

## Needs Of Gender Studies in the Context of Better and Greater Utilization of Human Resources Across the Globe

**Biswanath Kundu**

Retired Accounts Official in Indian Railways

### **Abstract:**

Gender studies stress on equality of treatment to both men and women on all issues. It aims at neutralizing gender difference with the induction of generalized category. It allows no room for gender biases or stereotyping. The primary objective of these studies is to mainstreaming all irrespective of caste, race, and sex as human resources instead of being compartmentalized as he or she. In modern times the social and cultural construction of masculinity and femininity matters more than the biological originality in following the choices of the individuals as regards to dress, eating style, talking attitudes etc. i.e., both men and women are now free to show their reverse traits in the society unlike of the olden days. 'Feminine side' of the men and 'Masculine side' of the women are often exhibited publicly as an outcome of the societal change from patriarchal to practical one. Globally too, Gender Studies examines issues related to migration, development and human rights in a very definitive way. There should be no external judge than the person concerned to dictate the course of his life paths. And this is what forms the basis of Women's Studies in general or the Gender Studies in particular.

**Key words:** Gender difference, Gender biases, Stereotyping, Development, Human rights, Patriarchal mindset

### **Introduction:**

Gender studies stress on equality of treatment to both men and women on all issues. It aims at neutralizing gender difference with the induction of generalized category. It allows no room for gender biases or stereotyping. The primary objective of these studies is to mainstreaming all irrespective of caste, race, and sex as human resources instead of being compartmentalized as he or she. In modern times the social and cultural construction of masculinity and femininity matters more than the biological originality in following the choices of the individuals as regards to dress, eating style, talking attitudes etc. i.e., both men and women are now free to show their reverse traits in the society unlike of the olden days. 'Feminine side' of the men and 'Masculine side' of the women are often exhibited publicly as an outcome of the societal change from patriarchal to practical one. Globally too, Gender Studies examines issues related to migration, development and human rights in a very definitive way. To add a meaning to the needs of Gender Studies, what we require most is to ensure social justice and empowerment for all, leading them as productive members of the society.

### **Needs of Gender Studies for a smiling civilization**

Gender Studies is nowadays one of the important branches of academic research. It aims at promoting social justice by analyzing gender inequalities of all forms and establishing instead mechanisms to empower the weaker sections with qualitative and quantitative salvos in a global context. Representations of gendered identity, be it in literature or in cinema or in mass media, have been hopefully changed now due to Women's movement made in the seventies. Women's status in India has changed appreciably from that of the colonized rule due to struggles launched by women against the absence of suitable forums like National commission for women's, women's police cell etc. Gender specific issues have been addressed through awakening of women's forces, making room of Gender Studies with goals of offering a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of gender's impact on individuals and society. Ensuring political, social, economic and human rights looks like a targeted objective of the enlightened and emancipated mind sets everywhere. In the Indian perspective too, it is no exception. The following may be seen in this regard-

“The Women's Movement after the seventies has been largely responsible for critiquing the social system, generating new perspectives on women's inferior status and initiating measures which could combat the forces oppressing women. It would not be incorrect to aver that many of the measures introduced by the ruling government have been considerably due to the struggles launched by women. The enactment of amendments to the rape law or to the dowry act, the institution of structures such as family courts and the National Commission for Women, women police cells, gender sensitization programmes for officials in different positions are a few illustrations of actions taken because of the constant demands made by women's groups. It is due to constant vigilance of the Women's Movement that rape victims or sufferers of domestic violence get some shelter. The Women's Movement has thus not only brought the women's issues to attention, but has played a pivotal role in empowering women to stand up against forces that curb their freedom.” (1)

Gender Studies is sometimes mistaken as Women's Studies because of a close correlation between the two. But the basic difference between them lies in the periphery of discussions. While Women's Studies focuses on the roles, achievements and interactions of women's as a biological construct, Gender Studies primarily revolves around gendered identity, gendered representation and its intersectionality with other social categories as a social construct shaped by culture, history and other identity markers like race, class and sexuality. Since time immemorial separate roles have been assigned to men and women depending on beliefs of patriarchal society. Dynamics of power and construction of hierarchy have long been determined unilaterally by the patriarchal mindset, making inroads of inequality and injustice to the fair sex everywhere. In literature too the portrayal of women characters witnessed this trend until in 1960 onwards the movement for women's liberation got a momentum. Feminist writers like Virginia Woolf, JK Rowling, Arundhati Roy and others have fought for social justice, gender equality and age-old concept of superiority of masculinity in their works. At present the journal of Gender Studies published from UK is not only a global platform for providing scholarly writings on the lived experiences of the people of all genders but helps to promote true picture of interdisciplinary (literature, history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, law etc) and intersectional (race, class, sexuality) Gender Studies bringing into fore the issues related to it, worldwide.

In the context of India which is a multiracial and multilingual country the women's problems of social, economic, other issues of equality with men are very deplorable and need be addressed urgently. In this context, the abolition of triple talaq system has been a memorable achievement towards justice to the Muslim Women. A glimpse on 'GENDER STUDIES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH' by Dr. K.R.R. Madhuri, at p/3, will suffice to understand it better. Here it is:

“In the Indian context, concern for gender equality almost always focuses on the need to address the greater disadvantages faced by women and girls, compared with men and boys. Female disadvantage pervades the social and economic spheres, beginning with a preference for male children and, hence, pre-natal sex-selection to abort female foetuses, and ending with inadequate social security for widows. Intra-household differences persist between girls and boys in investments in nutrition, health and education, and societal proscriptions that constrain women's mobility, access to economic inputs, and participation in the labor force abound. Although women enjoy equal civil and legal rights in most matters in India, the laws and practices in some communities remain unequal, including provisions related to inheritance, divorce, adoption and other family matters. The key challenges to achieve gender equality lie in closing the gaps between the education of girls and boys, particularly among disadvantaged groups such as Dalits, Adivasis and some religious minorities, health and nutrition, access to inputs (including land, credit and skills), work-force participation (in both the informal and formal sectors and important areas such as agriculture), gender-based violence in the domestic and public spheres, the enforcement of legal rights, and political participation, including local government and state and national assemblies.” (2)

Right to live is a guaranteed right for humans living in any corner of the globe. Humans consist of people of diverse categories. Besides heterosexual community there are also LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) people in the society. The legal right of marriage between homosexuals or between lesbians varies widely from country to country. Jurisdictions in this regard show remarkable variations in different countries. Gender studies explore the avenues of respecting and accepting them all like the heterogeneous populace. After a long battle fought by the transgender people, it is only in 2014, they got the honor of being known as third gender from erstwhile 'other' by the government of India. In spite of steps taken by the government, societal attitude to them does not change appreciably. With a view to achieving the goal of protecting the rights of transgender people, again in 2019 government of India passed in the parliament an act under the title 'The transgender persons (protection of Rights) Act. Gender Studies is deeply connected with all enactments that help to lead the people irrespective of their biological gender identity to the mainstream of life on equal footing sans any discrimination. The Excerpt of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019 Passed by parliament released by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, may be seen in this regard to have the stand of the State-

The proposed Bill has following provisions: -

- i. Nondiscrimination against a Transgender Person in educational institutions, employment, healthcare services etc.

- ii. Recognition of identity of Transgender Persons and to confer upon them right to self-perceived gender identity.
- iii. Provision of right of Residence with parents and immediate family members.
- iv. Provision for formulation of welfare schemes and programmes for education, social security and health of Transgender Persons.
- v. Provision for National Council for Transgender Persons to advice, monitor and evaluate measures for the protection of their rights.

The Bill will make all the stakeholders responsive and accountable for upholding the principles underlying the Bill. It will bring greater accountability on the part of the Central Government and State Governments/Union Territories Administrations for issues concerning Transgender persons.

The Bill will benefit a large number of transgender persons, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalized section and bring them into the mainstream of society. It will lead to greater inclusiveness and will make the transgender persons productive members of the society.” (3)

The narratives described multiple in enormities of pathetic and dark tales where the victims belong to LGBTQ individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning. The present world is markedly different from the world of seventies of the last century. Now through women’s empowerment and emancipation men and women are seen workings together with equal status in every walk of life including science and spaceships. Reflections of it are found abundantly in literature. The history of this shift in attitudes crosses boundary i.e., geographically also the tales of gender studies bear some affinity with regards to approaches both intersectional as well as interdisciplinary. Ann Oakley, a prominent British sociologist and feminist scholar played a crucial role in introducing and popularizing the term ‘gender’ as a concept distinct from biological sex in her book, ‘Sex, gender and Society’ published in 1972. However, as of now, the novels of Virginia Woolf and Arundhati Roy may be taken as specimen of case studies where both the female writers have emerged as crusaders of gender equality fighting against societal norms, expectations and stereotypes. Let’s start with the novel of Virginia Woolf’s. A Critical Study of Gender Issues in Virginia Woolf’s Novel Orlando by DR. UMAJI ANANDA PATIL, may be perused to study gender as an identity category or to broaden up Gender Studies that naturalize, normalize, and discipline gender across historical and cultural contexts-

“Virginia Woolf’s Orlando is foundational text in realm of feminist critical theories. The element which is dominant in this novel is controversial concept of gender. Woolf allows her protagonist to go from male to female half way through which novel sets in 16th century. The plot of the novel is woven round the character of Orlando who is nobleman. He strives with love and the art of writing. To escape from clinging lover, Orlando flees to Turkey where he works as ambassador. As woman, Orlando stays there with a gypsy community for a while before returning to England. She gradually becomes accustomed to her female identity. After reaching in the region of Queen Victoria She gets married and has child. Virginia Woolf presents Orlando quite normal both being male and female. He / she lives through centuries and meets some unique characters.” (4)

Arundhati Roy's novel *God of Small Things* is a bold one to highlight the oppression and depression of the marginalized people by the patriarchal mindset of the society. The adverse effects of caste systems play dominant in the story. Moreover, forbidden love seems to be the main theme of the story. Gender Studies takes a new turn with the bold depiction of adult relationship in literature by the feminist writer and social activist working for human rights and environmental causes. Srijia Nandy's 'Gender, Caste, and Love Laws in *The God of Small Things*: Contradictions and Trauma in a Post-Colonial Panorama' may be read in this regard-

"The adverse themes of caste disputes, social stratification, women's misery, class problems, untouchability, gender inequality, chauvinism, misogyny, in contemporary Indian society prevalent around the later half of the 20th century have been delineated in this novel in their raw forms. Roy's female characters create multidimensionality who defies societal norms, expectations, and stereotypes. They are oppressed, marginalized and also face discrimination. The gender issue seems to be the most thought provoking in *The God of Small Things*. The 'weaker sex' is incessantly exploited because of the patriarchal laws and fortunes that rests in man's hands. These rules decide how a woman should behave and act being within the society. The novel portrays their pathetic plight, intolerable pain and unexplainable struggle. The fact that who could love (and whom), in what ways (and how), and also how much (i.e., severity) were dictated by societal norms (love laws)." (5)

Despite fulfilling all essential and desirable qualifications (both educational and technical) and despite of the protection of rights passed in the parliament transgender communities often undergo through bitter experiences and mental trauma during their journey to life, mostly due to the societal attitude. The story of Manabi Bandyopadhyaya, the first transgender becoming the principal of a government college in Krishnagar, Nadia, W.B. is a glaring example of how toughest the struggle she had to face and won against this societal attitude. Gender Studies serves to effect a change in societal attitude. It will not be out of place to mention here what the professor said in an interview with *Hindusthan Times*. Here it is:

"I was the first transgender professor in West Bengal and the first transgender to complete a PhD. Despite getting my due honour, I have always faced threats and insults," said Bandopadhyay, who completed her PhD on transgenders in 2005.

"It is not the post that I sought after. It's the achievement and honour that's most important," she said. (6)

## **Conclusion**

Amartya Sen's work on 'Capability Approach' brings into the fore again this societal attitude that shows preferences for sons and sex-selective abortions. His assertion on needs of women's empowerment to freedom like that of men's in deciding their life path and allow them equal rights for overall development of the country with no impositions of barriers that restrict women's capabilities. And in the instant case, Gender Studies owes a lot to Sen's feminist economics theory for development of a nation, especially of the developing countries like India.

The violence on women both domestic and social, oppression on their rights both economic and political need be curbed timely and honouring their talent and power is a boon to maximize their potentiality in the development of the nation. But unfortunately, though the rapists of Nirbhaya have been punished, the rapists and murderers of Abhaya have not yet been punished

which is a shame on civilized society. Denying justified pay packets or scopes to them will only pave the way of forfeiture of extracting the bests from them and thus stay deprived of full utilization of human resources.

Globally too, Gender Studies examines issues related to migration, development and human rights in a very definitive way. It is however, feared by some that frustration may crop up sometimes in later ages amongst the converted identities as compared to those born with biological identities. Still there should be no external judge than the person concern to dictate the course of his life paths. And this is what forms the basis of Women's Studies in general or the Gender Studies in particular.

## References

1. Neera Desai & Usha Thakkar, Women in India, at pp/166-167, National Book Trust, India, First Edition, 2001, Reprint, 2020.
2. GENDER STUDIES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH' by Dr. K.R.R. Madhuri, at p/3 <https://researchdirections.org/Management/pdfreadpage.php?filename=article1133.pdf> Accessed 10 August. 2025.
3. The Excerpt of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019 Passed by parliament released by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, dated 27.11.2019
4. <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1593871> Accessed 10 August. 2025.
5. A Critical Study of Gender Issues in Virginia Woolf's Novel Orlando by DR. UMAJI ANANDA PATIL, p/1
6. <https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol10-issue6/Ser-2/J10066566.pdf> Accessed 10 August. 2025.
7. Gender, Caste, and Love Laws in The God of Small Things: Contradictions and Trauma in a Post-Colonial Panorama by Srija Nandy, p/3
8. [https://ijels.com/upload\\_document/issue\\_files/12IJELS-101202545-Gender.pdf](https://ijels.com/upload_document/issue_files/12IJELS-101202545-Gender.pdf) Accessed 10 August. 2025.
9. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/kolkata/manabi-bandopadhyay-india-s-first-transgender-college-principal/story-wBm82ypfC5kJWc9i3Oh6VN.html> Accessed 10 August. 2025