

Development and Implication of Gender and Women's Studies Curriculum at Public Universities of Punjab

Saima Noreen^{a,*}, Farah Deebe^b

^aGovt. Fatima Jinnah College, Pakistan

^bUniversity of the Punjab, Pakistan

*Corresponding Email: saima_noreen486@yahoo.com

Abstract

In mid of the twentieth century, feminist movement commenced the discipline of women's studies to encounter the Ideological critique; a theoretical framework lacking laborious struggle. This study is based on curriculum development and concepts, which were discussed in the process of curriculum making of Gender and Women's studies in the Punjab. This study aimed to explore the process of curriculum development at graduation and post-graduation level with details of its updating, reading trends in students, teaching methodologies, and inclination of students towards research areas. A qualitative method of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used. The data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews from 15 participants. The interviewee included the head of Gender Studies Departments and faculty members of 6 universities and 1 college of the Punjab province of Pakistan. The data analysis indicated that each academic institution has similar process of curriculum development involving faculty, the Board of Studies and Academic Council. Curriculum is being revised on ongoing basis. In most of the departments, participatory and interactive teaching methods are being used. Reading habits are not greatly instilled among students. This research intended to trace out the locale of formative phase of main themes and fibers of courses in relation with indigenous gender tendencies. The study has suggested that acute involvement of development sector should be promised which will stage the local gender issues and will also open up a maiden window to academic side in the formulation of a more congenial and endemic syllabus.

Keywords: *Women's Studies, Gender Studies, Feminism, Curriculum, Pakistan*

1. Introduction

After the slogan of 'have and have not' the complete century was dedicated to it but then 20th century met with feminism; a movement of equality between man and woman. This movement was so potent in its area of work that history of time cannot suppress or can corner it because there was the matter of universe's main specie and that was human being. Every successful movement is always backed up with a clear ideology but initially Feminism was just a movement and have to face a lot of criticism but then academic and

**3rd KANITA POSTGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
GENDER STUDIES**

16 – 17 November 2016
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

intellectual involvement develop a theoretical framework which leads Feminism as an emerging revolutionary epoch in the lives of woman.

As a mother theory, Feminism spread out in multicolor to cater the need of woman based on region and class (Sargisson, 1996). To introduce this fundamental theme of equality between sexes at gross root level through institutes and also to create an egalitarian society, department of woman studies were being started in Europe and then in the third world countries. Establishing Gender/Woman's Studies department is a step forward towards the awareness and importance of the ending of the oppression, which is being faced by woman in all parts of the world since the society, shifted to patriarchal style from matriarchal design. So, Gender Studies is not only a subject of life which is necessary to read but it's a dire need of the society for its survival otherwise it will be destructed by the hands of powerful, hegemonic man which is unbridled in his unquestioned authority over woman. As Feminism grow throughout the world and an ample amount of literature was produced by academics which in actual provide a straight pave to its practical form, which change the human relations in this world.

Gender and Women's Studies started at many universities in every part of world, in Asia, Africa, Europe, until it has become in Mary Maynard's words, 'something of a global educational phenomenon' (Maynard, 1998). Curriculum is the basic point, which constructs the minds of students. Curriculum really needs rigorous and competent efforts for its development and implementation in which all the aspects must be in caution to develop it. As subject, which is, intend to bring some social change and presented itself as intellectual branch of a movement which bring a great revolution must be designed with very conscious mind (Zajda, 2015). This research will clarify how the gender studies curriculum is designing and who are the constructors of it.

Women's Studies in Pakistan is initiated as a five-year project by Government of Pakistan under Women Development Division in 1989. Women's Studies centers were established in following departments initially, University of Karachi, Karachi, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, University of Punjab, Lahore, University of Baluchistan, Quetta, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. Now, after twenty-six years of development, Women's Studies is well-established, working and growing in universities of Pakistan. Initially, when this discipline was started, Women Development Division started it with collaborations and consultation with

**3rd KANITA POSTGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
GENDER STUDIES**

16 – 17 November 2016

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

academic and gender activists with intention of developing a discipline, which can bring social change by identifying women as change agent (Higher Education Commission, 2012). Following are the departments which participated in this research.

1.1 Women & Gender Studies Department, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad

The Department of Gender & Women's Studies was established under the faculty of social sciences and humanities in Allama Iqbal Open University in 1997. Its offering Masters and post graduate diploma in Gender and Women's studies (Aiou.edu.pk, 2016).

1.2 Department of Gender Studies, Punjab University (PU) Lahore

Center of Women's Studies by Ministry of Women's Development was established in 1997 in Punjab University for women focused research. In 2001, this center was converted to academic department of Women's Studies. Currently, this department is working under the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and offering Ph.D, M.Phil, MSc, BS (Hons.) in Gender Studies (Dws.pu.edu.pk, 2016).

1.3 Gender Studies Department, Government Fatima Jinnah College, Chunna Mandi, Lahore

Government Fatima Jinnah College, Chunna Mandi is only college of Punjab who offered Gender Studies in graduation and post-graduation level. Gender Studies department started in 2004 and get affiliated with University in 2005. This department is offering MSc and BS (Hons.) in Gender Studies (Gfjc.edu.pk, 2016).

1.4 Department of Gender & Development Studies, Lahore College for Women University (LCWU) Lahore

In 2004, Department of gender and development studies was established. In 2009, BS (Hons.) in Gender and Development studies and in 2011, the degree of MS Gender and Development studies was introduced (User, 2016).

1.5 Gender Studies Department, Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) Rawalpindi

Department of Gender Studies established in 2004. Currently department is offering Masters and BS (Hons) in Gender studies (Fjwu.edu.pk, 2016).

1.6 Department of Gender Studies, Bhauddin Zikriya University (BZU) Multan

**3rd KANITA POSTGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
GENDER STUDIES**

16 – 17 November 2016

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

Department of Gender Studies was established as an independent department in 2002. Earlier program of Masters in Gender Studies was offered under the umbrella of History Department. Department of Gender Studies offered BS (Hons) and MPhil (Bzu.edu.pk, 2016).

1.7 Gender Studies Programme, The Islamia University Bhawalpur (IUB)

Masters in Gender Studies started in 2009 under the umbrella of Political Science Department in Islamia University, Bhawalpure (Iub.edu.pk, 2016).

2. Research Methodology

The research design is Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The data was collected from seven departments, 6 departments from Punjab and one department was Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) which is the public Open University and working under federal government. Total 15 interviews were conducted. In this particular research, sample size is consisted on 15 participants. Two faculty members were selected from Department of Women and Gender Studies (AIOU) Islamabad. Three faculty members were selected from Department of Gender Studies (FJWU). Two faculty members were selected from Department of Gender Studies (PU). Three faculty members were selected from Women Institute of Learning and Leadership (LCWU). One faculty member was selected from Department of Gender Studies (GFJCW). Two faculty members were selected from Department of Gender Studies (BZU). Two faculty members were selected from Department of Political Science (IUB). All the Heads of Departments were interviewed. Purposive sampling technique was used. The major source of data is in-depth interview with participant. A semi-structured interview guide was used as a tool for data collection.

2.1 Data Interpretations

Process of curriculum development

All the universities have more and less same process of curriculum development. However, few universities have some additional steps in the process. In all the universities, at first level faculty developed the curriculum, then head of department review that, after it, courses are presented to Board of Studies (BOS) of every institute. After it gets approval from Board of Studies (BOS) it is presented to the Academic Council for final selection.

Curriculum development at faculty level

Most of the junior faculty members were able to talk about the details of first step of curriculum development not the rest of the departmental procedure. As a Lecturer from AIOU described her sources of developing a curriculum of “Gender Sociology” in these words, “*I am consulting books from library, reading articles, national and international journals, survey and reports of development sector*”.

All the public sector universities have the same criteria for formulating the curriculum. The role of faculty in curriculum development has a key role because they develop the first draft and after that discussion are preceded on it by different boards and curriculum is being finalized in the light of suggested changes so, first draft is a fundamental thing in the process of development and approval of curriculum.

Curriculum development from foreign faculty

All the universities consult western literature and curriculum while developing their own. But, there are two universities who have access to western universities through their collaborations with foreign universities directly in the curriculum development, and these are Fatima Jinnah Women University and Lahore College for Women University. Although in initial times, when Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) developed their outlines, they seriously feel the need of their own research and published material, as during curriculum development procedure they did not find any indigenous material. Earlier in 2005, Institute of Education, London facilitated in curriculum development and for last four years FJWU has collaborative programs with foreign universities for faculty development, student’s orientations and curriculum development. Faculty development is ultimately helping them out in curriculum development with international exposure.

2.2 Curriculum at various boards

Board of Studies (BOS)

After the first design of curriculum from the faculty members, it is presented in Board of Studies (BOS) at first phase. Every department has its own Board of Studies, which is consisted on professors. It is the criteria of Higher Education Commission (HEC) that only academic persons can join this Board. All the institutes supported it.

**3rd KANITA POSTGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
GENDER STUDIES**

16 – 17 November 2016
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

Furthermore asking, either all the members are from academia or few are from development sector too. As gender Studies is the off shoot of feminist movement and providing theory for gender specialists in the field so their participation is important. But a Lecturer from FJWU answered it in this way. *“All members are from academia. Few people are working in academia as well as development sector. So we can’t say that they are not in touch with development sector”*. But this is the case of one university only. In other universities, there are no details available that BOS members are also working or not in the development sector.

Gender Studies Department (PU) has no independent BOS as gender studies department is working under the broader umbrella of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies. So Gender Studies department has the same BOS as of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies which has more sociologist than gender experts. In charge Chairperson explains this situation in these word *“...Although there are few gender experts in the BOS. But, we didn’t face any issue. We are vocal enough to defend ourselves....”*

On the question that whether BOS contribute sufficiently in the curriculum development when it is presented to them for approval or not the answer was mixed.

Academic Council

Syllabus of all the universities goes to the Academic Council once it gets approved from BOS. Academic Board consists of experts of the subjects from academia as well as from other sectors.

Model of Allama Iqbal Open University

Allama Iqbal University has more enriched and stern process of curriculum development, As, chairperson of Department of Gender and Women’s Studies AIOU explained in this way:

“First of all, we have our internal meetings, head assigned the work, then first statutory body, we invite expert from different areas. There are panel of 20 people and we present our outlines there with readings list. Expert arise questions and give suggestions and discuss rigorously the whole outlines. Then we finalize it and write minute. We have a detail post proposal form. Then that proposal will go into faculty board, there are fourteen departments, all sit together, we, and expert from outside, then we discuss it in detail. Then, we write minutes of it and few changes occur, along with this, those minutes goes to the academic council, there are people who have perspectives in Gender Studies and few ask, “what is gender studies”. So, this is the process, its two years process of approval. If you want to change it 25%, we can do that. However, if it is more than it, again it’s a two years, rigorous process. Then it will go to Committee of course”.

Curriculum of Govt. Fatima Jinnah College, Chunna Mandi, Lahore

Fatima Jinnah College is an affiliated college with Punjab University so they have an entirely unlike process with comparison of other departments. They can teach the courses only which are instructed by the Punjab university.

2.3 Revision of curriculum

Gender and Women's Studies department of Allama Iqbal Open University has revised their curriculum twice since 2007. Pattern of PU is narrated that they change curriculum after three years and in other departments/Institute, curriculum is revised on ongoing basis and change their curriculum time by time. The Curriculum of Gender Studies Department (GFJCW) is not revised since it started.

2.4 Reading habits in students

Most of the participants were agreed that students do not have reading habits. Participants have viewed that it is the dilemma of Pakistan that students do not go for readings other than their notes. Although all the departments emphasize that they put efforts to make students develop reading habits but in vain. Few participants said that even students hardly go through the notes. As a faculty member from FJWU said that "*Very few*". *Students ask for notes only. I strictly do not give notes to them. Some students listen from those who read the books. Some only rely on lectures. But there are no reading habits in students. I encourage who have read and let her to speak so that the students can listen who didn't go through that. Because it's not possible in the class of 70 to 60 to give individual pressure. And if we embrace students if has no avail*".

Only Chairperson of BZU said that "*they have a system in which students go through various literatures, national and international and they are even well aware than us*". Except her, all members were of the view that reading habits in students are not observed.

2.5 Teaching methodologies for Gender/ Women's Studies

More or less all the departments are using very interactive and participatory approach in their departments of Gender Studies. All are conducting seminars, activities, multimedia, question answer sessions and workshops for students learning. But teacher role is primary. Departments of FJWU and GFJCW do movie screening on related topics. Lecturer from

(GFJCW) mentioned that they choose those methods, which can facilitate students to get good marks as at the end students good score is her priority.

As, Allama Iqbal Open University has different mechanism over it, their Chairperson mentioned her design as follows:

“We have additional and adjacent faculty, we hire part time tutors. I have 22 tutors, 50 students are attached with one tutor. In each course, two assignments are prepared by students. Students send assignments to tutors and seek help if they need in studying. After that, students appear in exams. However, in between that, we conduct workshops. Earlier, all the students were invites to Islamabad campus, it was a bit hard to manage, now, we have video conference system in Lahore, D.J. Khan, Peshawar, Muzzafarbad and Karachi. There are seven centers where they join us and ask any question. This is how we manage”.

Major research areas of students’ choice

It is analyzed that students choose the topics on which they can easily get data. Students go for easiness in their researches. Very few students come with innovative topics. Students usually want to do research on local issues and its problems and explore awareness levels etc. Still there are few students who work on innovative and challenging ideas like *“In Allama Iqbal Open University, students are working on “Highly Educated women prostitute of Multan”, “Abused and Harassment in Gujjar khan” and there is a Sawati girl who is working on homosexuality but it is really timeconsuming for students in distance learning”*. A student from Punjab University working on *“developing local model of Empowerment”*.

3. Discussion & Conclusion

It is concluded that all the universities have same process of curriculum development. Curriculum is initially developed by faculty members and then its goes for further stages of BOS and academia council after their approval it is implemented. Most of the Boards and councils are based on faculty members of various colleges and universities. In the subject like gender studies, it is important to include both the perspectives of academia and development sector. AIOU also follow the same procedure of curriculum development but with some extra meetings and boards, which ensure equal and best contribution of both development and

**3rd KANITA POSTGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
GENDER STUDIES**

16 – 17 November 2016

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

academia sector. Curriculum is revised in university on an ongoing basis. Although its university rule that curriculum will be revised in every three years (Higher Education Commission, 2012). PU ensures to revise their curriculum according to it but in other universities has an “ongoing process”. As, Mitra, Bhatia, & Chatterjee (2013) also the same as Women’s Studies in India remains “dynamic and alert on women’s issues”. Participatory and interactive approaches are using in the departments/institutes to teach Gender Studies. The system of teaching of AIOU is different as they are offering distance-learning program. Reading and Conducting and be involved in Research is not desirable in all the students from all departments/institute. Very few students are working on any guanine topic, which is emerging from cultural issues. AIOU has more diversity in their topics as their students are from diverse background of country. But, local narrative on gender is not being produced.

4. References

- Aiou.edu.pk. (2016). Programme Detail. Retrieved 8 May 2016, from <http://www.aiou.edu.pk/Programmes.asp?PID=59>
- Bzu.edu.pk. (2016). Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan (BZU). Retrieved 3 May 2016, from <http://www.bzu.edu.pk/departmentindex.php?id=63>
- Dws.pu.edu.pk. (2016). University of the Punjab - Behavioral and Social Sciences. Retrieved 15 June 2016, from <http://dws.pu.edu.pk/>
- Fjwu.edu.pk. (2016). Gender Studies | Fatima Jinnah Women University. Retrieved 19 June 2016, from <http://www.fjwu.edu.pk/gender-studies/>
- Gfjc.edu.pk. (2016). Women Studies. Retrieved 3 June 2016, from <http://www.gfjc.edu.pk/index.php?page=women-Studies>
- Higher Education Commission. (2012). Curriculum of Women’s Studies BS & MS. Islamabad: Higher Education Commission, Islamabad.
- Maynard, M. (1988). Women’s Studies, In Jackson, S. and Jones, J. (eds) Contemporary Feminist Theories, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Mitra, A., Bhatia, M., & Chatterjee, S. (2013). Perspectives on Women's Studies from India: Strengths, Struggles and Implications for Programs in the U.S. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 14(3). Retrieved from <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol14/iss3/14>
- Sargisson, L. (1996). *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*. London: Routledge Publications.

**3rd KANITA POSTGRADUATE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
GENDER STUDIES**

16 – 17 November 2016

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

User, S. (2016). Lahore College for Women University - Programs. Lcwu.edu.pk. Retrieved 16 August 201, from <http://www.lcwu.edu.pk/gender-studies-programs.html>

Zajda, J. (2015). Nation-Building and History Education in a Global Culture (1st ed.). London: Springer.