Study Guide

PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER STUDIES

CODE No. 4653

UNIT 1-9

Credit Hours: 3

Department of Gender & Women Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities
ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
ISLAMABAD
COURSE TEAM MEMBERS

Dr. Riffat Haque
Chairperson

Dr. Ayesha Ghaznavi
Reviewer

Dr. Ayesha Mustafa
Member / unit writer

Ms. Sarah Inayatullah
Member / unit writer

Mr. Umar Siddique Khattak
Editor

Dr. Mussaret Anwar Sheikh
Course Development
Co-ordinator

Course Coordinator

Dr. Riffat Haque
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Gender & Women Studies department offers interdisciplinary courses of study within the faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities to launch "Perspectives on Women's Studies", one of the compulsory courses, being offered to post-graduate students.

The department would like to acknowledge insightful and significant input and contribution of initial member of the committee of courses.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of all the women academic writers whose groundbreaking work of scholarship and research in the areas of women's studies were used as reference in the allied material for our programme's course material.

The initial course development Co-ordinator of this course, Dr. Mussaret Anwar Sheikh, worked very hard and diligently to put this course in your hands. Dr, Ayesha Mustafa. Ms. Sarah Inayatullah and Ms. Atifa Durrani compiled the course reading material to make it as interesting as possible.
INTRODUCTION OF THE COURSE

The course in your hand was first offered as a full (18 Units) course. In 2008 the University decided to bi-furcating its entire full credit courses into two courses, thus also dividing the study period as 3 credit hours. This was also the time when department of Gender & Women Studies was planning to revise & review its courses. The department through its internal and external committees decided to review the course. We plan to remove obsolete information and delete some chapters and add new chapters which should make more sense in this course. But due to paucity of time at present the course is being just bifurcated as it was previously offered.

The course “Perspectives on Gender & Women Studies” (4653) of nine units deals with various issues that are related to the emergence of women studies or gender studies, diverse nature of feminist discourses & women rights movement. The course also deals with construction of knowledge, research & how it has been biased. The last three units deal with gender & various religions & how religion has been interpreted & used by the dominating gender to subordinate women’s status in the society.
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1. Define Gender & Women Studies, feminism and gender in relation to today's society.

2. Scan history to find the answers for women's inequalities based on gender.

3. Identify the universal injustices being encountered by women in different societies and cultures.

4. Identify how different religious traditions treat the question of women's status. Recognize the role of Islam of elevating the status of women in history.
ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
GENDER’S WOMEN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Dear Students,

Welcome to the course, Perspectives on Gender & Women Studies’ (4653). It is a three credit hour course comprising of nine units. This book is the Study Guide, which is to be studied in accordance with the supplementary material for this course.

Introduction to the Course:

The course Perspectives on Gender & Women Studies is one of the three credit hour courses offered for M.Sc. and Diploma in Gender & Women Studies. The course is divided into broad theme i.e. Gender and feminism and status of women in different religions.

Course Objective:

After completing this course you should be able to :-
- Find answers to different perspectives on women’s inequality.
- Appreciate women’s efforts and attempts to build a women’s movement.
- Identify various religious traditions vis-à-vis the question of women’s status.
How to Study:

The study material for this course comprises of a Study Guide and Supplementary Study Material. The course outline spreads over 9 units/topics. And for each unit selected articles related to the topics have been included in the Supplementary Study Material. Each unit requires one week's study. If you spend two hours daily to study your course you can complete the course in eighteen weeks. In mid of the study period a workshop will also be held which is an effort to help you to prepare for examinations and meet peer group and listen to the subject experts and exchange knowledge.

Please do not confine yourself to the materials, which are being supplied by the university. To enhance knowledge at post-graduate level the students are expected to extensively use library and internet.

Tutors Guidance:

In distance learning system basically the students have to study on their own. However, if there is a viable group of 10—15 students the university does appoint a part-time or a correspondence tutor. Part-time tutors hold tutorial meetings in study centers established by the university. The students are required to regularly attend these fortnightly meetings. Otherwise you are assigned a correspondence tutor who not only checks your assignments but you are encouraged to be in contact with the tutors for guidance regarding the course as is convenient for both of you. The Regional office as well as your tutor will inform you about the appointment of the tutor.

Assessment and Evaluation:

According to university system your performance in the course will be evaluated through two modes that is :-

— Home Assignments
— Final Examination

You will be required to do two assignments for this course. The assignments are spread over course units and according to the schedule
provided in your student kit each assignment is to be submitted to the tutor for checking.

The main objective of the assignments is to encourage you to study and appraise your performance. The tutor's assessment will guide you for the preparation of your next assignment.

The marks obtained in assignments add up to the final examination. The papers for final examinations are prepared based on the complete course. The final examinations are held in specified examination centers. For passing a course one has to pass both the components of assessment that are take home assignments and final examination.

DR. RIFFAT HAQUE
Course Coordinator
UNIT-1

PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER STUDIES

Atifa Durrani
1.1 Introduction

Gender's Studies is the intellectual examination of the absence of women from history; a fresh look in a non-Freudian way at the social psychology of women; the study of women in literature and images of women in arts; the economic and legal history of the family; and speculation about "androgy" a state of society and a state of mind where sex differences might be socially, economically, and politically overcome (Tobias, 1978).

Gender's Studies has established as an important field of study in many countries across the world. It continues to be a rapidly expanding area both in terms of number of courses available and in the proliferation of feminist theories from a variety of perspectives. Also other academic disciplines such as Sociology and literature have been transformed, to varying extents as a result of the debates and the ideas that have emerged from within the discipline.

When we look at women's lives through a different perspective, which is prevailing in the social life and in academy, we come to know that women's situation is challenging in the society and there are many embedded biases in the different fields in which women are working and contributing their roles as an individuals as well as groups. In this unit effort has been made to discuss Women Studies as a discipline in Pakistan.

1.2 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

1. Define what is the concept of Gender's Studies
2. Explain the origin of Gender's Studies
3. Highlight the need for Gender's Studies as an academic discipline
4. Discuss Studies in Pakistan
1.3 Defining Women’s Studies

The founders of the US National Women’s Studies Association define it as "an educational strategy for change" owing its existence to the women’s Liberation Movement. Though in the 1990s there has been a debate over whether women’s Studies is an extension to the women’s movement or it is now structurally distant from that movement (Sheridan 1990) but it is obvious that Women’s Studies consists of both teaching and research. In other words we can say, it is an interaction and a process of learning along with feminist scholarship. It is learning which takes place in the classroom which inspires, probes, reinforces expands and develops and transmit knowledge as the truth from expert to the ignorant. In Women’s Studies teachers and students try to create knowledge in an environment in which all are learners. Teachers and Students both contribute to the existing knowledge of the scholarship and bring rich experiences of their lives and contribute equally. As Rutenburg (1980) says that during learning experience in women studies “the personal becomes the intellectual and the intellectual becomes the personal”. Women’s learning experiences are no longer distant from their lives. Instead what emerges is an attempt to understand problems and to develop means of solving them. Women’s Studies as a discipline stems from the attempt to blend theory and praxis, a rare case in other disciplines. Whether the topic is health, work, politics or literature, it discusses these topics from a perspective that puts women at its centre and allows us to compare and contrast our own and other people experiences and ideas with the given facts and figures.

Women’s Studies gives an opportunity to its students and teachers to breakdown hierarchies, interact collectively, rather than competitively and also stresses the need to take each other seriously and respect each other’s different point of views particularly relevant among women from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In women studies, feminist thoughts and ideologies that are raised by the feminist outside academia are tested and analysed.

According to Klein (1980) the ‘Subject matter ‘of Women’s Studies is women, but women’s lives do not exist in a vacuum: they are located in a social context which includes the study of men and children as well as the natural and the man-made environment. Economic situation of women is as much
part of women's studies as is violence against women, dangers and possibilities in technological, psychological and ideological aspects of life and the various forms of art that has been created by women. Women's Studies is not confined to specific 'women's issues' such as female biology, health care and reproduction, nor to studies on sexual division of labour or to women's participation in men's trade unions or men's wars. In fact every human issue is women's issue and at the core of Women's Studies lies the demand to look critically at every facet of life from interpersonal relationships to politics, from language to law, from the use of natural resources to the social construction of reality and to look at it differently, from a women-centred perspective.

It is very clear from the above definition that Women's Studies is not confined to certain compartmentalization of knowledge but it encompasses many other disciplines regarding issues existing in the societies.

Between 1971 and 1976, as Women's Studies proliferated the issues Women's Studies concentrated on which are summarized as under:

- **Study of Women**: What is a female personality
- **Masculinity and Femininity**: what are the implications of these terms? How are they defined? How is the behaviour learned? Is it universally the same?
- **Female Culture**: What is common to the female experience? How would it be evaluated in a male-dominated society?
- **Academic Disciplines**: Having discovered the absence of women from history and the minimizing of the subject of sex-role socialization, students and teachers proceeded to examine the disciplines themselves for bias. In this period, feminist literary criticism and fundamental critique of social science methodology began to appear.
- **Male Society and Culture**: what are the strengths and weaknesses of the majority when viewed as male instead of human?
- **Theory and Practice of Gender**: what is the outcome when gender, regarded as a social system for allocating tasks, rewards, and characteristics, is supported by a belief system justifying those arrangements? What are the ramifications of gender as sexism? (Tobias 1978).
Despite these areas of focus, recently many other issues have become crucial subjects in Women's Studies such as feminist ideas and perspectives on race, ethnicity, science and technology, feminist theory motherhood, health education and networking of women and the need for networking within women organization and as well as with other organization in the world. Debates within Women's Studies to the students who are studying feminism and gender relations have become very interesting and distinct feature of Women's Studies.

The development of Women's Studies courses has not been controlled by a single coherent theory of women's studies or feminist education though some initial work has been done on this particular aspect. Looking at the production of scholarship in Women's Studies – the body of knowledge classes in Women's Studies are based on – various types of research that can be compensatory as defined by Learner (1981). In her research she used a women-catered perspective where and what we currently call knowledge from which women are omitted, absent and trivialized. It was and still a very relevant question that where were all the women in history?

Compensatory research and the collection of data cannot take place without 'criticizing', which eventually leads to production of new theories, and models and this is an important aspect of feminist research. For the last two decades there has been a virtual explosion in feminist scholarship. There has been hardly any field that has not been touched by feminists, however much of it is still in line with the traditional concepts. Hence women's studies as a discipline provides us the opportunity to look at and analyse the different existing theories and ideologies in the academic disciplines with a perspective which places women in the centre and acknowledges their role in every walk of life in the societies.

Reading

For further study please read the following material:

1.1 Women's Studies: Mary Maynard (1998)
Contemporary Feminist Theories (247-256)
1.4 Origin of Women’s Studies

Some revolutionary students in American colleges and universities during the late 1960s focused on three issues: university complicity in the Vietnamese war and the defence-related research associated with it; the constitutional issue of university governance, particularly the role of student as a consumer and client; and curricular reforms. Although the first two received much national and international popularity and publicity, the third was also an essential element in the curriculum reforms for the higher education. These students were insisting that they should have free choice of offering course what is needed according to their own interests. The idea of free university and free university courses was floated at the same time. Students were of the opinion that they have the right to take more relevant courses according to their needs and interests. The women's movement came on the heels of these other curricular and non-curricular events.

According to Tobias (1978) women's studies sometimes considered to some extent a derivative of the ideas and purpose of free university. Women's Studies means courses on women, on sex roles, on sex-inequality, on the politics of gender, beliefs about male–female differences etc. such courses began without substantial prior organization at many colleges and universities in 1969. Although the attitude towards women's Studies was similar to that which stimulated black and ethnic studies, the spread of women's studies and its impact on research and teaching seems to have been far greater and long lasting.

Women's Studies have involved challenging the gendered nature of courses and scholarship, but it is also concerned with adopting a critical stance towards teaching and learning. In part, this is associated with theorizing the relationship between education, hierarchy, and power. In the beginning, many feminists were influenced by the writings of Paulo Freire (1972) who was critical of what he referred to as the 'banking' model of education. Where students are assumed to know nothing and teacher is the master of knowledge and can pass knowledge to them. Freire was of the opinion that this method was to create an unequal power relationship between teacher and students in which teacher is dominant and student take subordinate position. So teaching and learning activity in women's studies courses and classes is generally based on the equal power relation and it is reinforced through ideologies.
unrecognised but invisible in government statistics - then question appears that why women's studies be not a priority, a necessity?

* Activity

Study some theories of Sociology or any other social science and analyse it from women-centred perspective. Do you think they are conveying women's perspective? Write down your comments.

Women's absence from position of power, policy and decision-making has intensified the need for women to establish an academic platform for their ideologies and thoughts in their struggle against oppression and subordination. There are people who hold the belief that after taking few women as token in few policy and decision-making positions have opinions that the issues of women's oppression is either solved or almost solved. But we can argue that why this question is not important? To whom it is important? Who decides what is significant? Who makes the rules and who profits? Who controls?

The crux of Women's Studies is that it is not 'Just about facts and figures, it is not just another academic discipline- it involves a different way of viewing the world. It is about change: in consciousness; in material and psychological circumstances; in power and control. As majority of feminist believe that Women's Studies was developed in academia by feminist active in women's liberation movement and therefore has been called 'the educational arm of the Feminist Movement' (Acker 1980).

The absence of women from positions of power is reflected in the curriculum at all educational levels as well as in the research that is being pursued and is thought important in all the academic disciplines. According to Acker (1980) women who are in Women's Studies-students and teachers - both recognize and feel women's oppression from personal experience. By bringing these abilities to limelight is the attempt to understand it in an academic scholarly way in which not only women academics 'deconstruct' and 're-construct' previous knowledge but also construct new knowledge that includes women as a self-determining human beings, that empowers women to explore ways
to end their status as underpaid and overworked, abused and exploited second-class citizens.

1.6 Women’s Studies in Pakistan

Women’s Studies as a multidisciplinary subject has developed in the west in response to a strong women movement and its scope and theories have been evolved after long and intense debates. We in Pakistan need this discipline to study and bring into focus the issues females are facing in our societies. It is also very important that the theories and thoughts that are developed in the west must be modified in the light of our own cultural and social context. It was in the 1970s that women’ issues began to receive serious attention. One of its results was the creation of Women’s Division in the Pakistan. In 1989, this Division decided to fund Women’s Studies centres at five universities of Pakistan. What is most important in Pakistan regarding these centres is that Pakistani’s women’s issues, problems and constraint must be considered carefully in their Pakistani cultural and social scenario. These changes must be taken into account in keeping our traditions and values that must be neutral to every individual in the Pakistani society not on the basis of man and woman.

Reading

For further study please read the following material:

1.3 Women’s Studies in Pakistan: Afia S. Zia 1993 (71-77)

1.7 Self Assessment Questions

Q 1. Discuss in detail what is meant by Women’s Studies.

Q 2. Do you agree that women’s Studies is contributing its share in fight against discrimination against women in the society. Support your argument with examples.

Q 3. Write about the origin of Women’s Studies in detail.

Q 4. How would you assess and justify the need for Women’s Studies as an academic discipline in social sciences?
Q 5. Do you agree that women's Studies is an educational arm of women's movement? Support your answer with arguments.

Q 6. Why there is a need for Women's Studies courses in Pakistan? What should be taught in this regard as course contents in Women's Studies programs? Give your recommendations and suggestions.

1.8 Bibliography


UNIT 5

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUES OF PRINCIPAL AND FEMINISM
2.1 Introduction

Knowing the sex of a person is to know certain traits and characteristics of a person. Most of our ideas about males and females behaviours however are not based on scientific evidence, but on stereotypes that are shared beliefs in a culture about what characteristics members of a group possess and how they behave.

In this unit we will be looking to explore the differences between gender and sex, which are commonly considered having the same meaning. The term stereotype is also very frequently used while describing women and men traits. Stereotypes are a part of culture. They are shared symbols, beliefs and values prevalent in the societies. From the feminist's point of view, stereotypes in a social system help to maintain the position of power and privilege of a dominant group. This unit will look at all these issues of gender and will analyse the situation in most of the societies and psychological theories from a feminist perspective.

2.2 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

1. Distinguish the differences on the basis of gender
2. Discuss the difference between sex and gender.
3. Illustrate the various theories about the differences between females and males
4. Explain what the theories say about the cause of the differences between male and female?

2.3 Concepts And Definitions

In this unit we will start with some discussion of ideas or concepts, and the words that are used to express them. In other words, definitions!
A. Sex and Gender

It is important for you to understand that theorists usually mean different things when they use the words sex and gender. The word sex is generally used to refer to the biological and anatomical (physiological) differences, which are used to label humans (and other living things) as female and male. You know the most obvious examples. Women can have children, men cannot. Men can lift heavier weights than women. These characteristics are the result of physical and biological sex differences.

Gender, on the other hand, refers to learned and psychological differences. Gender is a socially defined and constructed difference. It is the difference in roles and behaviors that societies and cultures create. For example, if a mother stays at home to take care of a child; or, if a certain culture organizes life so that men stay at home and raise the child, while women go out and work those are gender differences or differences in gender roles. This has little to do with the biological sex difference.

Reading

For more detail please read the following material:

2.1 Studying Gender: An Overview: Women, Men and Society
Renzetti Curran (1995) p: (2-15)

B. Feminists

People, who have a commitment to equal rights and opportunities for women, generally insist on a clear distinction between the words sex and gender when they use them. In the readings for this course, you will find, however, that the word gender will sometimes be used interchangeably with the word sex. This unit and the next one look at sex and gender differences. They also explore the process of socialization. That is the way gender differences are learned, or the process through which people are taught the social expectations and behaviour of their culture. Are differences inherited or learned? Women's studies as academic discipline have gone through the same arguments as many fields of social sciences. A key question is, whether the cause of some behaviour is heredity or environment. Is it nature or nurture? Is it genetic or socialization? Those are the same question, asked
with different words.

For thousands of years, people have assumed that many of the differences between females and males were sex differences. They assumed these differences were biological or genetic. They assumed that women had no choice but to be and act as “females”; and men had no choice but to be and act as “males”. In later units you will find out that right or wrong, men had very definite ideas about what women could and couldn’t do, even more than 2000 years ago.

With the rise of feminist thinking 150 years ago, these ideas were challenged. Now it is understood that many things are not biological or sex based. It is believed that many differences between females and a male are learned, or is socialized behavior. And many other differences still remain a question mark to be answered by researchers of the future.

C. Theory and Research:

A theory is someone’s idea or guess of how the things they see, can be explained. When you are reading someone’s theory or theoretical explanations, you must keep in mind that this may not always be correct. Research is an activity intended to create new knowledge. Research usually is an attempt to prove someone’s theory or to help build a new theory.

Other readings are about why something happens-theory. Much of what is said about sex roles, or about women and men are just someone’s opinion or someone’s particular view of the world as it makes sense to them. You may find yourself agreeing with some of the readings; and, may, find that some of the reading doesn’t make any sense to you at all). The purpose of this course is to introduce you to many different ways of thinking about women’s issues-theoretical perspectives, as well as facts.

In other words, don’t always believe everything, you read, to be “The Truth”...just because it is in a textbook! If it doesn’t fit your worldview. You have a right to believe the way you want. This course is not trying to convince you .It is just trying to give you exposure to different ways of thinking about things.
2.4 Understanding and Explaining Sex Differences

This unit is organized from a chapter from a psychology textbook by Leonard Berkowitz the chapter is titled "Sex Differences in Social Behavior". Berkowitz looks at some explanations and theories for differences in female and male behavior. He divides the theories into three groups according to the focus of the theorist. These three groups are:

1. Theorists who look at anatomical differences (the physical differences between females and males).
2. Theorists who look at a social group and examine sex-roles from that perspective.
3. Theorists who look at the process of learning that take place when the infant or child interacts with her or his environment and learns what it means to be a girl or boy.

Did you notice that Berkowitz's categories represent the classic "heredity vs. environment" question for the origin of behaviour? Call it what you will, "nature vs. nurture", or "biological vs. social influences", the anatomical differences group (number 1) primarily reflects heredity, nature, and biological perspective. The social and learning groups (numbers 2 and 3) are those, which look at environmental or social influences.

Berkowitz discusses biological approach and psychoanalytical theories of sex differentiation as having an anatomical focus (# 1 above). I have condensed part of his lengthy discussion of #1 as follows.

2.4.1 Anatomical Difference Theories

These theories explain the anatomical differences between male and female.

A. Chromosomal Basis of Sex Differentiation.

The sex of an individual is genetically determined by only one pair of chromosomes (1 of 23 pairs in humans) from the ovum and sperm: This critical pair of sex chromosomes is formed in the fertilized ovum from one chromosome from the female of the species, and one chromosome from the male. The female of the species has only one kind of chromosome to give, while the male has two. An X generally designates the female
chromosome. The chromosome from the male, on the other hand can be either of two types. These are labelled X (like the female chromosome), or Y. Quick calculation tells us that pairs formed by the ovum and sperm would be either XX or XY. XX would develop into the female of the species, and XY would develop into the male.

There are two points to note: First is that all chromosomes are identical in both females and males of any species, except the sex linked chromosomes. Second, the chromosome from the male of the species, not the female determines if the offspring will be female or male.

The XX or XY chromosome pair is responsible for a number of biological differences between females and males. The obvious biological difference is the reproductive system. In the human female this includes ovaries, uterine tubes, uterus, and so on. Additional anatomical differences between females and males develop during the early teen-age years, at puberty. These are called the secondary sex characteristics.

B. Gender Identity

In rare cases, chromosomal abnormalities may result in confusion about the individual sex. A child can be born with “mixed” or incomplete sexual attributes, incompletely developed sexual organs, and/or unbalanced hormone production. The child is not clearly a male or female. When the reproductive structures are sufficiently ambiguous, and the individual isn’t exclusively defined as male or female, the child is said to be a hermaphrodite.

Such children are usually “assigned” a sex by the parents or doctor, and raised that way. These cases provide interesting evidence to support the socialization theory for gender development, which you will read more about later. Most such children accept the gender identity they are assigned even though their body has mixed attributes.

C. Influence of Hormones

The chromosome pattern determines whether the foetus (the early stage of growth of the baby) has female ovaries or male testes. Hormone guides further development. If it is a male foetus, a hormone called androgen causes the growth of male genitals. As later reading, points out, all foetuses would become female unless the male hormone androgenizes the development
process, and causes the cells forming female genitals to continue to differentiate and become male.

The male hormone androgen is also sometimes considered to be the reason males are more aggressive. There is some evidence to support the idea that aggressiveness is, at least in part, biologically determined. Studies of young girls with high androgen levels resulting from drugs taken by the mother during pregnancy show that the girls tend toward more aggressive and rough-and-tumble play. Some theorists even go as far as to blame androgen for wars.

Other sex hormones produced by the body, control the development of the secondary sex characteristics, which develop at puberty. These include such traits as body shape, breast development, body hair, fat deposition, and pitch of voice. There are also sexual differences in the hormone secretions, which regulates the reproductive systems in adults.

2.4.2 Psychoanalytical Theory and Sex Differentiation

Berkowitz includes Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical and gender identity theories as part of the anatomical group. He also includes another psychoanalytical theorist, Erikson in this group. Freud is described below. You will read about Erikson in the reading.

Freud's classic psychoanalytical theory was proposed about 100 years ago. Most psychologists rejected it. It is, however, of some importance to this course because it has been so internalised by the general public, that it is the target of much hostility from feminists. They see it as an insulting theory, proposed by an extremely chauvinistic male. The following paragraphs touch on some key points about Freud and his theory.

Sigmund Freud is called the "father" of modern psychology. He evolved his psychoanalytical theories toward the end of the 1800s. Freud worked primarily with neurotic, upper-class ladies of wealthy Vienna (Austria). He developed a theory based on the differences in anatomy between females and males. Freud believed that instinctual energy and desires (he called libido) were the same in women and men. He believed this was masculine energy. He felt that feminine sexuality, or the female psyche, resulted from the change of the original masculine libido. This change resulted when the girl realized that she did not have the same genitals as a male (which he called penis
envy); thus she repressed her masculine (active) desires and replaced them with feminine (passive) ones.

Other psychoanalysts altered Freud's theories by suggesting that physical anatomy differences caused fundamentally different psychological reactions from females and males. They considered the women had a natural inward orientation, or sense of "inner space", while men were more outward oriented. And still other neo-Freudians, like Karen Horney, argued that the significant envy is the male envy of woman's ability to bear children. Another psychoanalytical theorist, Erickson, is covered in the reading.

Now you can return to the reading and read it from the beginning. You will read about 1) other explanations of sexual and gender differentiation, and 2) about some experimental studies of sex differences in persuasibility, and achievement, motivation and anxiety.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2</th>
<th>Explaining Gender: Elizabeth A. Rider, pp. 57-86</th>
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<td></td>
<td>From Berkowitz: A Survey of Social Psychology. pp. 536-559</td>
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* Activity

Berkowitz suggested that explanations for sex differentiation could be divided into three focuses: anatomical focus, social group focus, and sex-role learning focus. Go through the reading and list the different explanations Berkowitz describes for each focus. Just use short phrases like "chromosome differences" or "the study of social relations and the needs of society".

The next readings expand on Berkowitz's descriptions of the second and third categories. The second category was the theorists who explain sex differences by starting with the social group and investigating the roles each sex plays. The third category looked at the interaction between the child and her environment, and the learning that takes place.
2.5 Focus On The Social Group

The first theories in Berkowitz's classification, the anatomical theories, focused on the differences between males and females from a genetic, or biological point of view. But, is human action merely biologically determined? Or is a human being a social being as well? Are differences (between females and males) sex differences? Or gender differences. In the following sections, our focus changes to considering the process of how the person and environment or society interacts to create differences. (This discussion will continue into the first part of the next unit where we will look more closely at the social forces creating gender differences, and what those differences are in different cultures).

A. Sex-roles, Socialization and Stereotyped Expectations.

This section looks more closely at the processes by which gender differences are created. It also carefully defines some of the terms involved. We are all social beings. Neither you nor any other human being lives in a vacuum. We are not isolated. We live in constant interaction with other people around us from the moment we wake up until the moment we go to bed. We are social in the sense that we live a life surrounded by people, observing them, getting along with them, learning from them. We interact from the very first moment we are born when one of our first tasks is to learn how to interact with mother to get what we want-food!

It is within this social interaction process that socialization or learning, how to act appropriately in the society, takes place. For the purposes of this course, we are interested in a particular type of socialization-sex-role (or gender-role) socialization. What is a sex-role? A sex-role (or gender-role) is simply the behavior and characteristics or attributes expected from individuals on the basis of being born a female or male. In other words a society decides what behavior makes a female a woman; and what different behaviors make a male a man. (The phrases sex-role and gender-role are often used interchangeably by me and by other authors.)

Every society has its own specific idea of what these behaviors and characteristics are. This pattern of expectations is a stereotype. Nobody ever fits the pattern or stereotype exactly, but the idea of it starts shaping.
Reading

For more information please read the following material:

| 2.3 Gender Stereotypes Tierney: Women’s studies Encyclopaedia. pp. 159 |

There is a subtle distinction between a sex- or gender-role, and a stereotype. A sex- or gender role is the expectation, or assignment of tasks and traits by the society, depending on sex; whereas gender stereotypes are generally defined as structured sets of beliefs about what individual men and women are like. (See Unit 2 for reading on gender roles.)

It is through the sex-role socialization process and stereotyping that societies establish regularity and order. This keeps the society from social chaos and anarchy-where nobody has any idea of who is going to do what next. As author of the first reading in this unit suggested, society defines what the characteristics are for the appropriate sex-role in our society based on the needs and survival of the society. Thus, the point needs to be made here that the process of sex-role socialization is necessary, just as stereotypes can be considered necessary. Feminists don’t disagree with teaching women or men how to act; they disagree with what is being taught. They are objecting to be the specific characteristics or expectations societies assign to the stereotypes, which put women in a lesser position. They would like some other stereotype or some other sex-role to be the norm for females and males.

The next reading addresses the issue of the socialization process directly. It looks at how the social environment acts toward, and acts on, the developing infant and child. In this reading, Allen Scarboro describes the differential socialization process. This is how the conscious and unconscious actions and expectations of parents, teachers, friends, and even the media, socialize females and males differently. “This influence is conveyed through directly expressed expectations and encouragement and in more subtle forms of differential treatment.”
Reading

For more information please read the following material:

2.4


B. Femininity as a Social Construction

In the next reading, Jill Morawski discusses femininity. She points out that psychological traits are believed to be universal and fixed but they describe the ideal healthy adults and the social, relations in the society of the time. For example, a society that valued the occupational role of housewife and mother would ascribe such sex related differences as passivity, dependence, and emotionality to women. These traits are the desired traits for that social role. From this viewpoint, society (rather than anatomy) defines the characteristics of femininity—femininity is a social construction.

At one point, Morawski refers to "My idea of separate spheres". You will meet this concept in other readings as it has been defined here. The separate spheres concept should be nothing mysterious to you. It is part of traditional way of organizing life in Pakistan, as well as in many cultures in all parts of the world—East and West. The spheres are a) public life, including business, political, and economic, activities, and which is usually reserved for men; and b) domestic or private life, which is generally the woman's sphere.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

2.5

Femininity Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopaedia. pp. (136-139)

Morawski's article suggests that a society grows and changes, so would the beliefs of what is considered feminine (or masculine), since these are not biological traits. Morawski is not the only person saying this. Much current research as well as feminist theory, supports the argument that there are no
(or few skills, talents, or achievements that are purely biologically fixed and sex-exclusive. Where differences do exist between females and males, the complex interaction of biology, childhood experiences, and socialization makes it impossible to conclude if there is an exclusively biological explanation.

* Activity

Morawski says that the 19th and early 20th century theories of traits of male and female resulted in descriptions of ideal types. These ideal types were considered to be biologically fixed and universal. She then points out that these traits for “healthy functioning adults” just happened to also fit the occupational roles of the existing society. How does Morawski say feminist theorists describe the ideal masculine and feminine personality type as they see it today?

2.6 The Process of Sex-Role Learning and Two Cognitive Theories

Berkowitz’s third category of explanations of sex differences was based on learning. Learning is a cognitive process. Learning is one of the many aspects of the brain’s functions that cognitive psychology studies. Cognitive psychology is that branch of psychology, which tries to figure out how the brain works. We don’t really know what the cognitive processes are because we can’t see what happens. Cognitive psychologists study thinking processes, problem solving, memory, and perception (how you see and understand things). Since cognitive processes are hidden from observation, the trick is to find some activity, problem, or situation that reveals something about how the brain works … and make that measurable.

Cognitive psychologists may be interested in how you solve a mathematical problem. Or, they may be interested in how you grow from an infant whose main concern is food and comfort, to solving bigger problems of life figuring out who you are, and how you fit in the universe Allah, created. A cognitive psychology question that would be of interest to us is how do we come to recognize that we are a female or a male? How do we learn what behavior is considered best? How do we learn who we are?
I. The Differentiation of Self.

John H. Flavell (1985) in his book Cognitive Development, outlines a cognitive psychologists' theory about how a person acquires a sense of self 'through the process of differentiation). He suggests that the child acquires the sense of self through a process of differentiation of self from non-self, of human objects from non-human objects, and of one human object from another. He describes the process this way: The child gradually evolves a sense of herself as a distinct and separate entity, clearly differentiated from all the other entities, human and non-human that populate her everyday world. To do this she must acquire some conception of herself as a physical object that, for example, occupies a particular location in space and is physically detached from other objects. As a person among persons she must learn that she is a psychological being (a self) distinguished from her fellow psychological beings. Over time, she will come to learn that she has her own unique selfhood and identity ("me-ness"). She will learn that she is a female rather than a male. This differentiation will have profound implications for her conception of what and who she is, and will promote and support many other differentiations. Within the self, but achieved through comparisons with others, she will distinguish between attributes she thinks she has like intellectual competencies, moral qualities, etc., and those she thinks she lacks. She will build up a differentiated psychological profile of herself. These differentiations will in time lead to a greater or lesser differentiation between the self she thinks she is stuck with (actual self) and the one she wishes she owned instead (ideal self).

Keep in mind—Flavell, like all cognitive psychologists, is interested in what is going on in the brain, so his description is different than a social psychologist. Flavell doesn't try to explain how the child learns she is a female, or how she develops a stereotype her ideal self. He is concerned with what is happening inside the developing child's brain—the process of differentiation.

II. Gender-Schematic Processing

A more recent cognitive theory of sex-role socialization is that proposed by Sandra L. Bem. It is important because it is a theory that evolves from a feminist perspective on sex roles and on development. According to Bem, children become socialized to society's sex-role expectations through
"gender-schematic processing". Schema is a hypothetical structure of knowledge in the brain, or hypothetical way, the brain represents knowledge. According to schema theory, the brain uses the schema already there to process, understand, and organize new information it receives. Bern says there is a schema that gives the child a generalized readiness for encoding and organizing new information (including information about the self), according to the culture's definition of maleness and femaleness. This gender-schematic processing is not related to the biological characteristics that define females and males. It is learned as a direct result of society's emphasis and reinforcement of the importance of distinctions based on gender. Thus gender comes to be a primary way of cognitively organizing input from the world.

Bern's theory gets some support from research studies, which show that children remember pictures that are sex-consistent better than those that are sex-inconsistent. (An example of this might be a picture of girls cooking as compared to a picture of girls helping fix a car.) Her theory includes a framework for planning and implementing approaches to rearing children who are not limited by traditional sex-role stereotypes. A weakness of Bern's theory, like some other theories (for example, Kohlber) is that it cannot explain the different behaviors according to gender, which appear earlier than age five or six when gender constancy is typically attained. (Boys will play more with cars tracks and girls with dolls as early as age two.)

As you will discover in Units 4 and 5 women have historically been excluded from the production of knowledge. From oral story telling in traditional societies, to textbooks; from Shariah to nuclear theory; most creation of knowledge, theorizing and writing has been done by men from men's perspective. Research has been primarily designed and directed by men based on what they thought was important. All of this ignored women's realities and women's contributions. Bem's theory is important because of the integration of theory about sex-role socialization with feminist contributions to psychological thinking.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

2.6 Learning Gender Women, Men and Society

2.7 What Research Says About Sex Differences

For centuries, sexual or biological differences in a wide variety of behaviors, skills, and abilities have been reported or have been assumed to be true. Many of these are psychological properties and traits. You probably have heard some of them, and might disagree with others. Men are said to be more aggressive, less emotional, better in math; while women are said to be compliant, have a natural mothering instincts and more skilled verbally etc. Some of these reported differences do not exist at all. Others may have small differences in average scores for groups, but that average score difference is no where near as great as score differences between individuals of the same sex and still others, may have a biological basis.

The feminist theorists see that masculinity and femininity relate to societal forms. Masculinity represents cultural progress with characteristics of the objectivity of science, of liberal political doctrines, and modern technological workplace. (You may have also listed those characteristics.) Femininity is the “other" or the absence of post-industrial concepts of personal traits ... or non-achievement traits such as passion, caring, intuition.

This idea of opposites is an important one to feminist thinking. Feminists see many "dualities" in the thought of females versus males.

The next three readings should be read together. The first is a short summary chart from AIOU’s Psychology of Women course. This chart very nicely condenses a famous book by Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jaklin analysing a large number of research studies done on the psychological differences between the sexes. The ladies found the results fell into three categories: unfounded beliefs or myths about differences, differences that were fairly well established to be sex differences; and differences, which could not be proven either way, and needed further study.

As you read these lists, you might want to compare them with your own beliefs. For example, do you believe girls are more "social" than boys? Maccoby and Jaklin found that wasn't true. The second reading is a review and summary of Maccoby and Jaklin's work by Mary Ann Warren. It is an interesting reading, because the author starts out very objectively presenting Maccoby and Jaklin's findings, but soon singles out one trait, that of male aggressive behaviors, and presents the arguments supporting the idea that
is innate or biological (genetic), and the arguments that it is socialized or
conditioned” behavior. Which side do you think she is on? Can you tell which
she believes?

The third reading is from a book Richard E. Mayer, a cognitive psychologist.
Cognitive processes are whatever happens in the brain to create thinking,
learning and problem solving. In the reading by Mayer, we follow his
discussion as he presents the research done on sex differences and math
abilities. These readings highlight the questions theorists are asking. The
first question is, are there any real differences between females and males
on all these different psychological traits or mental abilities? And, when
differences are noted, what causes them? Determining this is very complex
and goes back to the hereditary vs. environment question.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

| 2.7   | Psychology of Woman. AIOU, pp. 15-18 |

Before we leave these three articles behind, I'd like to point out that for
many aspects of sex differences the results and evidence from research are
not strong enough to support an argument of biological differences. Nor has
research been able to sort out exactly what combinations of factors might
create these differences.

* Activity

Think about what you believed were differences between females and males
before you started studying this unit. Have your thoughts changed? Have
you been surprised to find that some differences were “myths” or couldn't
be proven? Were there any differences mentioned that you never thought
about it?

The final reading for this unit pulls together and summarizes many of the
ideas and concepts we have discussed so far. It is an entry from an
encyclopaedia on “The Nature of Women” written by Mary Anne Warren.
We will be reading a number of other articles from Warren's encyclopaedia, so I would like to introduce you to Warren and her writing style. Warren is a feminist activist. Feminist activists believe women's positions in society need changing, and they are willing to work for this. You will feel her activist position as you read. Instead of trying to be completely objective, as most of our previous authors have done, Warren writes with emotion. You can often sense if she agrees or disagrees with what she is writing about. You can often tell her opinion and her position on the topic being discussed. You may even feel that she is trying to persuade you and convince you to believe as she does. The topic from Warren's book we will be reading here is "Psychology of Women". Warren first discusses the fact that no one ever says there is a need for a psychology of men. By saying we need a psychology of women, separate from ordinary psychology, it suggests that women are different. Different from what? Men off course. That implies men are normal (the norm) and women are different! (Personally prefer to think that women and men are different from each other.)

Men "construct" the world. Think about it ... why should men be considered the norm against which women are measured? This practice highlights men's influence in "constructing" the world. This influence is evident even in the smallest ways-and has been there for so long, we don't even think about it. For example, in the English language it is standard form to put men first (as most important). You would say "men and women", not "women and men". If you consciously noticed that I have been putting women first "girls and boys", "females and males", then you were already aware of the custom of making men more important by putting them first-and perhaps you didn't realize it? Do you see how the use of language can imply women are in an inferior position?)

In the last paragraph Warren renames the "psychology of women". She says it is more accurately the "psychology of sex and gender differences". Warren uses some words and phrases we have not discussed before. One is patriarchy, which means a male-dominated society and male-dominated families. You are already familiar with patriarchy-you live in it. Islam recommends a patriarchal society. It might be noted here that there is nothing basically bad about a family unit being organized around a man (or woman) as head. Somebody has to lead, just as any organization, government, etc., has a leader. Patriarchy does not automatically imply a lower subservient
status of women. Nor does patriarchy mean the extreme subjugation of women and their rights as is, unfortunately, often practiced by Muslim and non-Muslim patriarchal societies around the world. Warren talks about the ancient writers, Plato and Aristotle, and other more recent philosophers and feminists. Some of these you will meet later in the course. The others are not important for you to remember by name ... only the ideas they were proposing. Warren summarizes many of the theories and concepts (ideas) we have already studied in this unit, so this is a good way to check to see if you really understood

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

| 2.8 | Psychology of Women Elizabeth A. Rider. pp. (12-21) |

2.8 Self Assessment Questions


Q 2. What are the different sociological perspectives on Gender? Please explain in detail.


Q 4. What is your understanding of the following terms:

Feminist
Gender
Sex
Sex role

Q 5. Please describe the anatomical Difference Theories in detail.

Q 6. What is the Psychoanalytical Theory and how it explains construct of Gender. Discuss in detail.

Q 7. Write short notes on the followings:
i) Cognitive Theories

ii) Bem’s Theory of Gender Formation

2.9 Bibliography


UNIT-3

SENSITIZING TO GENDER ROLES

Dr. Ayesha Mustafa
3.1 Introduction

This unit continues the discussion begun in unit one about socialization and training into adulthood. Unit 1 emphasized physical and psychological theories of sex and gender differences; this unit places more emphasis on social and cultural practices-social learning and gender role socialization. This unit has three topics. The first is Gender based behavior norms and gender associated developmental tasks as they relate to the socialization process. The second topic introduces the concept of gender associated vocabulary and speech. The final topic is the gender typing of jobs and occupations. Effort has been made to give you feminist perspective on women's work and how gender roles are systematically prevailing in the societies.

3.2 Objectives

After studying the unit you will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between norms and development tasks and give examples of a gender based behavior norm for females and males,

2. Discuss feminist perspective on women's work and gender.

3. Define sexism. Give several examples of sexism in language.

4. Explain the meaning of sexual division of labor and gender-typing of jobs.

3.3 What is Gender

Before we begin the first topic, let us review the meaning of the word gender. In Unit 1, it is defined as the learned and psychological differences and distinction between females and males, is a cultural construct, the difference in roles and behaviors that societies create. It would be appropriate here to revisit the word gender in a little more detail, and its use by contemporary writers. Following is a short discussion on the term gender from Warren's book which we have referred to previously.
Gender: The term gender is often used as a synonym for sex i.e., biological maleness or femaleness. However, it is also used particularly by contemporary writers, to refer to the socially imposed dichotomy of masculine and feminine roles and character traits. Sex is physiological, while gender, in the latter usage is cultural. The distinction is a crucial one, and one which is ignored by unreflective supporters of the status quo who assume that cultural norms of masculinity and femininity are natural and directly and preponderantly determined by biology.

"To insist on the distinction between sex and gender is not to assume, on the other hand, that biology has no causal influence on the cultural phenomena associated with gender, but only that whatever causal relationship there may be are much less direct, universal and resistant to change than in the case of genuinely natural human behaviors like sleeping, sneezing, and eating. Contemporary researchers have demonstrated that gender can develop in direct opposition to its usual, biologically indicated direction. There are biologically normal males who are "feminine" in both gender identity (the gender they perceive themselves to be) and gender role, and biologically normal females whose gender is "masculine." Furthermore, there are cultures in which the traditional gender roles and personal temperament of women are what we would typically describe as masculine and cultures in which those of men are feminine." (Warren, p. 181) The current gender roles probably had their beginnings in the division of labor in a society. Because of women's childbirth and nursing activities, the tasks the society assigned to women had to allow them to carry out those activities. The supply and demand for labor probably also shaped the gender roles.

It would also be good to introduce this unit with a short reading on gender roles. You will recall from Unit 1 that gender roles and stereotypes were closely related. Gender roles are social expectations, where stereotypes are structured sets of beliefs.

Reading

For more study please read the following material

3.1 Theorizing Gender and Sexuality;

S. Jackson, Contemporary Feminist Theories. pp (131-142)
3.4 Gender Based Behavior Norms and Gender Associated Developmental Tasks

Although we will not be using these terms much, it is important that you understand the distinction between gender based behaviour norms and gender associated developmental tasks. Common sense tells you that the gender role or expected behavior, is different according to a person's a) sex (gender based behaviour norms) and b) age (developmental tasks).

A simple example: It is probably familiar for a young girl to see her brothers climbing trees. At 25 years old, it would still ok for a man to climb a tree, for example, to get a better view of a parade—but would any 25 year lady consider doing that? Why not? And at 60, even a man in good physical shape would probably not consider it socially acceptable to climb trees, even to get a glimpse of his favorite political candidate driving by in a car. That is a rather simple example of different expectations being set according to age and sex.

Stereotypes guiding the socialization process are regulated both by sex and age. Behavior norms are those invisible norms or rules that are applied to someone should act. Developmental tasks are age related—what are the invisible norms or rules for behavior at a given age. Both of these are different for men and women he considered separately according to gender. Ask yourself: What behavior norm apply to 10 year old girls? To 10 year old boys? What behavior norms apply to 50 year old ladies? To 50 year old men? In other words, what are the invisible norms or rules about the kind of behavior that is expected for a given sex (gender based), at a certain age (developmentally based)?

3.4.1 Gender Identity and Physiological Differences

The first two short readings discuss gender identity and physiological differences. Gender identity is the person's own beliefs of her or his sexual identity and the appropriate behavior she or he associates with that identity. The readings are summaries of the main themes of the two books written on the subject by Money and Ehrhardt, and Stoller. These authors studied individual cases where the sexual anatomy and/or hormone balances were mixed—not clear female or male. These readings add considerable support to the thesis that sex roles and stereotype are socially- taught rather than
biologically or psychologically fixed and inevitable.

**Reading**

For more information please read the following material:

|-----|----------------------------------------------------------|

### 3.4.2 Same Old Question-Socialization or Biology

Next, a section of a textbook by Lawrence Wrightsman, discusses research comparing the sex-role socialization in 110 (mostly illiterate) societies. Why look at other societies? Elsewhere in his book, Wrightsman argues that four conditions must be satisfied to if one wanted to argue strongly for a biological difference between the sexes with respect to a given characteristic, rather than a socially taught difference. One of these was that the characteristic appears to be universal—that is, it is more typical of one sex than the other in nearly every society. (His other three conditions are that the characteristic occurs when the child is very young; that it is also prevalent in one sex in other primate species; and that its presence is consistent with hormonal findings.

In this reading Wrightsman investigates five types of behavior often attributed to biological differences. These range from being nurturing to being self-reliant. Not surprisingly, the comparison found certain pattern of behaviors were stressed for girls and others for boys. Wrightsman then returns to a concept we have previously discussed—that socialization patterns are not based on biological differences, but rather, fit the needs of the society and change when the needs and customs of the society change. Gender roles aren’t biologically determined. They are shaped by the people in society. Girls and boys are treated differently from infancy onward. They are encouraged to do the things appropriate for their sex.

| 3.4 | Social Role Sociolozation Women’s Studies Encyclopaedia (1989): PP. 337-339 |
3.4.3 Culture and Different Socialization Practices

Following Wrightsman we return to Warren's book and more studies comparing societies differences with respect to stereotyping gender associated tasks. In other words the difference in learned sex-role behavior. Warren presents a short summary of the classic research and views of world famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead. Mead is famous for her landmark research on sex roles. Mead lived with and studied three primitive tribes in New Guinea. Her particular focus was cross-cultural variations in female and male roles in those societies. As Warren comments, Mead's research has done more than any other research to undermine the belief that cultural stereotypes of femininity and masculinity are universal and biologically inevitable. She found different stereotypes existed in different cultures.

Mead also theorized that women are not aggressive and outgoing because a girl learns at an early age that she doesn't have to struggle to achieve anything. She will experience "the supreme fulfillment of motherhood, not by effort and striving, but simply because she is a female", whereas men in every culture envy woman's ability to have children (or, as another author said, women hold the power of immortality of the human kind.) According to Mead, men must compensate by finding others modes of achievement, and cultures compensate by attaching a higher status to men's activities.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

and from Warren: The Nature of Women. Mead, pp (312-317)

3.4.4 Female Socialization in Pakistan

Around the age of 13 the female is expected to be doing those things which prepare her for marriage... thing which makes her more attractive as a wife. These things would be different in different societies. Learning to cook, getting an education, learning to behave in the manner expected of a women are examples of things she might be doing. After she is married, her primary role would be to take care of the house and children. She might or might not
be expected to carry out certain social responsibilities. She is probably expected to be sweet, nurturing, obedient, agreeable and compliant.

Activity

Describe the typical, traditional role for a female in Pakistan that starts around the age of 13. Then describe a gender role for a male in a society where the women are working outside the home. What are some personality traits they might be expected to have based on their gender role?

3.5 The Use of Gender Associated Vocabulary and Gender-Biased Speech

Language, customs, and human discourse reflect the social beliefs about the differences between females and males. Language has a role in creating and maintaining gender differences as well. This section looks at how in some ways language reflects and promotes differences between the sexes. In the previous unit it was pointed out that linguistic practices traditionally put men first. We say, he and she, or men and women, Mr. and Mrs. There are, of course some exceptions like the use of “ladies and gentlemen when beginning a speech.

3.5.1 Sexism in Language

This male-first practice is a simple example of sexism in language. Sexism is a term coined by the feminists of the 1960s to mean wrongful discrimination on the basis of sex, which defines individuals as inferior or places them at a disadvantage. While it could apply to men or women in this discussion of language, it means those discriminations which support a subordinate role for females and their status-dependency. Sexism has many aspects beyond linguistic practice such as sexist beliefs and attitudes of individuals, employers, or groups.
Language usage reflects social status which give importance to men, or establish man as the norm and women as the deviation, or support the subordinate status of women. Think about this: you always see D/O and W/O (daughter of, and wife of), but have you ever seen F/O or H/O? (If you didn’t figure out F/O and H/O, It means father of, and husband of). And then there is the Arabic language which is more “gendered” than English—has more masculine and feminine pronouns—etc. An Arabic teacher once pointed out that if 2,000 women were sitting in a room with one 2-week old baby boy, the women would be referred to in the masculine. That certainly suggests the relative importance of females and males in Arabic language.

Then there are English words which refer to both women and men, but emphasize men and imply the dependency of women like woMAN, huMAN, post MAN, etc. (Why not postperson? . What about the word history (his story). Why not herstory?

3.5.2 Do Women and Men Speak Differently

There are other gender associated aspects of language and speech. Feminists have intensively researched the differences in language used by men and women to see if there were possible sex differences in the language of men and women, sexism embedded in language, and the mechanism of women’s oppression through language. Two specific areas of interest “whether women have their own language and way of using words; and whether the power of men is related to the language men use. Feminist linguists also study how women are spoken about. In general it has been found that more negative words exist relating to women than men. (See discussion of “misogyny” in Unit 4). The next group of readings from Warren’s Encyclopedia considers some of these aspects. The first reading is Warren’s discussion titled “Language and Women.” In this, she refers to author’s reflections of various aspects of language. We will read Warren’s summary of the writings of four of these authors.

Reading

For further study please read the following material

3.6 Feminist Linguistic Theories: Deborah Cameron.
Contemporary Feminist Theories. pp. (147-158)
Activity

List four or more examples that show how language is sexist or how it emphasizes the importance of males by putting females at a disadvantage. Or how it can indicate a female is subordinate and/or status-dependent on a male.

3.6 Gender Typing of Jobs and Occupations

If we eliminate the idea that the words “jobs” and “occupations” are only that work which is paid, and consider the previous readings in this unit such as Mead, then you will immediately see that the gender typing of jobs and occupations varies from society to society. Even jobs you may think of as women’s work, for example child care, is not always exclusively assigned to women. The gender typing of paid jobs and occupations also varies from society to society. For example, being a typist or office clerk is not generally considered a woman’s job in Pakistan, but it is considered very suitable for women in the West. In 1980, nearly 80 percent of all of the clerical labor force in the U.S. was female. Other traditionally suitable jobs for women in the West include being a sales person in a store or shopkeeper, teaching, nursing, or librarian; however, more and more jobs at managerial levels in business and in every other field from engineering to finance are being held by females.

Activity

Take a minute right now, and consider the gender-typing of jobs and occupations in Pakistan. Make a list of the jobs and occupations (paid and unpaid) which are considered women’s work, or suitable for women in Pakistan ... of the jobs that are only for men ... and the jobs that either do. How do you think your list would differ from the same list made by a student in India or Iran? Are there any jobs that you do that and you don’t like to? Are there any jobs you would like to do, but don’t because they are gender-typed as men’s jobs?
3.6.1 Pakistan’s Textbooks and the Gender-Status of Jobs Portrayed

You might be interested in a study done in Pakistan in which the pictures in the very text books you studied in school were analyzed. Textbooks are a key source of support for gender-typing of activities and stereotypes and reflect what is considered as culturally appropriate roles and behavior. (In Pakistan, they are also predominantly written by men) It reported that the most frequently occurring activities (jobs) of female characters in text books were cooking and cleaning, domestic help, and picking cotton. Thus, women’s work was portrayed as not high in status, and the women as submissive. You might also be interested in noting that of the 3189 human characters portrayed only 19% were female against 81% male. (Government of Pakistan Women’s Division report, 1984.)

3.6.2 Gender Typing of Jobs Varies Over Time within a Society

Not only does the gender typing of jobs vary from society to society, but it may change within a given society as the society’s needs change. The result of the increase in the occupational and professional opportunities for women in the West has led to more and more participation of women in the work force. This does not automatically mean that the home and children are neglected. Following this is a slow shift in the gender-roles with respect to the care and maintenance of the home and children. More men are becoming involved inside the home and taking on responsibilities for child care, cooking, cleaning, and so on.

This is not an easy transition. There is an assumption which is part of the stereotyping of roles and jobs, that all women have a “natural” inclination for housework, and are good at it. This myth is deeply embedded in the patriarchal system of gender-role segregation. I say myth, because many women do not enjoy cooking, sewing, washing clothes, and other tasks involved in housekeeping. They prefer a suitable job, for which they earn money, as more challenging and rewarding. Destroying this myth of women’s natural inclinations for housework threatens the work roles of men, so it is a myth which will not be easily demolished in any society.
The rest of this unit will consider some aspects of gender-typing of jobs and occupations, and address the questions of how this may have come about, and some of the implications of it.

3.6.3 Sex-Role Plans for the Division of Labor

Long before there were "jobs" and "occupations", social groups had gender-specific assignments of the tasks that needed to be done. Or, as our next author calls them—"sex-role plans" for the division of labor. This was not a matter of stereotypes and sexism, it was a matter of survival.

You should note that the author of the next reading points out in some detail how the strong-male oriented bias in research has produced a one-sided picture of the division of labor in the historical context. For example, hunting was considered more important than gathering (food) by the researcher of the earliest times. This introduces a concept you need to understand, and, which will be further explored in Unit 4. The concept is that knowledge, itself, is sexist and biased, because of women's exclusion from the production of knowledge. In other words, it is men's thinking and men's viewpoints that is reflected in science, philosophy, history, and so on. These fields of knowledge were largely "created" by men. This may be a new idea to you, and probably sounds a little strange because perhaps you think of knowledge as being "universal truth" created by Allah. But as this author points out, terminology, methodology, and theories used to organize historical and economic knowledge can ignore women's roles and activities and put a male bias on what is known. In this case, because of the male orientation of economic theorists and researchers, a male-oriented view and understanding of labor in societies is projected. This undervalues the women's role.

Did you know that more than half of the work in the world is done by women? Think about it. Without women's labor, how would a society survive? Do you think women's work is given the importance it should be? Or do you, yourself, think that women's work isn't as important as men's? If you do, then you most likely have been biased by the male view.

The next reading, on the sexual division of labor, takes a historical view of the origins of gender typing of jobs and roles; with the reading on occupational segregation. Following that, is a reading which looks at the results of occupational gender-typing in modern times from an economists point of
view. Among other points, the latter author suggests an interesting possibility based on supply and demand economics for why wages for women are lower. She suggests that because there are lesser categories of jobs acceptable for women (hence lesser jobs), there are too many women competing for those jobs. With a surplus of women eagerly desiring any available job, the employer can reduce the salary, and still get workers.

Reading

For more study please read the following material:

3.7 Women and Work: Anne Witz
In Introducing Women's Studies (1997).

3.8 Sex Segregation in the Work Place: p. (239-256)

3.7 Self Assessment Questions

Q 1. What do you understand by the statement "Gender roles are socially constructed..." please comment on the statement.

Q 2. Jackson (1998) in her article "Theorizing Gender and Sexuality" discussed feminist perspective on gender and women sexuality. Please explain her analysis and your own comments on the perspective.

Q 3. What is Gender and how gender based behaviours and norms are associated with behaviours which vary from culture to cultures?

Q 4. Discuss in detail how roles of women in Pakistani society is defined? Do you think that these roles are changing with passage of time and if yes what are the reasons behind this.

Q 5. Do women and men speak differently? Do you agree or not? In any case support your answer with arguments.

Q 6. How gender typing affects job and occupations? Discuss in detail and support your answer with examples.

Q 7. Anne Witz (1997) Women's work from a feminist perspective. Give your argument against or in agreement with the article.
3.8 Bibliography


THEORIES OF FEMINISM

Atifa Durrani
Dr. Ayesha Mustafa
4.1 Introduction

Women's activism on behalf of equality, liberation and more humane conditions for themselves and their families since World War II is a major force behind feminist activities and movements. This activism took place in Asia, Africa, Europe and North and South America making it possible to claim a global women's movement. In fact, the diversity, complexity and contested nature of the movement makes us to think not in simple Feminism but of multiple Feminism. Thus feminism refers to variety of activism on behalf of social, political, economic and personal justice. In this unit you will learn about the historical stages of the feminist movement (or women's activist movement); and the feminist theories that emerged from the movement. The unit will also discuss anti-feminist thought and theories.

4.2 Objectives

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the history of Feminist Movement in detail.
2. Define the concept of “Patriarchy”.
3. Explain major theories of Feminism and theory of Biological Determinism.
4. Discuss the diversity among feminist thoughts.

4.3 History of the Feminist Movement in the World

The Feminist movement describes western values and understanding that how society should be organized to promote and protect the rights of women. (Unit 9, discusses the problems of imposing the Western movement of feminism on Islamic system of values and suggests an alternate paradigm for a women's movement in the Muslim world.) The feminist movement (or women's activist movement) has moved through several stages. It began in England, Europe and the United States, and then spread around the world. The movement has always focused on some aspects of women and their
place in society. Over time, it has had many specific focuses such as the right to vote. In general, however, Feminism is the belief in equal rights and opportunities for women, specifically, social justice, equality, and economic rights.

Debates on women and their role in society stem back from the earliest times. The modern feminist movement is often dated from 1792, when a British women, Mary Wollstonecraft, wrote a stinging attack on the male supremacist views of the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. Wollstonecraft's literary contributions label her as the first feminist philosopher of merit even though she lived for sometime a scandalous life, and held controversial views. You will have short readings describing Rousseau's views and Wollstonecraft's rebuttal. A movement to gain political rights developed in England and the United States during the late-1800s. The primary target of the activist feminists was to gain political rights, most notably, the right to vote for women. The term "women's suffrage" was used during this time to refer to this movement.

The Women's Suffrage movement in the U.S. also focused on abolishing the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. The women in the U.S. were successful in both objectives by the 1920s. (The nation-wide ban on alcoholic beverage production and sale lasted only a number of years before it was repealed.) The U.S. women's movement became more-or-less dormant for about 40 years after the 1920s success.

The 1960s were particularly "activist" oriented in the U.S., not just with relation to women's rights, but also with respect to global issues based on anti-militarist sentiments, world disarmament and peace movements, and other foreign policy issues. During the 1960's and 1970's the focus of the feminist movement broadened to include a range of economic, political and social equality issues in the U.S. An example of this would be unequal opportunities in employment.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the focus was economic and political rights and social equality. The following developments had taken place.

1. There was a building pressure to expand the women's movement into the arena of international politics and development—to improve the social, economic and political well-being of all women around the globe. The culmination of this was the UN's declaration of the "Decade for
Women” (1975-1985). The “Decade for Women” had a profound influence on the development of the global feminist movement.

2. The theoretical positions you will read about, which try to explain the cause and solutions for women’s lesser position, flowered and grew to maturity. The four main groups of activists and theorists were the liberal feminists, socialist feminists, radical feminists, and eco-feminists.

3. A confusion of real life issues emerged alongside the theory. This was partly because of the addition of the voices of women from all over the globe, each with her own set of injustices to address. The new issues included such things as the legal protection and welfare of elderly women and displaced homemakers, child labor, reproductive rights (abortion rights), concerns for rape victims and battered women (domestic violence), and even the war mentality that leads to acts of violence against women on or off the battlefield.

4. What grew out of this was a realization that women’s issues could not be separated from other problems. For example, women’s housing, health care and education could not be separated from community development and environmental sustainability. The result was a more sophisticated understanding of the links between women's issues and poverty, sexism, race-hatred, ecological damage and a myriad of other social, economic and political ills. And more recently, the understanding that women's issues were gender issues and could not be separated from men's issues.

5. Unfortunately, there was also a splintering of groups and organizations because of the rapid growth of the movement and multiple emerging issues. Each group focused on its own priority. This led to a “reformist” movement among feminists starting by the 1990s, which was aimed at internal reorganization of the feminist movement.

Reading

For further reading please read the following material:

Gender, is a cultural construct. It is socially imposed, and based on a dichotomy. Gender combines feminine and masculine roles and character traits. As feminists are quick to point out, these traits are usually defined in terms of some sort of opposition-strong/weak, public/private, etc. The early feminists, and indeed many feminists now, take a separatist standpoint. They look at women and women's issues in isolation from men. A seminal understanding gained during the decades was that women's problems were issues of gender and could not be focused on in isolation. One cannot change the feminine role or position in society without involving changes in the man's role and changing the society itself! Thus, for many feminists, women's issues have become gender issues.

The "politically correct" terminology in many quarters these days, when referring to women's issues, etc., is "gender issues". It means that the same problems are being addressed, but from a different perspective—a more holistic perspective.

4.4 Patriarchy - A Basic Concept

Before we go any further, we must look at the word patriarchy. Patriarchs and patriarchy are not feminist concepts. The words have been traditionally used by anthropologists and sociologists (and long before that) to refer to the paternal (male) leader of a family or tribe, or to a tribe or family ruled by a patriarch. You might note that a patriarch is leader over all the family—male or female. It can also refer to a system of social organization in which descent and succession are traced through the male line.

Feminists have many different views on the women's situation, but they generally share the belief that patriarchy is main limiting factor of women's freedom. They define patriarchy from their own perspective. To feminists, patriarchy refers to social systems where men as a group acquire and maintain power over women as a group at the most basic level of the family-unit and upward. Feminists oppose the subordination of women in male dominant patriarchal societies; and the way in which male power insinuates itself into the psyches of women, teaching them to join in this act of defining themselves as subordinate to, and dependent upon men. Feminists do not necessarily consider this a deliberate conspiracy of individual men, but rather a practice of a social system which empowers men, and gives them no reason
to want to change the status quo. The concept of male power and feminine dependence insinuates itself as much into the psyches of men as women, until all in the society believe that this is the correct way.

Feminists of different theoretical perspectives differ in their beliefs about the origins or causes of patriarchy and of how patriarchy controls women. A common point of agreement, however, between feminists is that the social institution of patriarchy entails efforts by men to control women and their bodies. According to feminists, patriarchal discourse defines women as uniquely, sometimes solely, suited for bearing and raising children. Patriarchal institutions attempt to control women's fertility through abortion and birth control (and individual men exercise control over the activities and choices of women through violence and rape). And through the reduction of women to objects of male sexual desire, men turn women's bodies into possessions and reward women for successful competition with one another for the attention, approval and protection of men.

The different conceptualizations of patriarchy lead to different strategies of resistance and different ideas of what needs to be changed. Those who think of patriarchy as a nearly universal web of male dominance tend to embrace a strategy of cultural change whereby women are encouraged to create a separate women's culture. Those who see it as a historical phenomena suggest resistance to the institutions and practices within which patriarchy operates. Some emphasize marriage as the crucial institution to be resisted, while others point to women's regaining the control of their productive and reproductive labor which they feel is controlled by men.

Reading

For further reading please read the following material:

4.2 What is Patriarchy: Kamla Bhasin (1993) P: (20-40)

4.5 Theories of Feminism

Thomas Kuhn(1962) spelled out Feminist Theory as "as a paradigms challenge to what it is regards as that androcentric theory that dominates discussions of social and political life". Feminist Theory offers new categories of analysis through a new language that is shared by researchers of feminist
Feminist theory has now grown into a vast field and it is not easy to keep track of feminist thought as a whole to have an overview of it, if not detailed knowledge. Yet in a broader context, Feminist theories can be classified into three main types.

A. Theories of Gender Differences
B. Theories of Gender Inequality
C. Theories of Gender Oppression

A. Theories of Gender Differences

There are some debates in feminist thought about "difference". These differences within feminist thoughts are taken as an issue and discussed on the following basis:

1. Whether the term "difference" itself is more appropriately used to discuss differences between men and women (gender differences). Focus is on the theorizing on the gender differences and differences among women (which is the theme of third wave feminism).
2. Policy implications for the feminists on the principle of gender differences (women have special needs, maternity, health care, etc).
3. There is a debate that there should be a female-specific and appropriate social organization for women.
4. Feminist criticize essentialists as they take social realities existing in the societies.

Examples

1. Cultural Feminism

Positive aspects of being women were used in cultural feminism in male patriarchy.

1. Female character or feminine personality was taken as strength for women.
2. Cultural feminist like Fuller, Adams argued society needs women's
virtues as corporation, caring, pacifism and non-violence in settlement of conflicts.

3. Stress to adopt female style of communication
4. Appreciate women's capacity for openness to emotional experiences.

2. Biological Explanation

In biological explanation feminist Sociologist Alice Rossi (1977-83) work is very important. She analyzed the theory in the following way.

1. She linked biological functions of male and female to different pattern of hormonally determined development over life cycle.
2. This development in turn lead to sex-specific traits such as light, sound, and differences in left and right brain connections.
3. Rossi argues, that socio-cultural settings make it possible for each gender to compensate through social learning for biologically "given" disadvantage.

B- Theories of Gender Inequality

There are four (4) major themes that can be categorized in theories of inequality.

1. Women and men are situated in society not only differently but also unequally.
   (Women get less material resources, social, economic status, power, opportunity).

2. This inequality results from the organization of society, not from any significant biological personality differences between men and women.

3. They argue that women should also have the freedom to seek self-actualization like men in order to get opportunities.

4. All inequality theories assume that both women and men will respond easily and naturally to more egalitarian social structure and situation, (this is contrast to gender theories of difference).
Examples

1. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminist's major concerns are

- Sexual division of labor
- Separation of public and private domain

Liberal feminists stress on the following strategies to cope with gender inequalities.

1. Mobilization of existing political and legal channels for change
2. Provision of equal economic opportunities
3. Recognition of female life for sharing equal responsibilities
4. Support for individual in combating sexism in daily life

2. Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminist stress on the following issues related to women:

1. Women subordination is embedded in class system.
2. Women in jobs are paid less because of their lower social status in the society.

C- Theories of Gender Oppression

All theories of Gender Oppression describe women situation in relation to power relation with men. Main points of the theories include:

1. Men have dominant position in controlling, using, subjugating and oppressing women.
2. Patriarchy plays a main role in the society as it is primary power structure and is sustained by strong and deliberate intention.
3. Gender difference and gender inequality is the by-product of patriarchy.
Example

1. Psychoanalytic Feminism

Explain patriarchy by theories of Freud and his followers. Psycho Feminists see patriarchy as "a system in which men subjugate women, a universal system pervasive in its social organization, durable over time."

2. Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is a reaction against devaluation of women all over the world on two main points:
1. Women must be taken as absolute positive value
2. Women are oppressed everywhere (Institutions like heterosexuality, ethnicity, caste, gender, class, etc).

3. Socialist Feminism

It is based on the diversity of ideas and writings, and stress is on the theoretical agenda rather than drawing on conclusions. It is a mixture of Marxian and radical feminism. Three major aims of the socialist feminism may be listed as:

1. Achievement in exploration of all forms of oppression and exploration can be attached to women experiences.
2. Development of explicit and adequate methods of social analysis in order to explore historical materialism.
3. Treatment of ideas equal to material production while dealing with human affairs.

Reading

For further information please read the following material:


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it has already been said that Feminist theory seeks to analyze the conditions which shape women’s lives and to explore cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman. It was initially guided by the political aims of the women’s movements. The need is to understand women’s subordination and their exclusion from or marginality within, a variety of cultural and social arenas. Feminist refuse to accept that inequalities between women and men are natural and inevitable and insist that they should be questioned. Theory, for feminist is not an abstract intellectual activity divorced from women’s lives, but seeks to explain the conditions under which those lives are lived. Thinking as a feminist involves challenging much of what has counted as ‘knowledge’. Because we have historically lived in male-dominated societies, women have more often been the objects of knowledge than the producers of it. As a result, much of what has passed as objective knowledge of the world has been produced by men, framed by their particular location in society as men- and usually white, middle-class man. Feminist modes of theorizing contest androcentric (or male-centered) ways of knowing, calling into question the gendered hierarchy of society and culture. Feminist theory is about thinking for women- women generating knowledge about women and gender for women (Jacskon & Jones 1998).

According to Maynard (1995) feminist theory is not and has never been a static phenomenon. This is one of the reason why it has proved so difficult to capture writing classification such as liberal, Marxist or radical. It is observed that diversity and change are interlinked. As Jackson (1998) said that as feminism has evolved, theorizing has taken many different directions and forms. Individual feminists have also changed their views over time and this is evident in the reflexive self-critical tenor of much feminist work. Gender has been a prime concern in Feminist Theories development.

According to Sandra Fargins (1994) Gender is unique to feminist theory. In its accounting of social transformation, it starts with the ways in which women have been thought about, talked about, written about, and ignored. It looks at women’s roles in the workforce, at methods for bearing and rearing children, at patterns of interpersonal behaviour in both private and public dominions. It is a set of writings that starts from the world as women see it and its
objective is to bring to a perspective that has been missing.

Reading

For further information please study the following material:


4.6 Diversity in Feminism

Four major groups of feminists emerged during the last several decades. Each of the four groups has a different theoretical perspective on the cause of male-domination, and offers different solutions to the problems of female equality. The main four groups are the liberal feminists, socialist feminists, radical feminists and eco-feminists.

1. **Liberal Feminists:** They believe equality can be achieved through reforms working within the system to end legal, economic, political and social discrimination. Examples: legal equality, equal opportunities in all areas including employment and education, equal pay for equal work, equal employment opportunities. (Friedan suggests what is needed is the ability to achieve fulfillment through work that is challenging.). They blame patriarchal legal and educational system (patriarchal laws, sexist school curriculum and public media), and stereotyped beliefs of the nature of women. (Friedan added the stunting of individual development produced by domestic confinement.)

2. **Socialist Feminists:** They believe in revolution and radical alterations in basic social institutions, socialist economic system and socialization of child care and domestic duties. In other words, equal participation in public production process and socialist reorganization of the family. They agreed with the above but added blame on economic systems like capitalism which are based on private property and surplus wealth. They consider that patriarchal sexism linked or merged with capitalism. They also consider that marriage and the woman’s traditional role in child bearing and homemaking contributes to women dependence on men in economic sphere of life.
Radical Feminists: They presuppose a socialist revolution the end to capitalism, legal, educational and occupational inequality, and patriarchal ideology which denigrates women just as socialists do. They add to that 1) elimination of the biological family as an economic, child rearing institution (or elimination of motherhood)-replaced with some sort of communal arrangement; and 2) a change in the norms for sexual expression: the abolition of the heterosexual marriage as the binding norm, and elimination of the taboos against non-standard sexual expression. They agreed with all the above, that male supremacy is rooted in culture and social institutions (capitalist economic system with its ideology of hierarchy and competition; the patriarchal family system). But they added stress on biological conditions—the biological division of labor that has existed since the beginning of time and which left the woman dependent on man.

Reading

For further information please read the following material:


| 4.6 Feminism |
| Tierney | Women's Studies Encyclopedia |
| Warren | Feminism pp 151-153 |
| Tierney | Liberal Feminism pp 207-208 |
| Warren | Liberal Feminism pp 280-281 |
| Warren | Friedan pp174-177 |
| Warren | Socialism and Feminism p 431 |
| Tierney | Socialist Feminism pp 351-2 |
| Warren | Firestone pp 155-157 |
| Tierney | Radical Feminism pp 309-312 |
4. Eco-Feminists:

From the beginning there has been a close association between feminism and the ecology movement. Eco-feminist are considering more than merely conserving natural resources and saving the environment. The classic definition of ecology is that it is the systemic relationship between organisms and their environment. It is this broader definition that represents the "eco" part of eco-feminists.

Eco-feminists raise questions on natural phenomena, or definitions of what is natural. They look at nature, and biological issues in attempting to explain women's subjugated status. They go back to evolution and other natural mechanisms as the cause of woman's current status. In general, they look at how humankind started, and the biological division of labor in reproduction of the human species. They consider that it is women's vulnerability during pregnancy, and the long period of infancy, which necessitates the protective and dominant role of the male. They take the position that male domination (and exploitation) is the result of the biological family, and has been determined through a process of history and evolution of the human system. They assert that it is this division of labor that initially defined the roles of female and male, not anything that has happened subsequently. One has not to be labeled an eco-feminist to hold these views. Many feminists who label themselves something else (like radical feminist), also occasionally espouse eco-feminist views or variations of this thinking. Eco-feminists sometimes take an utopian view of how, society should be. They emphasize going back to nature or living harmoniously with nature-in an effort to find the proper balance for society.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

4.7 Eco-Feminism: Women, Men and Society By Renzetti Curran (1995) P: (425-426)

Activity

- After completing the readings above on liberal, socialist and radical feminism,
take a large piece of paper and make a chart comparing the beliefs of the three groups. Go back through the readings and identify the fundamental causes each group claims as the origin for the oppression of women, and the actions and changes they think are necessary to eliminate this sexual inequality.

4.7 Feminism, Patriarchy And Muslim Societies

The topic of the Western feminist theory to Islamic values will be covered in depth in Unit 9. None-the-less, there is a major conflict of values between Western oriented feminism and Islamic beliefs. This conflict can be summarized with the words "individualism versus collectivism". Feminist movements developed in a culture where individualism is one of the primary organizing principles of the society.

In the West, the basic philosophy is individualism. One's "self", or one's identity is basically the individual, and one's individual goals, wants, and fears. There is not as much concern about who someone's family is, or what tribe they come from. Western philosophy also believes each individual has considerable independent control over her fate, which could lead to success or defeat. The external environment, including other people, is just a background, to support or interfere with the individual efforts. The "self" is the most important unit of the society. It is very important for you to understand that this Western concept of individualism stands in direct opposition to the practices of many societies. Muslim societies, for example, have a different view of the way an individual person fits into the scheme of society. In cultures such as Pakistan, the collective or group "good" is the organizing principle. The family (or community) is the determining force in an individual's life. It provides the identity of the individual, and is the location where decisions are made. Hence control and power are often in the hands of other people—the family, or even society as a whole.

Akbar S. Ahmed, in his book Living Islam, describes another dimension of this difference between Western thought and Islam. He points out that springing from the Muslim notion of the cosmos, and the order and balance in the universe, Muslims believe there is a similar natural pattern in society and the Muslim household. Thus, while each person is different, each also plays an equally significant role in the family. The roles are interrelated
to ensure balance and harmony of the society as a whole. (This is very similar to what some of the eco-feminist utopian theorists are aiming for!)

Another problem of conflicting viewpoints arises with the perception of Western feminists' view of society. They take a big leap when they seem to assume that patriarchy is automatically bad and oppressive for women. They view patriarchy as the subordination and oppression of individual women under patriarchal rule. They seek the liberation of women from this male tyranny. This apparent total opposition to all patriarchy is in conflict with the beliefs of a Muslim society which believes a balanced patriarchal society is divinely intended.

Many things Western feminists label as subordination are perceived quite differently by Muslim women. A Muslim woman walking behind her husband or son is often perceived by non-Muslims as a method of putting a woman in a lesser position. A Muslim woman is likely to consider it a method of self-defense or protection. Thus, some of the beliefs and perceptions of Western feminists don't have any "resonance" with the world of Muslim women. Often Muslim women don't find Western feminist goals important. Ahmed made this point by quoting a Cambridge anthropologist, Dr. Helen Watson. Watson visited Cairo and made the following observation:

Familiar western concepts of sexual equality and the liberation of women are irrelevant and unnecessary from local women's point of view. At the core of this conviction is the perception that gender roles and male and female responsibilities are fully complementary. There is a male sphere of influence and activity and a female one; both are separate and distinct, but in combination they form the basis of a stable society. (p. 162)

Watson pointed out, "Modernity has very little effect on how women live, or indeed on how they want to live." The two positions, of individualism and collectivism, are different ways of viewing how society should be organized. You need to keep this basic difference in world view in mind when reading any philosophical or theoretical literature from the West.

Having said that it should also be pointed out that while Islam teaches what the ideal society should be, that ideal is often not put into practice. There are injustices against women in Muslim collective societies. Muslim women do suffer from the oppression of male-dominance in families and communities, where Islamic principles are not observed; they do suffer from discrimination.
in the public life where a less than ideal Islamic environment does not encourage easy movement (for example, public transport); and they are often not protected at the government level with appropriate laws regarding their Islamic rights.

The goals would, of course, in many cases be different than those of Western feminism. The goals would be the establishment of the Islamic scheme of social order more closely aligned with the teachings of Allah and His Prophet (PBUH) and, men should not be separated from this movement, but be a part of it, just as they are a part of the cosmos Allah created.

4.8 Anti-Feminist Thought And Theories: Misogyny And Biological Determinism

This unit has presented a broad picture of the major branches of feminism and its theories: and diversity among feminists as liberal, socialist, radical, and eco-feminism. Before we close the unit, you should have a brief excursion to the oppositions' camp. To balance the picture being presented in this unit, you should look at some anti-feminist ideas.

First, you will read about the concept and theoretical origins of Misogyny—the hatred of women. Here we are presenting concepts and theoretical origins. One is Biological Determinism (refer to reading for definition) and two reviews of theorists who put forth anti-Feminist Theories.

Warren (p.322) says the following about misogyny and misogynists:

Misogyny is the hatred of women, or sometimes ... the belief that women are not only morally and intellectually inferior to men, but dangerous, and the source of much of the evil in the world. It is interesting that there is no parallel term for the hatred of men..... Misogyny, on the other hand, has roots in the oldest Western traditions, from the Greek myth of Pandora and the Genesis tale of Eve’s temptation and sin, to Aristotle’s dictum that a woman is a misbegotten man. The greatest philosophers and theologians of the Christian tradition have been guilty of misogyny. (See St. Paul, Augustine...also Christianity.)

Of course, not all anti-feminists are also misogynists. There have been many who praise women for their special virtues and consider them the moral
superiors of men, even while consigning them to a very restricted role...

...Misogyny itself has also become a subject of study and analysis. Horney, Lederer, and Mead have suggested that misogyny is fundamentally a result of men's envy of the female's capacity to give birth, and their fear of the power which this capacity seems to imply. Some theorists who have sought to explain misogyny in terms of the psychoanalytic tradition have held that the only solution to men's hatred and fear of women is for the latter to remain strictly within the traditional feminine role and not to arouse men's apprehensions or hostility by competing with them in any other area. But radical feminists, many of whom have also learned a great deal from Freud, have argued that it is precisely women's traditional role in the biological family which generates male misogyny.

Dinnerstein points out that such an association is inevitable in any society in which children are raised almost exclusively by women; for in this situation male will always regard female as a retarding force from which he will seek to escape into an all-male environment. On this analysis, misogyny springs from the male's fear of being dragged back into the state of dependency, and his inability to treat females as equals is a reaction to the time when he himself first learned to submit to the authority of another, who happened to be a woman.

In Unit 2 we have briefly discussed sexism in language. The comment was made above that while there was a word for the hatred of women (misogony), there was no parallel word for the hatred of men. This is an example of sexism in language. Linguists who specialize in investigating sexist language have studied the existence of such "relational" words for one sex or the other. Words representing negative relationships are found top-balanced between females and males. Languages tend to be heavy in words related to women (such as misogony).

**Reading:**

For more information please read the following material:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.8</th>
<th>Socio Biology/ Biological Dertermination: Tierney</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women's Studies Encyclopaedia (1989) PP. (337-339)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.9 Self Assessment Questions

Q 1. Discuss the history of feminist movement in detail.

Q 2. What is the basic concept of Patriarchy? How feminist explain idea of Patriarchy?

Q 3. How would you explain theories of feminism?

Q 4. What are the contemporary feminist theories? Write in detail.

Q 5. What is meant by diversity in feminism? Write in detail.

Q 6. Please discuss the ideology of feminism in the Muslim societies and give your own perspective regarding the ideology.

Q 7. Discuss anti-feminist thoughts and theories in detail.

4.10 Bibliography


Feminism and Knowledge
5.1 Introduction

This unit explores the idea of what knowledge, is women and knowledge production, sexist knowledge, and women’s knowledge systems and how they are acquired. Some of this thinking became prominent only after feminist philosophers and theorists started analyzing the patriarchal impact on knowledge production and women’s exclusion from knowledge production. An effort has been made to bring these important issues under discussion in this unit in order to give you an insight.

5.2 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

1. Explain the positivist view of knowledge
2. Explain the feminist theorists view of the production of knowledge
3. Discuss reasons feminist give for knowledge being sexist

5.3 What is Knowledge?

What is your definition of knowledge? Do you think of knowledge as the sum total of everything created? Do you think that knowledge is a fixed set of facts carved in stone someplace? Do you think of knowledge as a universal set of principles, which everyone knows to be true? If you do, you are most definitely a product of Western positivistic thought. If you define knowledge as being a social construction that is relative to who and where you are, then you are thinking along the lines of current epistemological theory. Knowledge is that which is known, not that which is knowable. The moment you accept that distinction, you will begin to see that knowledge is a human product. Knowledge comes from the interaction between a person and the surroundings and environment—from working with the environment and changing it. This is explained very well in a quote attributed to Mao Tse Tung, a Communist revolutionary leader of China who said: If you want knowledge you must take part in changing reality. If you want to know the
taste of a pear you must change the pear, taking it into your mouth and chewing it. If you want to know the structure and properties of an atom, you must make physical and chemical experiments to change the state of an atom. If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution.

The science of the origin, nature, limits and validity of knowledge is called epistemology. It is a philosophical field, much complex for our purposes. Still, if you have never read any discussions of what knowledge is, you need to be introduced at a very simple level to a few concepts.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

| 5.1 Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2000 pp: (1-10) |

**Positivism:** A belief that knowledge is based on objectivism, rationality and truth. Most educated people these days are still influenced by the Western positivist tradition of what knowledge is. They think knowledge is fixed, measurable, objective, rational truth discovered through objective scientific means, and that this is the only truth there. The positivist tradition places science (and the very tightly prescribed scientific method of finding knowledge) as the "god" of all knowledge. It is a very masculine position, which emphasizes (as superior) those domains in which men work, and the only true knowledge as that which comes from the scientific method. It ignores subjective knowledge such as the knowledge of the domains where women work (and Mao's taste of the pear). After perhaps 200 years of dominating all discourse on knowledge, the positivist position on knowledge is dying, albeit slowly; after being attacked from all sides by everyone from modern physicists, to humanists, feminists, and theologians.

Bakhtiar Husain Siddiqui, who writes from the viewpoint of the Islamization of knowledge, (not feminism) describes the positivist tradition in the quote below. He objects to positivist tradition's rejection of subjective, intuitive, and revealed knowledge.

In the Western positivist tradition, sense-experience is held to be the primary source of all valid knowledge. According to the prevalent view, sense-
experience yields knowledge of all the reality that there is. The real is observable and the observable is the real. There is no invisible world behind or beyond the visible one. The Western tradition not only separates reason from revelation and intuition, but also altogether rejects them as valid sources of knowledge. The positivist culture is a culture born, as it were, exclusively of the eye. It claims to be based on purely objective, value-free knowledge.

In other words, positivists say that sense experience is the only source of valid, rational and objective knowledge. Ironically, the decision to define knowledge as that which can be observed, measured, and quantified was made on the basis of someone's value system. You should notice that the positivists' decision to exclude other possible definitions of what constitutes knowledge is a decision based on someone's values. Thus, the positivist definition of knowledge is subjective, not objective, and value-laden not value free!

**Criticism of Postitivists from an Islamic Perspective.** Siddique suggests some other sources of knowledge when he points out that positivism rejects intuition (a product of the intellect) and revelation (religious and spiritual experiences) as sources of knowledge. He points out how Islam provides an epistemological contrast to positivism; that is, Islam defines knowledge differently than positivism. He says Islam......concerns itself with the realities of both the human psyche and the universe. In the Islamic intellectual tradition all the three modes of consciousness are employed in order to arrive at the knowledge of reality; sense-perception is used for obtaining the knowledge of the things concrete, intellection for the knowledge of the things abstract, and intuition, besides revelation, for the knowledge of the things spiritual. (Islamic) Epistemology is not confined to any one of these sources, for in that case it would cease to be an expression of the whole man.

In contrast to the positivists' claims that knowledge is objective and rational; he points out that knowledge from the Islamic perspective can be both subjective and normative (has values and "should") as well. From his perspective, there is knowledge that is not objective and rational.

**Knowledge as a Construction of the Human Mind.** A cognitive view of knowledge suggests that knowledge is constructed by human beings in their minds. That doesn't mean that we make up things, but rather that each
person may have their own mental understanding. The idea that knowled
g is constructed can be viewed from the level of the individu
el for better understanding. That which is known, was inquired after by someone, perceived by someone, and understood by someone. These understandings were then organized into larger meaningful bodies of ideas by someone, and passed on again and again as information to become someone else's knowledge. In that process of inquiring, perceiving, understanding, and organizing, the knowledge is being filtered through an individual's brain and their particular understanding of reality. This knowledge or information can become distorted, and subject to revision and bias, or simply ignored.

Thus, knowledge is the result of an interaction between the knower and the known; between the person and the world. It is a construction, which can be very different from person to person, and group to group. This idea implies that objective; rational truths may not exist by themselves. Truth, according to this view would be that which is agreed upon by a large number of people even though some other people might disagree. That makes truth relative phenomena, not some fixed absolute.

In other words, that which is believed as "true" by one group or society might not be the same as "truth" to another. And, in fact, "truth" to one person, might not be "truth" to another. (Example of how truth can be relative: To a group, which wanted to go for a picnic, rain would be a bad thing. To a group of farmers, whose crops were dry, rain would be good. Is rain good? Or bad? Which is the "truth"?) With this necessary introduction to the ideas that a) "knowledge" is an individual's or group's defined concept, rather than one fixed in stone (so to speak); b) that knowledge is acquired in different ways; and c) that knowledge systems view the world differently, so "reality" and "truth" can be different from one person and group to another—we can move on to the topic of this unit: considering gender aspects of knowledge. With this necessary introduction to the ideas that a) "knowledge" is an individual's or group's defined concept, rather than one fixed in stone (so to speak); b) that knowledge is acquired in different ways; and c) that knowledge systems view the world differently, so "reality" and "truth" can be different from one person and group to another.
.4  **Sexist Knowledge and other Feminist Ideas about Knowledge and Gender**

Basic premises of most feminists theorists, with respect to knowledge and gender are: 1) women and men have different knowledge systems and different perceptions of what is important. 2) women (and their world-view) have been traditionally excluded from the male dominated production of knowledge. 3) because knowledge has been largely constructed by men (and because discourse is largely controlled by men), what we believe to be true has largely been defined according to male values, male ideas of truth, and a male reality. Thus, knowledge is biased and sexist. Let us interrupt this discussion for a moment and define the word discourse. Discourse is a word you will read here and there. The dictionary says discourse is the formal and extensive, oral and written treatment of any subject or field of knowledge. What this means is that after men construct the knowledge, they control the formal way in which that knowledge is thought about, organized, and presented to others. They decide what knowledge is important, and why it is important, and what knowledge should be ignored. They control discourse on most subjects. We will read about women’s domestic knowledge systems later. You will find that men control even part of that.

**Women’s Exclusion from Knowledge Production.** Now back to our discussion. Do you understand number two above, about women being excluded from knowledge production? Men have traditionally been the scholars and teachers; men have traditionally been the religious leaders and keepers of history. Over thousands of years, a woman’s voice has been heard here and there, but women in general have not been part of the creation of knowledge and discourse. They have not been the philosophers, have not written the histories, have not been famous mathematicians, or astronomers, or religious experts ... men have.

**Men’s Construction of Sexist Knowledge.** Having explained number two, let’s look at number three. After the discussion of this reading, we will return to number one, and consider one author’s view of a Pakistani woman’s domestic knowledge system to get an idea of the difference between male knowledge systems and female knowledge systems.)
Reading

For further information please read the following material:


In order to expand your understanding of number three—of knowledge being sexist and constructed—we will read an essay by Dr. Akbar Naqvi, which asserts that Muslim males have chosen to disregard one aspect of the Sunnat of the Prophet (PBUH). The result of this sexist "reconstruction" of knowledge, according to Naqvi, a different "reality" is constructed in which Muslim women live fenced in by patriarchy and men's constructed knowledge systems.

Reading

For further information please read the following material.

5.3 "The Forgotten Message": Naqvi, A. (1994) P. (73-75)

Naqvi points out the sexist influence when he says that Muslims don't speak or write of the important women in the Prophet's life as often as they should; and when they do, it is in passing, as though they were rather unimportant "when in fact they were central to the Prophet's life and to his happiness". This is one way of reconstructing knowledge-to minimize the importance of something. Naqvi's essay also points to an obvious example of women's exclusion from the production of knowledge. As Naqvi highlights, the process of filtering and/or ignoring that which is known is one way in which knowledge can become biased and sexist. What is understood about Islam in the modern times is primarily from male knowledge systems. Since Muslim males are the primary conveyers and interpreters of the practices of Islam, and control Islamic discourse through deciding what information is important, and what isn't, the responsibility for any distortion lies directly on their shoulders. It is very important to note that Naqvi does not blame individual men for this (nor do feminists). He feels it was impossible for men to escape from traditional practices even though it was on the "Islamic agenda of reform" and was Allah's "own strategy ... to change things through persuasion and prophetic examples..." Many Muslims believe that perhaps it was Allah's plan that the Islamic reforms would take place over a longer period of struggle. And some Muslims feel that now is the time for Muslim women to start seriously studying
Islam, and ensuring that the woman's point of view is also represented. The problem of sexist knowledge and women's exclusion from the production of knowledge is by no means limited to Islam. It is in all fields of knowledge. You have already read about male bias in the achievement motivation theories in psychology. Economic theory and analysis is another field of knowledge that feminists are quick to point out is male biased. For example, they might say that the only labor, which is valued in economic theory, is that labor which earns money. By historical fact, that excludes almost all labor of women, even though they provide the domestic and often agricultural labor that keeps civilizations running. Women's work is depreciated.

Female anthropologists point out to the importance given to the hunting role of men in primitive societies (ignoring the equally important food gathering and preparation activities of women) when male anthropologists studied and analyzed these groups. This is another place in which a male interpretation leads to sexist knowledge, and where men control discourse.

5.5 Two Hallmarks of Sexist Knowledge

Sexist knowledge is characterized by certain characteristic practices or hallmarks. In this section we will point out two of those hallmarks.

Discourse, as defined above, is the sum total of oral and written knowledge. This knowledge is not automatically sexist just because men control discourse. But, when the men creating these fields of knowledge chose terminology, theories, and even research methodologies which ignored women's realities, and under value women's roles, the knowledge became sexist. For example, women's labor in societies from primitive food gathering, to modern domestic labor has been considered less important than the male's hunting activities; or male's labor reimbursed with money. The first hallmark is knowledge and discourse that ignores a woman's perspective, realities, and roles, or which under-values women.

This may result, in part, from another hallmark of sexist knowledge—the practice of describing experience as a series of sex-linked dualisms, or opposites. Tierney's Encyclopedia makes the following remarks on the subject of patriarchy and discourse, and details this hallmark of sexist knowledge.
On the level of discourse, feminists have condemned patriarchy in creating and reflecting an exclusively masculine view of the world and for rendering women’s experiences and women’s perspectives invisible. Patriarchal thought is characterized by the imposition of dualisms and oppositions onto the disparate flow of experience: reason versus emotions; mind versus body; subject versus object. Patriarchy then favors one side of each pair over the other, establishing a hierarchy of classifications in which that which is associated with the male is given priority to that which represents the female. Thus patriarchy establishes male dominance in its basic accounts of the world, its standards of knowledge and judgment, as well as in its concrete institutions and practices. But once again women’s experiences as marginalized within patriarchy can spur a more determined articulation of their points of view, thus evolving a set of feminist discourses that arise to challenge the dominant patriarchal view.

Thus, a second hallmark of sexist knowledge is the imposition of dualisms, which prefers those things, which are associated with men, and depreciates the opposite that is associated with women. This idea of dualisms (or binary distinctions as the next author calls it) has been referred to in previous readings, and will be met again in the next reading.

5.6 Women’s Knowledge Systems and Methods of Acquiring Knowledge

Now we will return to the earlier list of the three basic premises of most feminists’ theorists with respect to knowledge and gender and discuss number one. (We have already discussed numbers two and three.) Number one was:

1) Women and men have different knowledge systems and different perceptions of what are important and why shouldn’t women have different knowledge systems? After all, if knowledge is the result of the interaction between the person and the world, then women’s knowledge would reflect a woman’s interaction and a woman’s world.

The final two readings discuss women’s knowledge and interaction with the world. They both point out that knowledge can be acquired in subjective ways, without scientific experimentation, or learning in school or from books. They also indicate how de-valued women’s knowledge is. The first of these
readings, by Hilary Rose, is a more theoretical work. Rose looks at women's knowledge from the perspective of women's work or labor—a socialist perspective. Rose is writing from the socialist perspective of Marx, and the perspective of labor being something that is bought and sold. She says that feminism must look beyond "the appearance of love and the naturalness of a woman's place and woman's work, to reveal the equally systematic relationships of the sex-gender world." Thus, she is looking at the labor of women from the perspective of a theory of labor. She begins with a discussion of the origins of knowledge. The key to this particular feminist method is a theory of labour. What has this to do with knowledge? The point is that for materialist theory, human knowledge and human consciousness are not abstract or divorced from experience (or separate) from the material reality of the world. Human knowledge, whether of the arts or the sciences, comes from practice, from working on and changing the world. As people work on nature and transform it, they gain knowledge of how nature including their own nature—is organized and may be explained. Knowledge initially derives from the basic needs of human survival, the need for food, for shelter and so forth.... (and) science in this sense is organized knowledge of the world derived from practice upon it.... Because science derives from labour, it is clearly shaped and formed by the purposes and direction of that labour. She then discusses the relationship of labor (the worker) in a capitalist society and says it is alienated by the capitalist and worker confrontation. She continues with the following description of masculine knowledge, and how it is considered scientific and valuable; while a woman's knowledge is considered natural (thus devalued).

To understand the specificities of masculinist knowledge and the exclusion of women from it, and to understand the transformation of knowledge made possible by a feminist epistemology (or feminist stand point), it is therefore necessary to return to the particular nature of women's labour - in the world and the division of labour between the genders. Masculinist knowledge takes the form of a peculiar emphasis on the domains of cognitive and objective rationality ... and on dichotomous partitioning of the social and natural worlds. It is this masculinist knowledge which has produced today's deadly culture of science and technology and which seeks to relegate women and women's knowledge to the realm of nature. By contrast, a feminist epistemology derives from women's lived experience, centered on the domains of interconnectedness and effectual rationality. It emphasizes holism and
harmonious relationships with nature... To understand feminist knowledge, a `feminist science", we have to begin with women's work.... Rose says that women's work exists as `not men's' work, and that women do much more than half the labor of the world as indicated by international time-budget studies which indicate the gross inequality. She points out that by taking women's work as part of nature, and taking it out of cultural and economic systems, it resulted "in the near total erasure of women within the masculinist construction of culture." She then highlights that a key objective of labor movements is to reduce the hours a man works, but with no similar concern to reduce woman's work. She concludes the discussion with: "In a patriarchal society, spare time is acquired for one gender by converting the whole lifetime of the women into labour time." In the next section titled "The Labour of Love", Rose highlights the fact that women's work must be considered labor in the economic sense as well as the natural role of love and caring for the family. It has been feminism

... which not only named and thus brought into visibility the distinctive labour of women, but has also insisted that we understand its double-sidedness both as labour and as love. This combination of menial labour, often involving long hours, boring repetitive housework and very complex emotional work with children, husbands and dependent elderly people, has not been easy to unravel. Rose argues that women's work needs to be detached from the thinking that it is natural, and insists that it should be considered as part of the division of labor, and socially and financially valued as such. Referring to the undervaluing of women's work, Rose says, "according to this ideology (of women's work being natural), where `skill' is, women are not." Thus, women are seen as inferior bearers of labor, and their presence in any job signals it is a low-status occupation. She points to the lack of esteem in the domestic sphere that is displayed when a wife, or mother caring for small children or an elderly relative says, "No, I don't work. I am at home looking after my children/elderly father/ etc." Of course caring for family is work, and this type of attitude reflects just how undervalued the skills women acquire.

In the domestic context women's nurturative qualities are simultaneously praised and seen as pre-scientific practices awaiting the emancipator certainty of scientific knowledge." Rose emphasizes the contradiction apparent when knowledge from experience is dismissed and trivialized, yet women themselves emphasize that it is an accumulation of knowledge and skill
when they say, for example, 'the second baby is easier than the first'. Part of the problem, according to Rose, is that there is a lack of language to explore the tacit or unconscious knowledge derived from caring for others. Yet, women do manage to share and develop collective (experiential) knowledge even though it is dismissed as purely subjective. In a section titled “Discipline and Women’s Labour”, Rose suggests that men’s violence toward women is seen as natural and normal when in fact it is sexist, patriarchal coercion. Doing women’s work brings little recognition, but ‘failure’ to do it can cause criticism, anger, even violence on the part of an individual man. If that failure takes place around children, it may result in social care intervention for the mother, ranging from psychotherapeutic support ... to the forcible removal of her children from her. Unpaid the labour of housewifery and childcare might be, but ... it is carried out against the backdrop of extraordinarily powerful (social and legal) sanctions.

Discussions of women’s labour often fail to reflect on the punishments inflicted on women for ‘non-compliance’. Yet these often savage punishments (a beating for a burnt meal to murder for infidelity) police the boundaries of women’s familial labor as surely as factory fines and overseer beatings police the labour of free labourers and slaves. Yet, unlike the latter, violence against is routinely seen as rooted in biology ... rather than as an integral aspect of the sex-gender division of labour ... an unarticulated sense that it is natural for men to be violent to those who care for them. Yet the naturalism of the connection between violence and caring only holds when they are between men and women.... Men’s violence is rendered natural and normal, so integral to being a man that it becomes difficult to connect it to other aspects of men’s lives, let alone to place violence within a theory of knowledge.... Men’s violence and women’s caring are locked together, each integral to the ordering of patriarchal society. Rose insists that “caring” is labor whether it is work done out of love, work that is coerced by a man’s orders, or other types of taking responsibility and providing nurturance. She says that the recognition that caring is labor is inescapable when labor outlasts love. It is then, often that the ideology of self-sacrifice appears. Rose concludes her paper by tying together what she has said about women’s knowledge, women’s labor and making suggestions on how her theoretical perspective can lead to a “Feminist Epistemology” and restructure the sciences, or create a feminist science which would reflect and reproduce a new world.
Reading
For further information please read the following material.


* Activity
List the key points of Rose's article.

The final reading is by Rubina Saigol from the book, Unveiling the Issues. It is called "Domestic Knowledge Systems and Patriarchy". It is largely a description at a practical level of the knowledge Pakistani women have. The purpose of Saigol's paper is to demonstrate that a powerful domestic knowledge system contradicts attempts to improve people's lives through public education. Saigol makes several basic points before she details Pakistani women's domestic knowledge system. First, she points out that there are different ways of acquiring knowledge and that there is a difference between organized public, formal, school knowledge and private, informal domestic knowledge. For example, she includes knowledge about one's ethnic and regional identity in the latter. She then asserts that the reason the efforts of many international funding agencies' development projects have failed to enrich life and improve the life of the poor and women, is that they focus mainly on formal education-more specifically on economic development via education. She says that the informal domestic knowledge system contradicts much of the international development efforts.

For this unit, we are mainly interested in her discussion of the differences between female and male domestic knowledge systems in Pakistan, her general description of aspects of the domestic knowledge system of Pakistani women, and how that knowledge is acquired. However, you should keep her ideas on development in mind when you get to the last units of this course on women and development. Saigol points out the patriarchal influence when she emphasizes that the women's knowledge system is a pedagogical system aimed at producing the ideal feminine wife as a product to be "bought" in the marriage market. Did you ever consider it from that feminist perspective?
Reading

For more information please read the following material:


5.7 Self-Assessment Questions

Q 1. How would you explain knowledge? Also explain the positivistic view of Knowledge.

Q 2. What is feminist epistemology. Discuss in detail.

Q 3. What are the feminist ideas of sexist knowledge? Discuss in detail.

Q 4. What is Rose's understanding of women's knowledge? Make comments.


5.8 Bibliography


FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
6.1 Introduction

Feminist Research Methodology itself is problematic. If you have asked yourself, “What is feminist research methodology?” you may have already encountered the first problematic area. Is this methodology for doing feminist research, that is, research on feminist issues? Or is this a research methodology that feminists should follow when doing any research? The answer is yes! Then the next issue is that this seems to imply there is a distinctly “feminist” research methodology—which there isn’t! In fact, the whole topic of feminist research, research design and methods is currently being debated among feminists and feminist scientists as you read this.

Then, the concept of feminist research methodology (however you may choose to define it) requires a look at science, because research is merely a tool of science, which, in turn, is one way of creating knowledge. This then raises the question of the relationship between feminism (or gender) and science. In this unit we are going to explore numerous issues and concepts regarding science and the research that informs that how feminism and gender relates to each other. This unit tries to explain some of the new ideas in this study guide which you will be studying later in your readings.

6.2 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

1. Differentiate between quantitative and qualitative research methods.

2. Explain why feminists have generally discarded the positivist scientific method in favor of qualitative methods.

3. Discuss the concerns, criticisms and objections feminists have regarding “conventional” or traditional research and research methods.

4. Discuss some ways in which feminist methodology provides an alternative answer to the question “What is feminist research?”
6.3 A Debate over Methods: Can the Positivist Method Measure Human Phenomena?

We begin this unit with a look at the historical debates on what constitutes the correct approach to science and knowledge because this has important bearings on feminist ideas about research.

A. The Single Science Argument and the Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methods Debate

These debates began a hundred or so years ago when the positivist tradition (discussed in Unit 4 on Feminist Knowledge), and its tool, the logical-empirical, or scientific method, had come to dominate thinking about what constituted "true" knowledge. This approach calls for a quantitative approach of experiments using variables that can be measured with numbers. It is based on the practice of hypothesis testing, and the covering-law model of explanation and predictions. The basic idea was that reality was fixed and governed by laws and that eventually all laws would be discovered and proven through this method, and everything would be known and predictable. When this was applied to the natural world, or hard sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, etc.) it was relatively successful.

So a century or more ago, it was proposed that for the soft or human sciences (social sciences like psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, etc.) to be successful, they needed to emulate the hard, or natural sciences. Even then, there were people who argued that this was inappropriate. Those people believed that the sciences that explored human phenomena required different methods than quantitative methods and measuring with numbers.

At the risk of being accused of over-simplifying very complex philosophical ideas, the following reasons could be suggested that the study of any field of human endeavor is not suited to positivistic thinking. First, ask yourself to consider the people you know. Ask yourself if fixed laws could be generated to explain and predict their every complex behavior in each and every situation? Then consider that there would have to be laws to cover the collective behavior of millions of human beings in interaction in the human existence. The impossibility of this seems self-evident.
The second point is that reality in the human sciences, is, in fact, a mental or social construction. What do you mean by reality being a mental or social construction. It means that each person has a different reality—a subjective reality. Each person lives in one's own understanding of what happens. When many people have the same or similar perception of reality, reality is then "constructed" or built around their perception. And a final point to be made about the fit of positivistic science ideas to human sciences, can be simply put by asking yourself a simple question. While the speed of an atom can be quantified, that is described in measures expressed by numbers, how can one quantify and ensure the human experience, for example, the grief of a mother who has lost her child? The human situation simply cannot be reduced to numbers or measured with some sort of mechanical gadget.

The ultimate question which science attempts address is: What is reality? It has been already pointed out that the nature of reality in the human realm is the individual or groups conception of "life". This involves human experience, thought, emotions, etc. The quantitative research tools of positivism, which were designed to produce certainty, were considered by some as being unable to capture knowledge about those things most central to human experience. This methodology which was designed to produce indubitable truths, was considered not capable of addressing the significant questions about the human realm.

Thus, the idea was floated a hundred years ago, that two approaches to knowledge were needed one for the natural world and one for human phenomena. These two approaches generally relied on different approaches to research: quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative approaches ask "How much?" It wants a quantity as an answer—other words numbers. Qualitative approaches ask "What kind?" It asks questions about the quality of human existence and allows for words to be used to describe subjective experiences such as good/bad, happy/sad, sweet/sour, and all the variations and complexities of those experiences.

Unfortunately, the argument that there was only one approach to science was stronger. The single science point of view "won"! The human sciences adopted the methods of the natural sciences. Qualitative and non-experimental designs, based on reasonable or descriptive explanatory models, were not considered acceptable or valid research.
On considering the strength of the one science argument, feminists might be quick to point out the following: Spoken or unspoken, the distinction between the hard sciences and soft sciences is also seen as a masculine/feminine dichotomy in which masculine is "better". The knowledge of the hard sciences is seen as certain and full of truth (masculine); while knowledge about the human realm is seen as soft and fuzzy (feminine) and can't be pinned down with precision. This type of definition of the social sciences lead researchers within those fields to want to be more like the hard sciences. This was a psychological driving force behind the human sciences trying to emulate the "better" hard science methodology, and positivistic approaches.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:


B. Movement toward Qualitative Methods for Social Sciences

It doesn't end universal agreement on the positivistic methods for all sciences. Over the past 100 years or so, the argument that the study of human phenomena required different methods, continued to resurface from time to time. In the past three decades it has become particularly strong, and social science research has gone through dramatic changes.

Two other factors led support to these changes. First, the assumptions of the logical-empirical (positivistic) philosophy of science which have failed to hold up under examination. This is not the place to give detail of the positivistic system's areas of vulnerability, but one significant criticism was its lack of attention to context of the research activity, and the role of hypothesis creation (picking and framing the problem to be researched). These are areas where bias of any type can become a serious problem-and positivism's claim of objectivity falters. The second factor supporting change in social science research came in the form of epistemological developments outside the positivist logical-empirical system. These theoretical developments expanded the understanding of knowledge and science, and suggested alternative systems of inquiry and methodology.
For example, the ideas people have about the nature of knowledge have changed. Knowledge is no longer considered to be “certain”, no longer is it believed that following the “correct” method of research guarantee that the results are “true”. The criteria for knowledge now is that it is the better solution to problems or questions that may have competing explanations. As compared to the old idea that scientific results were true for all time, the attitude now is that research results simply provides “the best we know at the present time”.

A second theme of this new way of viewing knowledge (and research) is that knowledge is developed in a historical and cultural context and is subject to the limitations of the conceptual and technical tools used to generate it. Science is a human activity, and the subject as the “knower” is central. A third theme is that the intellectual tools that are used to develop and justify knowledge are more varied than positivism used and include various types of reason and logic for arriving at a conclusion. And a final theme is recognized that activities such as proposing hypotheses, the testing of proposals, and the communication of results to others are personal creative activities (and hence subjective, and open to bias).

The current position of those who oppose exclusive use of logical-empirical methods in the human sciences believe that the methods and research design must be able to yield information about being human as we experience it. This generally requires non-experimental qualitative methods (talking to people and getting their knowledge, feelings, and opinion, etc.). Subjective information and knowledge is considered important. In this method, in general, language provides the data, and the researcher is the instrument (for interpreting) and not some gadget with numbers on it.

All of these new thoughts added to the complexity of the environment in which this debate about methodology and human science was taking place.

**Reading**

For further study please read the following material:

6.4 Feminists And Research-Some Basic Issues

Where does feminism fit in all of this? Well, just as the arguments against positivism's approach were heating up in the social/human sciences, the feminist movement was gaining strength and had begun to grapple with questions about a feminist science and the related issues.

I. What Research Methods Fit Feminist Needs?

Much of the rationale and many of the assumptions behind the debate over appropriate research methodology in the larger arena of social sciences, fit the feminist needs and perspective, and were adopted by them. Thus you will hear echoes of the general arguments above rephrased to fit feminist's needs, for example: feminist methods and research design must be able to yield information about being females as we experience it.

Feminists saw quantitative research as often being too superficial and simplistic because it ignored (or controlled) variables which might be important to express human attitudes and behavior. Qualitative research, on the other hand, allowed the researcher to get closer to the data and to see the world from the subjective point of view of the participant. Qualitative methods were seen as the way to learn about the experiences and values, the actions and reactions, the motives, meanings and emotions of the life of women. In most cases, feminists felt that the same methodology that fit the needs of the social sciences fit the needs of feminists. (This fact is the basis of the previous assertion that there was no specific feminist methodology. You will be studying this type of social science methodology in AIOU's course, "Research Methods in Women Studies "). The fit of the logical-empirical or positivistic method of experiment and quantitative measurement is suited for the hard sciences (with exceptions). Feminist scientists in the hard sciences have some problems with the position of their sister feminists in the social sciences.

With respect to research some other basic issues are discussed here.

II. What is the Relationship between Feminism and Science?

We noted the complexities of human thought and the human existence above. There are many different perceptions and conceptualizations to
answer these questions. The very earliest feminist concerns regarding science and research were rather pragmatic (as opposed to philosophical). The truth in the old saying, “Women don’t do science” was pursued with questions such as, “Why aren’t more females working in science?” This leads to attempts to uncover sexism in the fields of science with respect to employment and acceptance of research and emphasis on science as a career path for women.

A second pragmatic issue was quickly uncovered. Research tended to produce knowledge needed by men. This was nowhere more evident than in research in the health fields. Heart attacks, a leading killer of men, was a financially well endowed and heavily researched area; while breast cancer, a leading killer of women, was receiving little attention in medical research. (It might be noted that heart research was almost exclusively focused on male patients not on women patients. So the next focus was, “Why isn’t more research focused on women’s problems?” One answer was, of course, money. Money is power, and power is politics. Most research funding was controlled by men—research was politically determined.

As these extremely important, but relatively superficial aspects of the relationship of women and science and research were being inspected, more sophisticated concerns came to light. It was noted that the positivist process of research design, of hypothesizing regarding the problem, of drawing conclusions, was subjective and biased—not objective as claimed for a century. This allowed for bias against women ... or other minority groups. (A simple example is the definition of the psychological constructs or concepts being researched and tested, according to male attributes. Later you will read a selection on how a female psychological researcher redefined the male construct on achievement motivation to fit females.)

Feminists also began searching for sexism and bias in all types of research (positivist or post positivist). Regardless of the methods used, research and its results were not considered to be gender free, or conducted from a neutral perspective. They were seen to reflect sexism and elitist values in many ways. For example, the issues explored were not of importance to women, or stereotypical beliefs led to different standards of evaluation. And, as has been previously discussed, often the male behavior is seen as the norm or the normal healthy behavior of humans—while female behavior is seen as the deviation.
The next step in the maturation of the feminist's position with respect to women and science, research, and knowledge generation, was the linking of the feminist perspective with the larger debate of appropriate research methodology for the social sciences. This lead to joint discussions between the feminist and academic communities. They discuss about how best to represent the world women live in as an important part of research methodology. These intellectual and academic debates revealed another problem. Often the debate centered around one point or another that assumed that women live in a different world than men, and that the world of all women is homogenous or the same. In other words, all women share the same world and that there is a commonality of women's experiences.

This commonality is not true. Asian rural women, and Western urban women may have nearly nothing in common; a woman who is a career professional with no children does not live in the same world as the mother in her "caring" role. So, the question becomes: how can one prescribe one research approach, or one methodology to capture the essence of the woman's existence-to capture the different worlds women live in? Many feminist scientists take the position that this can't be done.

Then there is the problem of separatism. Feminists began to realize that women's issues might not be solved in isolation. Women were one of two genders. These two are defined in relation to each by society. Women's problems had to be viewed as gender issues. It became clear that there was a delicate balance to be maintained between male-dominated science, and feminist science, however the latter might be defined. The danger was that rather than integrating feminist concerns into the mainstream of science, a separatist situation would develop. Then there would be 1) science and 2) female science.

In case you are feeling a bit confused by the complexity of the issues raised by the feminists, let us review the points discussed thus far.

Feminists suggest:

- There should be more women in science and research
- the political nature of research needs to be recognized
- research should balance its choice of problems to make certain
appropriate attention to problems that affect women.

- Sexism and bias in research methodology can be apparent regardless of the method.
- women’s worlds differ from each other as much as these methods differ from men’s.
- Women’s or feminist science should be integrated with men’s science.

III. What is feminist research?

Feminist research is research on, with and for women. (Of course it can be done by men.) Feminist research deals with the creation of new knowledge about a host of women’s issues. It focuses on women’s issues that are prevalent and structured in societies, including women’s oppression and subordination in different societies, male dominance, masculinity, and other such issues.

Feminist research may also address traditional topics, but from a women’s standpoint rather than a masculine point of view. To do this, it reformulates traditional research questions, redefines concepts, creates new concepts or constructs, and even applies non-traditional theory (such as Marxism) to traditional areas of scholarship. (Two readings below consider the impact of feminist scholarship and research on the subjects of family social structure and women’s work.)

As we saw above, feminist research arose, in part, as a resistance against bias in specific scientific methodologies in practice. It is committed to discovering, revealing, and challenging biases and minimizing power relationships within and outside research contexts that lead to these biases. Feminists researchers also challenge the validity of research that excludes the subjective experiences of females. This includes the so-called neutral or andocentric studies which excludes the subjective experiences of either gender.

There are various purposes motivating feminist research beyond the creation of new knowledge. According to some feminist researchers, both the research that is produced, and the relationship between the researcher and the “researched”, is important. Part of the purpose of feminist research, according
to these researchers, is to raise the awareness of women to motivate them to take part in social change to empower the participants. Other feminist researchers have a different purpose. On considering the pitfalls of assuming a commonality of experience among all women, they look toward feminist research to build alliances between women, and with men.

We have already discussed the fact that there is no separate set of feminist research tools, but there are many different opinions with respect to general methodology. In general, the preferred methodologies are participatory, non-hierarchical (non-we/they) approaches which take into consideration the context surrounding the phenomena as well as the phenomena being studied. Qualitative methods are considered more suitable feminist research methods.

The preferred tools of feminist research are the standard qualitative tools used by all social sciences: interviews, open ended questionnaires, ethnographic techniques and observation, etc. These tools allow the researcher to look at daily actions and reactions in ordinary settings and situations, and to record the experiences and interpretations of the participants in their own words and perceptions. Because these involve the researcher as the collector and interpreter of data, the researcher is considered part of the research process.

The important point for you to remember is that it is not the research tools which are important to feminist research. The things that are important, and the things that define feminist research are the standpoint of the researcher, and the conceptual and theoretical framework within which the tools are deployed.

It should also be kept in mind that the above description of feminist research identifies it as almost purely social or human science research. Many feminists object to such a narrow definition. They object to the hard sciences being ignored in discussions of feminist research.

**Reading**

For more information please read the following material:

| 6.3 | Methodology Matters: Liz Stanely (198-218) Introducing Women’s Studies. P: (198-218) |
To avoid the problem of sexism in an existing theoretical framework, some researchers develop new concepts to specifically measure women's behavior. The next article, by Martha T. Mednick, is an example of a scientist who worked within a dominant masculine paradigm of psychology, but defined a new construct or concept which applied to women. It is also an example of another thing we discussed. It demonstrates that knowledge is not fixed and certain, but rather is the best explanation available at the time, which can give way to newer thinking.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:


We discussed above, that feminist research focuses on women's issues that are structured in societies, and how it reformulates research questions and redefines concepts from a feminist perspective, or even applies non-traditional theory to gather new knowledge from old fields of research. In addition, it was pointed out that feminist research is defined by the standpoint of the researcher, and the framework within which the research takes place. The next two readings discuss the feminist impact on research on the family and women's work. They will give you a clearer understanding of exactly how this is done. The most basic social unit which influences the construction of gender and demonstrates the power relationship structure in a society is the family. The family was one of the first targets of feminist research. Valuing of women's time, and how their labor is viewed was an equally important topic for early feminists.

Readings

The following readings describe a number of ways in which feminist research applied its own perspective to research questions regarding the family and women's labor. Through its challenge of the assumptions of traditional research, this feminist standpoint research has had a profound impact in these areas. It has offered alternative ways of understanding the family and women's work, and changed the way as these are viewed and analyzed by science. In doing this, it has reshaped knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of
reading the next two readings is not so much to learn about the family and women's work, but rather to see examples of how feminist scholarship and research framed its questions from a different view than traditional science.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

| 6.5  | From Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia. Blee, “Family (as a Socioeconomic Unit)”. pp: (129-132) |

The final reading is a long and complex paper written by E. Anne Kerr. This can take more than one reading to understand.

Kerr comes from a hard science background and has problems with the current feminist positions on science, which are primarily aimed at social sciences. Her paper is a critique of the major feminist theorists positions, and their “fit” with the needs of feminist scientists working as practitioners in natural, or physical sciences-theorists versus practitioners. Thus, the overall objective of her paper is to consider the fit between feminist epistemologies (theories and perspectives) of science, and the practical world of scientists working in the hard sciences. You might notice that in comparing theory in the social sciences to practice in the natural sciences, she is handling two intellectual shifts. The first shift is the move from theory (epistemology) into practice; and the second is moving from social sciences to natural sciences.

The paper is divided into four topics. You might want to consider that you are reading four different articles. The four areas of discussion are listed and outlined below:

1. “Negotiating the Gap Between Theory and Practice”. This section gives a brief historical overview of feminist criticisms of science, then introduces the idea that the feminist social scientists have created a split between themselves and the natural sciences, which has resulted in hostility of feminists in the natural sciences.

2. “Feminist Epistemologies of Science.” This section introduces three main types of feminist theory regarding knowledge and science, then discusses and criticizes them in general, then specifically with respect
now they can (or cannot) be implemented in the natural sciences.

"Feminist Practitioner's Perspectives". This section shifts from discussing the theorist's views, to what practitioners have to say on such subjects as feminist standpoint theory, objectivity in science, financial support of research and the research environment, diversity and interdisciplinary research, and research for social action. This section is both a critique of feminist theories, and an attempt to unravel what a feminist natural science might be.

4. "Further Discussions and Conclusions". This section explores practical strategies for establishing feminist natural science.

For your information: The dictionary definition says epistemology is "the branch of philosophy that investigates the nature of human knowledge". In this case, it is referring to the feminists theories and perspectives on creating feminist knowledge through science and research.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

| 6.7  | Kerr, "Toward a Feminist Natural Science: Linking Theory and Practice" pp: (95-109) |
| 6.8  | Introduction: Shulamit Reinhart (1992) pp: (3-17) |

In her (23-43) second section ("Feminist Epistemologies of Science." ) Kerr comments that the main practical aspects of feminist science literature concerns social scientists, and excludes the natural or physical sciences. In fact, she says that the social science feminist scholars display an apparent alienation and distaste for women scientists in the physical sciences. She feels this will serve to reinforce their sense of isolation as scientists.

Activity

Kerr then criticizes and agrees with the feminist theories. Identify or underline at least one criticism of feminist theory with respect to how it doesn't fit to physical sciences. 2) Identify or underline at least two items on which she agrees with the feminist theory.
6.6 Self Assessment Questions

Q 1. Can the positivist method measure the human experience? Comment on this statement.

Q 2. Feminists consider some basic issues in the field of research. Discuss those issues in detail.

Q 3. How would you define feminist methodology? Explain with examples.

Q 4. Discuss Anne Kerr (1998) point of view regarding feminist epistemologies and science.

Q 5. How Anne Oakley discusses issues related to gender and methodology in her articles "People's ways of knowing". Comments on the article.

6.7 Bibliography


THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN:  
(NON-MONO THEISTIC PERSPECTIVE)
7.1 Introduction

There is no doubt that religion or religious teachings play an important role in most peoples' lives. Different people's beliefs differ significantly from each other, but regardless of the specific content of religions teachings, religions appear to be a cultural universe. Some form of religion has existed in every society that we know of. Religious beliefs and practices are so ancient that they can be traced into prehistory, perhaps as far back as 100,000 years ago. It seems, some concept of a supernatural realm that lay beyond everyday reality (Robertson 1987: 397). Why is religion so appealing? This answer lies in the fact that all religions, despite the tremendous variations among them, respond to particular human need. First, virtually every one seeks to understand the purpose of their existence as well as events in their lives and environments that seems unexplainable. Religion offers some answers to these puzzles, thus giving meaning to human existence and easing somewhat the psychological discomfort caused by life's uncertainties. Second, religion provides its followers with a sense of belonging, for it is not usually practiced alone but rather as the social theorist Emile Durkheim puts it, in a “community of believers.” And finally, religion lends order to social life by imposing on its adherents a set of behavioral standards. Importantly, however, religions typically establish different rules and often different rituals for men and women. In this unit effort has been made to discuss the status of women from the perspective of three non-monotheistic ideals. The first is socialism, the second is Hinduism, and the third is Buddhism. Sociologists use the term religiosity to refer to the intensity of the commit of an individual or group to religious belief system. One is religious beliefs may also strongly influence one's views on social and political issues. It is observed that religious beliefs bear such a strong relationship to our attitudes and behaviours. Therefore it influences social lives and status of individuals in the societies and determines one's position and status of power attached to it. In this perspective it is also tried that how these religions portray women's social status in the societies in which they are influential.
7.2 Objectives

After reading the unit you would be able to:

1. Discuss the classic socialism and the problem of women's oppression.
2. Describe the cause of women's oppression according to Marx and Engels who understand that patriarchy existed long before capitalism and is separate from it.
3. Discuss how the status of women was improved under Buddhism as compared to the prevalent religion of the time-Hinduism.

7.3 Socialism, Communism (Marxist Socialism) and Women

You will recall from Unit 3 that the main groups of feminist theorists are the liberal feminists, socialist feminists, radical feminists and eco-feminists. Socialist and Marxist theory is an important influence on feminist theory. This section gives greater detail on socialist theory, including Marx's theories on the position of women.

Socialism and Marxism are economic theories of how to regulate the distribution of wealth and power. They emerged as a reaction against capitalist economic theory. It is therefore in order to start with a quick description of the basic tenets of "pure" capitalism's views on the distribution of wealth and power and women's place in "pure" capitalist theory.

1. Pure Capitalism-Penalizing the Weak. The purest form of the economic theory called capitalism is that of a Scottish professor named Adam Smith who described his version laissez-faire capitalism in 1776. (Laissez-faire is French word for "let it be"). Smith believed that there was a natural order in the economic world, comparable to the natural order in the physical world. He believed in absolutely no government regulation of the economy. He believed that the government should not interfere in the economy through laws or tariffs. He thought natural forces, such as free competition, and the profit motive should be allowed to regulate the market.

Of course, this meant that the ambitious, efficient and hard workers would be rewarded, and the lazy, or handicapped, or otherwise weaker
people (including women), who wouldn’t or couldn’t take part in the creation of wealth through manufacturing, would be penalized. Smith saw this inequality as part of the natural order. Smith’s laissez-faire capitalism was never practiced, but it served as the basic theory behind all forms of regulated capitalism.

Other theorists supported laissez-faire capitalism, but with some modifications. They believed that government legislation was needed to correct problems of distribution of goods, establish minimum wages and maximum working hours, protect working children, and break up monopolies, etc. One can see why many feminists reacted against a capitalist form of economy controlling the distribution of wealth and power? Since women were not generally a part of the industrial production process, they were automatically excluded and left in a weakened position.

II. Socialists: Socialists are economists who believe that laws were not enough to correct the miserable working and living conditions of industrial workers. They felt direct government intervention was necessary. The intervention they favored was government ownership of all the means of production and distribution—factories, farms, mines, railroads, trucking lines, ships and all transport systems. They believed in social justice instead of the profit motive; they favored central planning instead of competition; and they wanted to reduce the great gap between the rich and the poor by having everyone share in the profits of an industrial society.

Socialist theory tended to believe in the “trickle down” effect to improve the status of women. In other words, the woman’s status and condition was linked to that of her husband. If the man’s condition was improved, then so would the woman’s. While socialist economists (and socialist feminists) generally agree on the goal, they disagree on how to go about achieving it. For example, the “utopian socialists” called for the establishment of model industrial communities; and the “democratic socialists” wanted to change the economy by electing socialist representatives in the government. Some issues were the degree of rights an individual could or should have, and/or the degree of government ownership. During this century, many nations, including Pakistan, have been governed by socialist oriented governments.
Socialist feminists did not always agree that the socialist economist’s solutions would resolve the sexist treatment of women, and end the oppression of women.

III. Marxist Socialism or Communism: This was a more radical and revolutionary kind of socialism developed by Germans Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, starting in 1848. “The Communist Manifesto”, and “Das Kapital” are two key publications explaining their views. Marx’s writings made people more aware than they had ever been about the effects of economic forces on the human condition, and societies. According to Marx, history was a continuous struggle between classes—between those who hold power and those whose labor is exploited. Feminists were very quick to see the parallel between men who hold power, and women whose labor is exploited at home and in the fields.

Marx argued that capitalism exploited workers while factory owners were growing rich; and that eventually the workers would revolt and seize the means of production and distribution. This “dictatorship of the proletariat” as Marx called his post-capitalist system, would have no economic classes, because everyone would own everything in common. All workers would produce according to their abilities, and be rewarded according to their needs.

As an economist, Marx’s theories have not proved correct, and most of his predictions about capitalism have not come true. However, as I said earlier, Marx’s writings made people aware of the influence of economic forces. Marx’s final theory of the oppression of women was published after his death in a book written by his long-time friend and collaborator, Fredrich Engels. Marx held that it is material, and economic reality which shapes human relationships and institutions. In general he believed that it was surplus wealth which lead to private property. This, in turn, lead to social-class distinctions and sexual inequalities. Class oppression thus was economic rather than biological. Yet Marx also held the view that the oppression of women within the family developed in part from the natural division of labor between the sexes in the bearing of children. The next reading considers Marx-Engels theories in more detail.
Reading

For more information please read the following material.

7.1  Family: Women's Studies Encyclopaedia. (1989) PP. (127-132)

Warren, The Nature of Women Engels, pp. 137-143

Activity

A. Summarize the Engels reading with respect to this question: What did Marx and Engels see as the main cause(s) of women's oppression?

B. Did either propose a solution for women's oppression?

IV. Women's Progress under Marxism. The next reading is the review of a book by Hilda Scott in which she summarizes women's progress under Marxism in Eastern Europe. Many early Marxist feminists had assumed that women's exploitation would be ended when they were part of a workforce which was organized without class or sex distinctions. The failure of Soviet-styled socialist systems to achieve social equality for women challenged feminists to search for other explanations and theories to broaden Marx's original theories. One direction of feminist analysis considered that the cost of a worker (presumably male) included the unpaid labors of the spouse to maintain the worker's home and family-hence his survival. This hidden exploitation of women led to a demand for "wages for housework" to insure the economic autonomy of women.

One important feminist's focus was analysis of patriarchal gender hierarchies which reinforced, class relations under capitalism. Marxist feminists did detailed analyses of the ideology and structure of family ideals and how women's work was structured to maintain patriarchal relations within the home. They concluded that the capitalist system worked to sustain patriarchy. There was considerable debate about the dynamics of this process. Key to these debates was the relationship of the concept of the sexual division of labor (such as the segmentation of the labor market along sex lines) to the ideology of patriarchy. And
more recently, Marxist feminists have analyzed the way in which the modern welfare state has maintained the patriarchal relations in society.

Reading

For more information please read the following material:

7.2: Feminist Theory and Economic Change Stevi Jackson
(1998) P: (34-49)

7.4 Hinduism and Women

We will start this section with a brief overview of Hinduism. It is important to understand the basic beliefs to see how women's status fits. This discussion, and the brief description of Buddhism is drawn from Welty's The Human Expression.

a) Hinduism-the Religion. The foundations of Hindu beliefs and customs came to the Indus River valley sometime between 1700 B.C. and 1500 B.C. with Aryan invaders who migrated from Central Asia. They also brought their language of Sanskrit. The original sacred writings of the Aryans, called Vedas, is a collection of mostly hymns to Aryan deities. Hindus today recite these hymns when celebrating births, marriages, and funerals. At first Aryans were divided into three major social classes-priests, warriors, and commoners. A fourth class of successful merchants arose. During the period of approximately 900-500 B.C. the Aryans spread eastward across the Indo-Gangetic Plain, cultivating land and building cities. This period of the Aryan civilization is called the Epic Age because during this time two religious epics, or heroic poems began to take shape. The first was the "Mahabharata", the world's longest poem. It describes a long war between two Aryan families. Within the poem is the "Bhagavad-Gita", a dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the deity Krishna. The Bhagavad-Gita's basic thought is that duty should be done without emotion or desire. This became fundamental to Hinduism.
The second epic, the Ramayana, tells the adventures of Prince Rama and his devoted wife who were exiled because of the jealousy of a stepmother. Their adventures include the kidnapping of Rama’s wife, Sita, by a demon king and her rescue by Prince Rama with the help of the monkey king, Hanuman. The story ends happily with the return of Sita and Rama to their homeland. Sita and Rama have become examples of what good Hindu men and women should be. Rama is brave, devoted to his wife, and always ready to fight against evil. Sita is always kind and loyal to her husband regardless of the circumstances. By the end of the Epic Age, Hinduism was well established as a major religion of the sub-continent.

Unlike many other religions, Hinduism has no fixed creed. It is more a way of looking at life than a set of established beliefs and rituals. It teaches that reality is one, and the many deities (as many as 330 million) pictured in temples and homes are merely symbols of a universal spirit (roughly the equivalent of God). Hindus call this universal spirit Brahma. Every living thing in the universe is part of Brahma. The deities are not really independent gods, but represent different aspects of Brahma. So when Hindus pray to one or another of these deities, they are really praying to Brahma. The most popular deities are Brahma who creates the universe, Vishnu who preserves it, and Siva who destroys it so it can be recreated. Others include Krishna who appears in the Bhagavad-Gita, and Ganesha the elephant-headed god of business.

A key belief in Hinduism is the idea of reincarnation, or rebirth. Hindus believe that every living thing contains a soul that is part of Brahma, and that when the body dies, the soul is reborn. The shape or form after rebirth may be different than its previous existence. The form taken is determined by the “law of karma” which says that the acts a person performs while alive determine the shape and form of the soul’s rebirth. Good acts raise a person to a higher level in the next rebirth or reincarnation. Bad acts lower a person’s status. The purpose of reincarnation is spiritual progress. As a result of their belief in reincarnation, Hindus are cremated on a pyre, or pile of wood. If possible, the pyre is built near a river, preferably the holy Ganges.
b) Femaleness and Women's Status in Hinduism. The reading below discusses Hindu beliefs about the nature of women, or femaleness. Kumari's view projects a very submissive, subservient, and self-sacrificing role for women.

Reading

For more information please read the following material.

7.3 Femaleness: Ranjana Kumari Ranjana Kumari (1990) PP: (3-11)

A chapter in the same book written by K.V.K. Thampuran, reflects a different picture of the woman's status in Hinduism as presented in the ancient holy writings. This chapter addresses several of our indicators of woman's status (Refer to Unit 6): religious status, educational practices, marriage practices and the relationship within the family—at least with respect to ancient practices of Hinduism. Then he suggests some influences which changed the status of women. The paragraphs below summarize the key points made by Thampuran.

Hinduism is a constantly changing religion—modified by the infusion of new ideas and the reinterpretation of old ideas. There are many periods of different religious thoughts and many sects, therefore it is difficult to make generalized statements. Hinduism has never exerted the kind of authority which Christianity or Islam did because it has neither a corporate structure, nor has it much association with matters or powers of the State. The authority of Hinduism comes mainly from the power its thoughts had on people. The theories of Karma and rebirth, and the ideal man, woman, family and society portrayed in the philosophy and mythology, provide models for the people.

The Hindu concept of God (Brahma or universal spirit) includes the female as well as the male sex—Man and Woman are the two halves of God the Creator. Some groups also believe that the man is incomplete in his potential until he is associated with woman. Thus from a religious point of view of the Hindu scriptures, both the male and female are of equal importance, value and worth, and demand the same respect and reverence. Hindu scriptures viewed women neither inferior nor superior to men in their potentials and capabilities, and also indicate names of exceptionally learned women, including advisors to kings. The character of women and men are basically same—from noble to mean.
The status of a woman is based on the position she held in the social structure and hierarchy of the religion. Ancient Hindu women seemed to have faced no discrimination in the matter of education, and the religious sacraments prescribed for boys also prescribed for girls, but performed slightly differently. As for the woman's status in the house, the duties of the home must be performed by the husband and wife as a team, and both the father and mother are to be considered as gods. Many forms of marriages are considered socially and religiously acceptable by Hindu scriptures: the love marriage allowed a woman to choose her husband, but with the prescription that she should not marry men lower than herself. Polygamy and polyandry were not uncommon. A woman of the Vedas time had a definite role and function in the home and outside it, in religious ceremonies, etc. She could also work and was employed as governess, companion of aristocratic girls, as entertainer, even as secret agents in the employ of the state, or in self-employment doing petty trade. The holy books of the Hindus reflected an admirable attitude of men towards women. Men used to regard women as partners in life. She was a partner in managing the affairs, however the "householder" (presumably the husband) is considered the "eldest" because he nourishes and supports the others with food for the body and mind. However, as time passed, things began to change for the worse. One of the main reasons for the gradual enhancement in the status of men (and consequent decline in that of the woman) was a change in the earlier religious belief that one can redeem oneself from one's sins only through one's own efforts. In the Puranic era, the belief was introduced that the performance of the appropriate ceremony by one's own son can get rid of one's sins, even after death. This belief naturally increased the value and worth of the sons, and resulted in a decline in the status and privileges enjoyed by Hindu women. Additionally, the incorporation of Buddhist emphasis on the monastic life as the means of liberation, glorified the life of the un-married ascetic, and made women and marriage appear as an obstacle to man's spiritual evolution and salvation. The attitude that women and marriage are considered as bondage in life, and projected as evil, can be seen among the so-called religious-minded Hindu men of today.

The preceding summary of Thampuran's article focused on the historical treatment of women. To complete the picture of woman's status in Hinduism,
you should recall what you read about women in modern India in Unit 3 (Reading 6.9). Do you think an MA student like yourself, in India, considers herself as basically wicked, needing complete control by a man, submissive, etc?

7.5 Women In Buddhism

About 500 B.C, a second major religion arose in India. Its founder was Siddhartha Gautama who is generally known as Buddha, the Enlightened One. Gautama was the son of a wealthy and powerful monarch who ruled a territory in the foothills of the Himalayas. Until the age of 29 Gautama had lived a very protected life. Then, when he was shocked by his first view of human suffering, Gautama left his wife, child, and home to find the cause of human suffering and its solution. He searched for six years, then one day a flash of enlightenment or understanding caused him to give up meditation and begin preaching his message to the people of India.

a) Buddhism-the Religion. Buddha's teachings are based on the Four Noble Truths. On seeing the young become old and die, the freshness of a flower at dawn disappear under the hot sun, and other such things, Buddha concluded that nothing is permanent except decay and change. It was the understanding of the importance of change that led Buddha to preach the Four Noble Truths. Part of his teachings reflect the Hindu concept of reincarnation. Buddha's teachings are supposed to lead a person out of the cycle of reincarnation to the perfect spiritual existence of nirvana. The First Noble Truth is that everyone suffers. The Second Noble Truth is that desire is the cause of suffering. The Third Noble Truth teaches that by suppressing all desires, a condition or state of complete peace is achieved which is called nirvana, and the cycle of rebirth ends. In his fourth Noble Truth Buddha offered a series of ethical guidelines for achieving nirvana called the Noble Eightfold Path. The guidelines consist of:

1. Right intentions in actions and feelings toward others
2. Right speech about others
3. Right conduct in relations with others
4. Right living without hurting other living things
5. Right effort to train oneself
6. Right mindfulness about feelings
7. Right meditation to improve an understanding of life.

b) Women's Status in Buddhism. The two readings on Buddhism make no pretensions of being unbiased presentations—the authors' prejudices are very apparent, particularly in the second reading. These articles are written by Buddhists who are reacting against the Hindu majority surrounding them, and are quick to point out the "evils" of Hinduism. You need to practice your critical reading skills to keep this bias against Hinduism in its place, as the authors may not be correct in their assertions. Buddhism flourished on the subcontinent for about 800 years. It was very strong in an area that is now part of northern Pakistan. One reason behind its decline was the adoption of nonviolence and other Buddhist teachings by Hinduism. Another reason was that it didn't provide rituals for birth, marriage, and death, which were important to the people, hence, they preferred Hinduism. Buddhism also spread to Southeast and East Asia where it became a thriving religion.

Reading
For more information please read the following material.

| 7.4 | Buddhism from the Scriptural Point of View: S. Rangaswamy. (1990) p: (114-119) |

* Activity
Look at Reading by Rangaswamy. Buddha's wisdom was revealed in a primarily Hindu society. Underline or mark at least four examples the author mentions which indicate improvement in the status of women under Buddha's teachings.
THE STATUS OF WOMEN (MONOTHEISTIC PERSPECTIVE)

Dr. Ayesha Mustafa
8.1 Introduction

Three old religions sprang from the traditions of Abraham (Ibrahim) and his belief in One God. These three religions are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This unit considers women’s status in Judaism and Christianity. It is difficult to have completely separate discussions on the women’s status under Judaism and Christianity. Many of the religious traditions of the Jews are included as the basis of Christian traditions. Specifically, some of the Jewish religious books called the Bible form the first part of the Christian Bible. The status of women in both religions is established, in part, in these books.

There is a second difficulty in discussing the status of women in the two religions. The written traditions regarding women and many other religious practices can be interpreted in different ways. Thus there are formal divisions in both Judaism and Christianity similar to the types of divisions that exist between the various schools of thought in Islam. This leads to many different practices regarding women in both Judaism and Christianity in current times.

8.2 Objectives

After studying the unit you will be able to:

1. Describe the shared nature of the religious writings and traditions between Judaism and Christianity

2. Discuss the three key stories of the Jewish Bible (Christian Old Testament) which are interpreted to establish women’s status

3. Explain how the Christian New Testament stories about Jesus’ treatment of women suggest a higher status for women than the Old Testament treatment

8.3 The Hebrews and Judaism

The brief historical discussion of the religions is again drawn largely from history’s. The Human Expression: You must keep in mind while reading that
there is a continuity from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. You must also keep in mind that this unit is written from a theological point of view, and inspection of the documents. It only briefly touches on the actual current practices. The early Hebrews were nomadic herders who worshiped many gods. Sometime approximately in 2000 B.C. and 1600 B.C. there was a tribal leader named Abraham (Ibrahim) who preached that there was only one god. This god was called Yahweh. From that time of perhaps 4000 years ago the Hebrews and their descendants—the Jewish people of today—have preserved knowledge of the One God.

I. The Jewish Bible

During the earliest years, the traditions and holy words were memorized and orally transmitted. The first written copies of these oral traditions were believed to have been recorded between 1000 and 800 B.C. The collection of these writings was called the Bible, which means “book”.

These writings tell of the creation of man and the beginnings of the Hebrew people, Noah and the great flood, Abraham (Ibrahim), Isaac (Ishaque), Jacob (Yakub) and the journey out of Egypt. According to these writings Abraham led his tribe to a land called Cannan (a land approximately in the area of modern day Israel). This land had been promised to them by their God, Yahweh. Abraham’s grandson, Jacob (Yakob) was also called Israel. Israel had 12 sons whose descendants became known as the Twelve Tribes of Israel. (The Jewish people took the name Israelites, or children of Israel.)

The Jewish Bible tells of Joseph (Yusef), a son of Jacob, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers. He became a favorite of the pharaoh and was set free. He brought his father and brothers to Egypt. Later Pharaohs made the Israelites slaves (approximately 1300s-1200s B.C.) until a prophet named Moses (Musa) threatened the pharaoh with God’s anger if he did not free the Israelites. Moses lead the Israelites out of Egypt. During the 40 years of wandering that followed (called the Exodus) God gave Moses the Ten Commandments which have provided a basis for ethical conduct for both Jews and Christians.

The years between 1000 and 900 B.C. were a great period in Israel’s history. During this time David (Daoud) then Solomon (Sulaiman) ruled. Israel dominated a large part of the surrounding area. David, a powerful warrior
was also a poet. His Book of Psalms contains some of the most beautiful poetry in the Jewish Bible. David's son Solomon built the first Temple in Jerusalem.

The writings that make up the Jewish Bible are considered as sacred writings by both Christianity and Islam. (Muslims, of course, believe that men changed the writings over time, so they may or may not be reliable.) The Jewish Bible consists of three parts:

1. **The Torah** (The Law), also known as the Five Books of Moses, which begins with the creation of the world and ends with the death of Moses. It describes the Jewish concept of God, and sets out the moral and ritual laws that God gave to the Jewish people, including the ten Commandments of Moses which form the basis for the civil and criminal codes of Western civilization.

2. **The Prophets**, which is an account of the activities and sermons of a group of religious teachers who preached from 900-500 B.C.

3. **The Writings**, which are a collection of psalms, poems, proverbs, and history. In the Christian Bible these three parts are called the Old Testament.

**The Talmud.** The Talmud is another important Jewish book. It is the collection of the original laws of Jews which had been handed down by word of mouth. These were written down perhaps in the 500s B.C. The Talmud also contains biographies, stories, debates and discussions with unbelievers, practical wisdom, and a code of ethics. For centuries it was the main textbook in Jewish schools.

**Jewish Beliefs and Practices.** The Hebrews concept of God was different from that of other Middle Eastern peoples. Yahweh is spiritual, cannot be represented by a statue or painting, is not tied to a specific place on earth, (exists everywhere), God is just and fair. Jews are supposed to worship God, not by offering sacrifices, but by following a moral way of life, and to work for social justice through charity, education and laws. According to the Jewish Bible, the Jews made a covenant or agreement with Yahweh to carry out His wishes, in exchange for which He promised them a homeland in Palestine. Judaism (as Islam) does not have a religious hierarchy or group of officials of different ranks governing the religion.
Over time, disagreements took place over how strictly Jewish laws should be interpreted. This resulted in three basic divisions in the way Jews practice their religion. The different groups are called Orthodox Jews, Conservative Jews, and Reformed Jews. Orthodox Judaism emphasizes tradition and observance of ritual. They observe the Sabbath (roughly the equivalent of Jummah) as a day of rest and worship and will not conduct business, or work or travel on that day. Dietary laws (and butchering laws) given in the Torah are carefully followed. Women sit in separate places in the synagogue (place of worship). Conservative Jews believe that is it sometimes necessary to change traditions, and are more flexible about following the traditions and rituals. Women may sit with men at services. Reform Jews depart even more from tradition. They say their prayers in the language of the region instead of Hebrew, have simplified many rituals, and allow women equality in the synagogue.

8.4 Christianity and it's Teachings

Christianity developed from the teachings of Jesus (Essa) 2000 year ago. Jesus was a Jew who was born in Palestine. The details of his life and teaching are found mainly in four books called the Gospels. The first Christians were Jews who converted to follow the teachings of Jesus.

The Christian Bible

The Christian Bible is made up of many different books and writings. The first part of the Christian Bible is the Jewish Bible. You read about the contents of the Jewish Bible in the previous section. In the Christian Bible, the Jewish Bible is called the Old Testament. The other parts of the Christian Bible are called the New Testament because they were added onto the old Hebrew writings and beliefs. The New Testament tells stories of the life and teachings of Jesus (Yesu) and his followers, especially Paul of Tarsus. The Gospels are the first four of the 27 new books the Christians added to the Jewish Bible. Other books include the letters of Paul, and other Christian writings. Different branches or sects (denominations) of the Christian church sometimes differ on which books should be included in the Christian Bible.

According to the New Testament Gospels, Jesus's public or teaching life began when he was about 30 years old. This period lasted only three years.
Then he was brought to trial and put to death at the command of the Roman governor of Jerusalem. Jesus preached about the way God wanted people to act toward one another. His dealings with women demonstrated they were worthy as persons and equal in religious aspects. According to Christian belief, everything Jesus said and did centered on God’s love for humans (women and men) and the love people should have for one another. He told his followers to love everyone. Christians had to show this love by their actions. The Gospels tell that Jesus once told his followers to sell their possessions and share the money with the poor. The real treasures, he said, were in Heaven.

There were no definite guidelines given in the New Testament on how the Christian religion should be practiced. In addition, different groups of Christians differ on how the teachings of Jesus should be interpreted. This has resulted in many different branches or sects (denominations) of Christianity, each differing from the other on some specific belief regarding the religious practices or church government structure. There is, however, agreement on many things. Christians believe in the Trinity, or the three persons or natures of God as Father (creator), Son (savior) and Holy Spirit. They believe Jesus was a part of God in human form who carne to came to earth. They believe his “death” was a symbolic sacrifice to make up for humanity’s sins. Christians also believe that the coming of Jesus marked a new covenant with God, and for that reason they place special emphasis on the New Testament.

The Muslim reader needs to understand a distinction between the belief that the Quran is the exact word of Allah, and the general Christian belief about the Bible. Most Christians accept that the Bible is the revelation of God’s actions—hence a revealed book. Others would say that the writers were inspired by God, but were also human beings subject to error. No claim is made that all of the writings in the Bible are the words of God directly transmitted through the writer in any manner similar to the way the Prophet Muhammad received the Quran.
8.5 Women’s Status in the Jewish Bible (Christian Old Testament)

There are two important stories in the shared Jewish-Christian Bible chapters which were used by traditional Hebrew and Christian theologians to establish the status of women. These are the stories of the creation of human beings and the story of the Fall (Adam and Eve’s story in the garden). There are two separate accounts of the creation in the Bible.

In the earlier account of creation, God created Adam from dust. Woman is created from the rib of Adam in order that he may not be alone. It is Adam who names the living creatures, and Adam who calls his helper, woman. In the chronology of this creation account, man, created first is seen as superior to woman and all the living creatures. The relationship of the two, however, is a unitive one-flesh relationship. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they become one flesh.

The second account of creation reflects a contrasting view and understanding of the creation of man and woman. In this account man and woman are created by God simultaneously, in the image of God, and both are empowered with dominion over the earth and all of life. Being created in the image of God, man and woman are each responsible beings before God. The relationship of man and woman suggested in this account is complementary, as man to woman and both under the dominion of the Creator. (Dictionary of Christian Ethics, p. 361).

At the time of the creation there was no sex-consciousness in woman or man. In the story of the Fall or temptation of Eve by the Devil, Eve is considered the more guilty of the two for having disobeyed God, hence woman is responsible for the first sin. It is the result of this disobedience that sex consciousness comes into being (and Adam and Eve rush to cover themselves). In addition, woman is given the punishment of bearing children in pain and to be in subjection to her husband who is to rule over her. In addition to these specific stories, in which the religious view of the status of women is deeply rooted, the paternalistic nature of the Hebrew society is evident in many of the other descriptive accounts.

In the Old Testament the place of woman is strongly influenced by the prevailing patriarchal form of family life. The place of woman is related to her role as wife and mother and her status in the marriage and family
relationships. The subordinate position of women is evidenced in the development and the history and religious life of Israel. But her place was both influential and revered. The biblical narratives record positions of honour accorded to the wife and mother. Some women reached positions of prominence in the Old Testament society. In the patriarchal society of the Hebrew culture these positions were achieved by women working through men who held the ranking power. (Dictionary of Christian Ethics, p. 361.)

It is to mention here that in many modern Christian churches and denominations, there is no direct teaching about the women’s status based on biblical interpretation. Thus, some of the theological interpretations in this unit are unknown to many Christians of today.

8.6 Women’s Status in the Christian New Testament

In the New Testament (the Christian additions to the Jewish Bible) the life and stories of Jesus demonstrate an egalitarian position with respect to females and males. Behind the new status given to women in the New Testament is the attitude of Jesus himself. He deals with women as persons, worthy to be talked to and listened to in need of salvation equally with men. All four Gospels (books of the Bible about Jesus’ life) testify that he made women the first witnesses and heralds of his resurrection (coming back after death) (Dictionary of Christian Ethics, p. 361.)

In an earlier unit you had a reading that suggested that the patriarchal practices of the times overwhelmed the new teachings of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) about women and old practices of the subjugation returned. It appears that the same thing had happened previously in Christianity. The teachings of Jesus in the four Gospels were overshadowed by the letters of Paul contained in the last books of the New Testament which are considered very anti-women by many.

New Testament overtones of the male dominated culture are particularly reflected in the Epistles of Paul. Paul’s attitude towards woman is the subject of much debate. (Dictionary of Christian Ethics, p. 361.)

Paul’s controversial remarks include such things as saying that the head of man is Christ (or God) while the head of a woman is the man; and that man was created in God’s image, but woman was only created in man’s image. He also emphasizes that woman was created for man (as if she were created...
only to serve him). Paul's remarks come as close to the Hindu belief that a husband is "god" for the wife as one can if one believes there is only one god—but he stops just before actually saying that. He also takes a strong stand against marriage, claiming that celibacy (abstinence from sexual activity) is the best life. From a feminist perspective, these letters (epistles) from Paul are the most objectionable parts of the Bible.

I. Who was Paul?

He was one of the followers of Jesus, who never married, but, instead spent his life preaching and establishing Christian churches in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt and even Rome. He kept in touch with the various groups of Christians through letters in which he interpreted Christian teachings. His letters are included in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. Paul was sainted by the Roman Catholic church, so is often referred to as Saint Paul.

II. Saint Augustine.

Paul's writings influenced (Saint) Augustine. Augustine lived at a later period after the Roman Catholic Christian Church was firmly established. He was a writer-philosopher of the Roman Catholic Church. His writings are also important to our topic of the woman's position in Christianity.

8.7 Women in the Christian Church—Past and Present

Throughout the history of Christian churches, women have had two traditional duties. The first was the nurture and education of the young as teachers, and the second is the care of the sick, poor, and aged. The way in which women were involved in these tasks varied at different times in history. The status of women in the church has never been fixed, or unchanging.

About 150 years ago the organization of church women volunteers, particularly to support Christian missionary work, emerged as a new phenomena. In modern times most of the work of women in churches is done through women's organizations attached to the church. Today these local church women's organizations may even be part of larger regional or national organizational structure. These organizations may do everything from providing study opportunities for religious learning, to visiting the sick, to raising money for the church itself or church charities. The status of women
The particular church is defined in terms of the women's organizations' status. When women's groups are integrated with church activities, the women usually have considerable power. When the groups are isolated from the life and function of the church they do not have respectable status in the church.

Each denomination of Christian church has a central governing "body". The governing body and administration may even be world wide. Thus there may be 10,000 local churches of a specific denomination of Christianity all linked to a central administration authority. This authority sets religious and business policies, manages finances, and may even establish universities to train its leaders and ministers. These graduates may be ordained or certified as ministers (priests, pastors, etc.), then assigned as leaders of individual local churches.

The ordained Christian minister (or priest) in an established church is a paid position of substantial influence in the community. In addition to conducting religious services and educational programs, they manage the business and financial affairs of the church, perform marriages and funerals, counsel troubled people, visit the sick, and are often very active in a variety of community affairs. Up to now, most Christian churches have put a "male only" sign on ordination for the church ministry and/or administrative positions. Today this practice is being challenged in many churches, and some denominations educate and ordain women as ministers.

The status of women and opportunities to participate in the governing and policy-making bodies differ from denomination to denomination as does their status in the full-time service and ministry in the various churches. There are women who are educated, trained and willing to serve the church. The way the churches use the services of these women is a question of much concern, often centering around the question of ordination of women. A number of churches have opened the full ministry to women on equal terms with men. The ministry of women directly affects only a minority of women in the church. The raising of the question has compelled those charged with answering it to re-examine the nature of the ministry, and to look to the broader aspect of the place of women in the Church. (Dictionary of Christian Ethics, p. 362.)

The question of women in the ministry presses the Christian churches for interpretation of the ministry (priesthood). In most churches there are strong
UNIT-9

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN (ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE)

Dr. Ayesha Mustafa
9.1 Introduction

The Muslim women in the world live in a variety of societies and communities where legislation, customs and traditions affected or inspired by interpretations of Quran and Shari'a which collectively define concepts of female roles and status in a society. It is clear that within a specific Muslim Society, these concepts may vary from one class or generation to the other as well as over time, just as they may differ from one Muslim country to another. In addition, Muslim women's lives and the choices they face are influenced as much by patriarchal social arrangements as they are by religious ideology. This confirms Shirley Ardener's observation that we 'need to be wary in cross cultural comparisons of women's status giving a weightage to each variable for each society and this is impossibly complex.'(1992:6). Moreover, as Kandiyoti (1991:18) said that Muslim women, in the same way as women in non-Muslim societies, tend to be "divided over the definition of their gender interests, over the nature of social arrangements which best serve them and over their visions of better society." This divergence of views on women's social position is reflected by different Muslim discourses depicting modernist, traditionalists and fundamentalists trends. Muslim societies as well as the Western perceptions of them tend to be projected primarily through male perspectives. In this unit an effort has been made to present a multicultural perspectives of women's own experiences and choices in contemporary Muslim communities. The main theme of this unit is the manner in which Muslim women consciously and unconsciously practice religious belief to negotiate their gender roles within the situational context of their lives.

9.2 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

1. Discuss the stereotyping of Islam with reference to social development.
2. Describe the social status of women in Islam living in different Muslim societies.
3. Discuss Islamic perspective on sex equality
4. Define Islamic perspective regarding women’s social status in society.

9.3 Stereotyping Islam

Some sociologists such as Stowasser (1987) and Esposito (1984) are of the opinion that public opinion in the west generally ignore the diversity of Islamic societies and is largely influenced by deep-rooted assumptions that Islam is a monolithic religion controlling all aspects of its adherent’s lives. Islam has been subject to growth and development, adaptation and change. Over the centuries Islam has been permeated by a series of cultural acceleration reflecting the complex ways in which religious belief and social reality accommodate one another. This is of course a unifying framework which is provided by the Holy Quran as standard source and language of faith, as well as through the five pillars of Islam. Nevertheless this unity is accompanied by a multitude of diversities which need to be taken in account in any discussion of Islam and its practice by Muslims (Lee 1988).

As a recent volume on Islam in North America puts it, Muslims tend to be described and interpreted by west as ‘other’, non-us’, or ‘them’, with Islam ‘held up as an alien religion against as idealized, a historical Judeo-Christian mirror’. (Waugh et. Al, 1991, and Hourani 1991). Marcus (1992) is of the opinion that in addition, in the current political climate fundamentalist Islam tends to be represented as ‘universal, irrational, terrifying and mad’, with a central political role in Muslims cultures and societies. By contrast, fundamentalists Christians sects are generally depicted as ‘minor aberrations’ of restricted political significance.

According to Azari (1983) this view of Islam has been inadvertently caused by the widespread religious revival sweeping much of the Muslim world over recent decades, a resurgence generally associated with the 1979 Iranian revolution with the images of turbaned, bearded clergymen and women covered in black from head to foot. As Roff (1987) observed that from North America to Pakistan and down the geographical map to Indonesia, Islam has become a political and social force increasingly impinging upon the consciousness of western societies. El- Guindi (1981) identified that west gives a little thought to the economic, social and cultural context in which the Islamic movement operates, or the reasons why Islam is held up
as an alternative political model to the one enforced by the ruling elite. Matsui (1991) participated in a workshop held in Pakistan in 1986 concluded:

Islam and Islamic culture are a complex reality. This complexity is distorted by the west in terms of the way the west views Islam. But the West also has a contradictory position on Islam. On the one hand, it operates as active anti-Islamic campaign, and on the other, it supports fundamentalism. In both cases, however, it does this for its own political purposes (p. 97).

It is, therefore becomes necessary to understand that Islam as a religion must be analyzed and discussed keeping in mind the socio-political and economic position in different societies as all of these factors certainly influence lives of the every individual living in these societies.

9.4 Women and Islamic Perspective

The position of women under Islam has been the subject of repeated controversy among Muslims since they came under the impact of western civilization. However, Islam is not a rigid framework of laws and institutions, but a set of principles capable of fresh application in changing social conditions. It has been observed that Islamic injunctions in regard to the regulation of sex and family life can be adopted to the modern conditions without departing from the principles underlying them. According to Siddique (1996) orthodox theologians maintain that every single, specific injunction of Islam is eternally valid and unchangeable while western Muslims advocate changes which are sometimes repulsive to the total world—outlook of Islam split its basic principles. He agrees that we admit the need of change but only within the frame work of fundamental Islamic values and general underlying principles whose validity remains unaffected by the varying conditions of social progress.

The rights of women versus those of men spring from sexual, biological and social realities not from romantic idealism and scientific facts. The civilization’s attitude towards women is largely determined by its total pattern of life, and particularly the status of man and woman in the society. Islam does not lessen women’s social status in the society rather it provides her every basic right in order to fully utilize her capabilities and potentials. It has been said before that keeping the basic Islamic principles in mind, many other factors influence the society as women live in different Muslim societies.
In the west, Muslim women are depicted heavily veiled, secluded and restricted only homes to or harems. But when we observe different Muslim societies and communities world over, we find that there are many other socio-economic factors which determine women social role and their rights in the society, for example women living in Arab countries are different from the women living in Pakistan and India or in Indonesia and Malaysia. The question is that we still have to look for a Muslim woman who may represent a typical Muslim woman. For example, purdah is observed in many Muslim societies but there are many different forms of Purdah which is practiced by women in different ways. Female exclusion from public life is a controversial issue within the Islamic societies.

Gender relations in Islam also have diversified views and debates within Muslim societies as well as in the western countries. These views are interrelated in different trends defining women social position in different Muslim societies such as fundamentalists and modernists. Kandiyoti (1991:2) supported the view of diversity within which Muslim women are living their lives in different cultures. According to her “women position in the Muslim societies’ can neither be read off from Islamic ideology and practice, nor be entirely derived from global processes of socio-economic transformation, nor from universalistic premises of Feminist theory”. Therefore, it can be inferred that women negotiate or made to adapt social and cultural customs along with Islamic practices in different Muslims societies. Social and cultural influences can not be neglected while studying women in Muslim societies in view of the fact that traditions and customs affect women lives along with Islamic injunctions in any society.

Reading

For further information please read the following material:

9.1 Muslim Women’s Choices: Religious Belief and Social Reality: Camilla Fawzi El-Solh and Judy Mabro (1994) pp: (4-25)

9.5 Islam and Sex Equality

Islam is not against sex equality. It gives freedom of thought and actions to both men and women, but certainly in this way also places responsibilities on those who have some privilege on other. Siddique (1996) says that:
In passing judgment on Islamic teachings with regard to sex relations and the ideal of sex equality, it is necessary to keep in mind that Islam puts emphasis on aspect just those qualities of the soul which leads to greater social harmony and prevent class conflicts. Islamic civilization stands midway between ancient ascetic cultures which negated life and matter and looked upon the teachings of this world as having a soul-degrading effect and the materialistic culture of modern west which has turned material wealth and economic prosperity into objects of idolatrous worship. (p.13-14).

Islamic perspective of sex equality recognizes sociological, physiological and psychological impact of these essential elements on the society. And that is the reason these elements cannot be neglected while taking social life of the individuals in account.

Reading

For further information please read the following material

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9.6 The Condition of Women and Muslim Women Today

In his book, Women and Social Justice, Dr. Anis makes the following comments about the condition of women in today's world generally, and about Islam and women, and Muslim women in particular. In Chapter One, he says:

"Muslim societies are generally described as male dominated, patriarchal and, in some cases, even male-aggressive. Lore Heise (UTNE Reader, November-December, 1989) has furnished statistical information on the aggressive male behaviour in some of the developing and developed countries, for example, Thailand, Ecuador, India, and U.S.A. This provides evidence of a practically global war against women, particularly in the non-Muslim countries. This does not mean that women are target of oppression in non-Muslim countries alone. Nor does it justify presence of any injustices against women in the Muslim countries. This only indicates that denial of social justice, respect, dignity and honour to women is perhaps a global phenomena. This also shows that the restoration of certain legal, political,
and social rights of women and acceptance of equal opportunity in employment, right to divorce, and so forth are not enough to improve the situation. The remedies suggested by the secular societies have not led to substantial gains for women."

In the preface to Women and Social Injustice Dr. Anis says:

Discussions on the rights and role of women are often misconstrued as a threat to man's position in society. Similarly, concern for the plight of women and repulsion against injustices done to them are sometimes mistaken as a call for Westernization. There may be some element of truth in these perceptions, but the fact remains that women are one of the most oppressed segment of humanity in the developed as well as the developing world. The oppression is not only at economic, political, legal and social levels, it exists even at a moral level. Woman has been projected in the world literature as a thoroughly sentimental person, rarely pious and more often tempting others to sin. She has been blamed for the descent of man on the earth....

Contemporary discussions on the rights of women, consciously or unconsciously, either take the feminist movement in the West as a point of departure for their treatment of the issue, or they altogether disregard it. Taking a general, rather too simple approach, they maintain that since, ideally, Islam takes a just approach toward women, there is no injustice or exploitation of their rights in contemporary Muslim society. A third and more meaningful approach is needed in which instead of taking the East or West as a model, an Islamic paradigm may be developed. This paradigm should be inspired by the Quran and the Sunnah and should take into consideration the realities of life in the contemporary Muslim society.

The emphasis on the sentence above is in order to highlight the important distinction Dr. Anis points to. What he is saying is that some people ignore women's position today by saying that since Allah gave women rights, then injustice doesn't exist. They ignore the discrepancy between the ideal Islam established, and contemporary practices. True, Allah and the Prophet (PBUH) integrated women in a very just position in relation to men and society, but do Muslim societies follow that in actual day-to-day practice from home to home? Or is it merely given "lip-service"? (Unfortunately, in many cases there can't even be lip service to Islamic ideals because Muslims themselves are ignorant of the teachings of Islam with respect to women.)
Reading

For more information please read the following material:


Activity

Consider that you are an advocate for the improvement of women's condition in Muslim societies. Keeping in mind the general directives and other factors mentioned in readings. What problems would you identify as appropriate for an indigenous woman's rights movement?

9.7 Self Assessment Questions

Q 1. What is stereotyping of Islam with reference to social aspects of life? please discuss in detail quoting examples and your own point of view in this regard.

Q 2. How would you explain social status of muslim women in different societies in the world? can we compare it with each other?

Q 3. Gender relations in Islam is also have diversified views and debates within muslim societies as well as in the western countries. Please Comment on this statement.

Q 4. What is the Islamic perspective of social status of women in the society? Please discuss in detail.