer a new discipline.
- Born out of the women's movement in India, its disjuncture with activism created an uneasy alliance in networking between "scholars" and "activists"

“The relationship between WS and women's movements is a complex one. How Women's Studies practitioners tend to develop a language of their own consisting of terminologies and jargons inhibiting communication with ordinary people and connection with the masses. Sometimes, this promotes the creation of a hierarchy within the WS movement, between those who are in pursuit of a theoretical rigour in the discipline and those who are more practically oriented to the issues at ground level. It has been noticed that such a pursuit of theoretical rigour also encourages elitism, thereby, drifting away from the pressing concerns that affect the lives of the majority of women (Mazumdar 1994: 50).

- The current WS/GS researchers must be cautious of the above issue raised

Section –I Defining Women's Studies

- Women's Studies (WS) is a field of study - interdisciplinary academic discipline interact with Economics, literature, music, philosophy, political science, history, history of art, Science, management, all kinds of academic content.
- discusses the issues of women with gender lens
- focuses anthropologically, sociologically, psychologically, and historically with the perspectives of economic and politics, how their roles have changed throughout time.
- Deals with cultural intersectionality, and how women have been treated, viewed in different cultures.
- Includes theoretical frameworks, which will include Feminism.

Gender Studies

- Gender Studies – More inclusive - study of feminine, masculine and LGBT identity focusing on the phenomena of Gender
- An interdisciplinary approach is used and the intersection of gender with other categories of identity such as ethnicity, sexuality, class, and nationality is being studied
- explores the history
- experiences and contributions of women to society and studies, the influences of gender on the lives of women and men, transgender, LGBTQ etc.

Gender Studies Analyses

- What it means to make gender salient
- brings a critical eye to everything from labor conditions to healthcare access to popular culture.
- Gender should never be isolated from other factors that determine someone's position in the world, such as sexuality, race, class, ability, religion, region of origin, citizenship status, life experiences, and access to resources.
- Studies the structures that naturalize, normalize, and discipline gender across historical and cultural contexts.

Feminism

- Feminism is a social movement that is studied in Women's Studies courses. It is one of the many social movements and theories that are discussed in Women's Studies.
- Feminism is a social and political philosophy.
- Helps to examine and challenge social norms around what it means to be a woman or man in society, and to pursue justice and equality for all

Why WS/GS Research

- gender inequality persists and grows despite all efforts and resistance.
- Women's Contributions to private and public spheres - disregarded
- Women have skills and talents that are not being fully utilized
- Sex disaggregated data
- Gender oppression, along with class differentiation and caste discrimination
- Update empirical knowledge - gendered practices, norms & discourses
- Systematic analysis to **produce notions, methodologies, and theories and make the discipline visible** in academic disciplines.
- women's multiple and overlapping marginalisations in the complex interplay of caste, class, gender, ethnicity and religion.
- Train to apply a gender lens to the many aspects of development work
- **Policies to ensure -women and men, transgender, marginalized are included in decision making – recognize agency**

Section II-WS Genesis & Contributions in India

- draws extensively from the history of the women's movement- instrumental in articulating the question of women's history and shaping feminist discourses.
- Feminist historiography developed- not only making women visible in history- but..contributions to various social & historical processes
- integrate women's experiences into the dialectics of history
- building a new knowledge base and production, providing new ways of seeing and understanding women

Cont.

- > than four decades-official recognition of Women's Studies as an academic discipline in the university system and other WSCs
- ICSSR and the women's movement were critical players
- WS- conceptualised - branch of the social sciences & humanities
- emerged as a discipline-core body of theory- interdisciplinary framework.
- Engages with- sociology, economics, political science, history and literature among others as developments – knowledge production
- questions existing concepts, tools, techniques and methodologies across disciplines which marginalized women's questions

Institutionalization of WS

- Entered first in RCWS at the SNDT Women's University and 3 more institutions
- WS -regarded as an instrument of transformation, not only to change state policies but also to transform women's perceptions about themselves (Vina Mazumdar 1987).
- The Institute of Social Studies Trust 1976)
- Centre for Women's Development Studies - 1980
- Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies - 1985
- 1974 Towards Equality Report and alarming findings sowed seed for research
- Changed the perspectives –Women as subjects to be educated to Women as the new subjects of investigation and study
- Institutionalisation of WS facilitated the permeation of feminist ideas into the university system.
- Feminist concepts of patriarchy, sexual division of labour, gender inequality, injustice and oppression, into its language and analysis, the devt of WS has effected the **visibilisation of women in social knowledge and action.**
- **WS and women's movements have undergone significant changes over the last three decades.**
- **Expansion of the scope and focus of WS from the time of its inception.**
- **UGC WSCs established since 1987 and continues till now**
- **NPE 1986 underlined the need for WS to be integrated – Issue is-WS get marginal location in the institutions with exceptions**

Women's Studies/Gender Studies

Research

- Women's studies programmes have pushed academia to function in a more inclusive and democratic fashion.
- Emerged - process of **the critical evaluation of issues that structured the way women lived**
- Issues of violence ,communalisation of society
- rampant caste discrimination ,dowry deaths
- female foeticide and infanticide, sexual harassment,
- lower female work participation rates, , ill effects of globalisation and many more are not just real issues
- WS- played a critical role in redefining the notion of "social," transcending former narrow formulations. A significant example in this **regard has been the conception of "class." notion of 'Development'**
- **In contrast to earlier formulations of positioning class in opposition to the structures of gender, caste, and ethnicity, WS practitioners played a key role in making class and gender central to the analysis of women's oppression.**
- Disposition of gender is crucial to the understanding of class differentiation in society (Mazumdar 1994).
- WS did not question the idea of development per se, it raised concerns about the **kind of development undertaken and its differential impact on people across social classes and groups** -critical of the kind of development that was insensitive to **gender concerns and issues of other marginalised groups** (Mazumdar 1994: 45–46).
- broadening its spectrum with an emphasis on equity and inclusiveness.
- encapsulate gender non-normative persons, trans people, queer and other groups, marginalised on the basis of their identities and sexual orientation.

Research in Women's Studies/Gender Studies (CWDS)

- Globalisation, Women and Work
- Democracy, Politics and Governance
- Rights of the Child Early Child Marriage
- Sex Ratios
- Law and systems of justice
- Statistics and gender indicators
- Migration and Citizenship
- Labour, Law and Migration
- Women and Violence
- Gender and Conflict
- Gender and Education
- Women and Health
- Histories of women's movements
- Women's Studies and Feminism
- Gender and Disability

Cont.

- Violence Against Women and Girls with Physical Disabilities in India: Understanding the Issues and Promoting Legal Empowerment
- Interrogating Violence Against Women from the Other Side: An exploratory Study in the World of Perpetrators
- Maternity Care Provision, Medical Dominance and Healthcare Market in India, sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science Research
- Engendering Change: Exploring the interlinkages between Marriage, Disability, Sexuality and Knowledge Building in India from a Women's Studies perspective (Funded by Ford Foundation)
- a) Analysing Early and Child Marriage in India: The Interlocking Markets of Education, Marriage and Work
- b) Intersectional Analysis on Disability and Sexuality
- c) Knowledge Gateway on Women's Studies in South Asia and Creating a Digital Archive of Grey Literature on Women's Studies
- d) Building Capacities of Women's Studies Centres in Regional Contexts
- Historical Overview on Early and Child Marriage
- Gender Dimensions of the Urban Labour Market: Investigating the Terms of Women's Exclusion and Inclusion
- Work in Freedom: Evidence from Odisha
- Cross continental/regional trends and perspectives around the Changing Contours of Women's Work
- Labour Law and the Migrant Workers

Global Research/GS

- Abortion rights
- Benevolent sexism
- Camp
- Female genital mutilation
- "Femicide"
- Femme invisibility
- First-wave feminism
- Gamergate
- Gender stereotypes
- Gender-neutral language
- Glass ceiling
- Guerilla Girls
- Heterosexual
- Homosexuals in military
- Partial-birth abortion
- Polysexual
- Radical feminism
- Same-sex adoption rights
- Same-sex marriage
- Same-sex parenting
- Sodomy laws
- Stereotypes
- Transgender
- Transsexuals
- Women in combat
- Women in non-traditional roles
- Women in WWII
- Women's suffrage

Bharathidasan University WS Research

- Women in Political Participation
- Adolescent health Workers in EPZ- Garment Sector
- Domestic Violence and Alcoholism
- Water and Gender Concerns
- Reproductive health Rights
- Gender Issues in Nursing Profession
- Gender issues among Legal Practitioners
- Menstrual Hygiene Management
- Unorganized sector women workers
- Women Entrepreneurship
- Gender Concerns and issues Women in IT Sector
- Surrogate Women's Rights
- Women workers in Coir Industry
- Migration and Gender Concerns
- Gender Perceptions among women, men, students, faculty members, etc.
- Muslim Women's Rights
- Visually Impaired women and their sexual rights
- Child Marriage
- Women Leaders in Railways
- Rights of Rape Victims
- Evaluation studies on SSA Schemes
- Female Sex Workers and HIV Positive Women and their Reformation
- Gender Friendly Policies in Higher Education
- Access to Sanitation for Women at Work places integrated with MHM Needs
- Issues of Puthiraivannar Community
- Dalit Women's and other Marginalized issues
- Transgender Concerns and policy needs
- Tribal women and their issues
- Action Research to introduce women from conventional to non-conventional areas.