**Gender**

**Sample Introductions:**

1. Ever since the dawn of humanity in the fertile coast along Euphratic and Tigric rivers, the daughter of Eve has been subjected to endless social injustices. Her puppet-like existence has always been at the mercy of the sons of Adam, sometimes in the form of father and brother, and sometimes in the of form merciless husband. A major breakthrough in her perpetual existence of serfdom was only made possible in the eighteenth century when a courageous and outspoken Marry Wollstonecraft had published her magnum opus ‘A Vindication of the Rights of Women’. It had not only kindred the flame of freedom in the hearts of millions of women but also laid the foundation of a movement that would then go on to secure the social, political, economic, and civil rights for women. Such has been the importance of feminism and feminist movement in the course of human history, and so remains today. An analysis on the contours of feminism as well as its growing influence and acceptability among women reveals its popularity. This importance is given just because of the contribution of feminism along the vast spectrums. The feminism movement, with its bright prospects can easily overcome the existing challenges facing women across the globe.
2. From the horrific case of 27-year-old Noor Muqaddam, who was brutally tortured and beheaded in the nation’s capital in July 2021, to that of Ayesha Ikram, a digital creator, who was harassed and groped on the country’s Independence Day by more than 400 men on the grounds of one of the country’s major national monuments, the Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore – it feels as if violence against women has reached epidemic proportions. The last few months have been particularly harrowing for Pakistani women.
3. Intellectual journey is like a marathon. It is an exhaustingly long competition against ignorance. At times a person feels tired, about to give up, about to concede to the daunting presence and comfort of ignorance. Nonetheless, she keeps on going, battered by the incognizance of everyday, pushed on by the mystery of life, forced to push through the darkness and bring about the reign of light. It is a very long struggle that only terminates temporarily at the event of death, but is soon taken up by a predecessor; hence, it is a relay marathon. A marathon that would continue until a human continues to breathe on this planet.

**Expected Essays and Useful Arguments**

1. **Equality, Patriarchy and Misogyny , Role of Biology and Psychanalysis, Gender Stereotypes**
2. **Readings**
3. **Role of patriarchy in widespread women oppression (**The Creation of Patriarchy by Gerda Lerner**)**

“Gerda Lerner traces the development of patriarchy from prehistoric societies to the ancient Near East. She argues that patriarchy is not a natural development but rather a historical process that emerged in response to specific social and economic conditions” – The Creation of Patriarchy by Gerda Lerner

Although early humans from Hunter-gatherers societies were characterized by relatively equal relations between women and men, the rise of agriculture and development of private property alongside division of labor led to the subordination of women and the development of gender roles and gender stereotypes. As men began to accumulate wealth and power, the also began to control women’s sexuality and reproduction, leading to the establishment of patriarchal family structures and the exclusion of women from public life.

With the rise of agriculture and development, men began to dominate as primary producers of food, leading to a male-dominated social structure.

Religion legitimized patriarchy and the subordination of women and consequently, patriarchal attitudes and structures were reinforced through cultural practices such as language, myth, and ritual – The case studies of Sumerian city-states of Mesopotamia and Egypt’s patriarchal norms.

The Sumerian city-states of Mesopotamia were characterized by a **complex hierarchy** that emerged as a result of the **growth of trade and commerce**. This hierarchy favored the interests of men, who were able to accumulate wealth and power by participating in trade and other commercial activities.

In Egyptian mythology, the gods were often depicted as male, and the goddesses were associated with more domestic and nurturing roles. This reinforced the idea that men were the dominant gender and that women's roles were limited to the domestic sphere. The concept of Ma'at (goddess of truth and justice) also reinforced the idea of male superiority, as the pharaoh was seen as the ultimate embodiment of Ma'at and had absolute power over his subjects, including women.

Language played a key role in the creation and perpetuation of patriarchy. The use of gendered language, such as the association of masculine words with power and dominance and feminine words with passivity and subservience, reinforced gender roles and hierarchies. Even in ancient languages, the words for "man" and "human" were often interchangeable, but as societies became more patriarchal, "man" came to be understood as the default or universal human, while "woman" was relegated to a lesser status.

Myth and ritual were also used to reinforce and justify patriarchal dominance. Many ancient myths depict the world as being created by a male deity, and that this deity often creates woman as a subordinate or secondary figure. Similarly, in many ancient rituals and ceremonies, women were excluded or relegated to secondary roles, reinforcing the idea of male superiority and female inferiority.

Modern patriarchy emerged in the 18th century with the rise of industrial capitalism. The new family structure was based on the male breadwinner model, which confined women to the private sphere of the home and excluded them from the public sphere of work and politics. The division of labor between men and women in order to maximize profits also reinforced the toxic norm.

1. **Misogyny (**“Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny” by Kate Manne**)**

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Innumerable are the ways in which misogyny manifests itself in society. From verbal harassment to physical violence, women face a range of misogynistic acts on a daily basis. These acts include the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and authority, the gender pay gap, the objectification and sexualization of women's bodies in media and advertising, and the pervasive belief that women are not as competent or capable as men. Additionally, women often experience gaslighting, silencing, and other forms of emotional abuse that are rooted in misogyny. The effects of misogyny are far-reaching, permeating every level of society and reinforcing harmful gender norms and stereotypes.

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1. Misogyny should be understood as a social and political phenomenon, rather than just an individual attitude or behavior.
2. It is a form of gendered social control, which aims to enforce and uphold patriarchal norms and expectations, by punishing women
3. By enforcing patriarchal norms and punishing women who resist them, misogyny reinforces gender inequality and limits the freedom and autonomy of both men and women.
4. The logic behind misogyny is a social order that reinforces traditional gender roles and norms, which are typically associated with men being dominant and women being submissive.
5. Sexual objectification and harassment, epistemic subordination, enforcement of patriarchal norms, rape and domestic violence are some of the misogynist acts against women.
6. Reinforcement of gender norms, gender discrimination, normalization of domestic violence, self-censorship to avoid public backlash and undermining women’s abilities are among the various adverse implications of misogyny on society.
7. **Key Pioneers in Women’s Rights Movements**

There have been many pioneers of gender equality throughout history, but here are a few key individuals who have made significant contributions:

* **Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)**: Wollstonecraft was an English writer and philosopher who is best known for her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792). In this work, she argued that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.
* **Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906):** Anthony was an American women's rights activist who played a crucial role in the women's suffrage movement. She helped to organize the National Woman Suffrage Association and worked tirelessly to secure voting rights for women.
* **Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928):** Pankhurst was a British suffragette who founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. The WSPU was a militant organization that used tactics such as hunger strikes and property damage to draw attention to the cause of women's suffrage.
* **Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986):** de Beauvoir was a French writer and philosopher who is best known for her book "The Second Sex" (1949). In this work, she argued that women are not born but rather made into women through societal expectations and norms.
* **Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-2020):** Ginsburg was an American lawyer and judge who became a champion of gender equality during her tenure on the US Supreme Court. She fought for reproductive rights, equal pay, and against gender discrimination in all forms

1. **Topics**
2. **Gender Equality: A Popular Slogan**

Thesis Statement:

­­­Although some critics posit that gender equality is just a popular slogan and cannot be achieved due to innate difference between the two genders; however, the inequality between the two genders is a result of some historically unequal social and political structures, and if women are provided with equal opportunities as to men, they can perform at par with men. Thus, gender equality cannot merely remain a popular slogan.

1. **Gender Equality is a Myth**

Thesis Statement:

Although critics argue that gender equality among all the genders is not achievable due to their innate differences; however, this inequality is a result of some historically unequal social and political structures, and if all the genders are provided with equal opportunities as to men, they would perform at par with men. Hence, gender equality among all the genders is both achievable and desirable.

1. **Universal Human Equality is Utopic**
2. **Can Women be equal to Men in Pakistan?**
3. **Boys will be boys (Done)**
4. **Frailty, thy name is Woman (Meaning: - “Weakness, your name is woman”) (Done)**

Ever since the dawn of human societies along the fertile lands of Mesopotamia and Egypt to the societies of modern times, woman has widely been deemed a fragile creature. Many people, across the globe, still hold the viewpoint of women being weak due to their perceived physical appearances. The statement, “Frailty, thy name is woman” serves as a prime example of the pervasive notion against women. Nevertheless, this standpoint is misguided and has no valid reason to believe in. The essay argues that while it is true that men have comparatively a slight edge over women in terms of their physical strength but this sole aspect cannot undermine women’s abilities to thrive and grow in any sphere of life, including physical strength. From contributions in foraging and gathering food in hunter-gatherer societies to the participations in areas of modern science and arts, women have always renounced the popular perception of being weak and ‘other’ gender to men whenever given with equal cerebral opportunities in life. History and current times have replete with innumerable women figures who are considered epitomes in their own fields. Among the many names, the name of Mary Wollstonecraft, who spearheaded the women's rights movement across the globe; Marie Curie, a genius scientist of the twentieth century; Fatima Jinnah, a pioneer of Pakistan’s Independence Movement; and Ronda Rousey, the greatest woman champion in the field of Mixed Martial Arts, are just a few examples of women who have made significant contributions to the world. Despite all the progress and contributions, women are still being discriminated, despised and even killed in many parts of the world. The roots of such misogynist behaviours against women can be traced back to the urge to maintain a societal hierarchy that reinforces conventional gender roles and harmful patriarchal standards within the community. Therefore, certain measures pertaining to address the harmful misogynist behaviours against women, empower women with equal cerebral opportunities in life and challenge the conventional gender roles and toxic patriarchal norms in society are required in order to allow women to excel at par with men.

1. **Social and Economic Securities for Women in Islam**
2. **Women Rights and Honor Killing in Pakistan**
3. **Fulfillment of ‘New Woman’ in Pakistan is a myth**
4. **Patriarchy and Misogyny in the Digital Age: Navigating the Complexities of Online Harassment and Gender-Based Violence**

* Patriarchy and misogyny in Digital Age
* Complexities of online harassment
* Complexities of Gender-Based Violence in the digital age.

1. **Moves for Women Empowerment and their subsequent positive changes, Feminism and its controversial issues**
2. **Readings**

**Feminism** is a social, political and cultural movement that advocates for gender equality and aims at eliminating discrimination against women based on their gender. It seeks to promote women’s rights and addresses issues such as women’s suffrage, reproductive rights, workplace discrimination and gender-based violence.

**Brief History of Feminism**

Feminism has a long history that spans over centuries and continents.

**First Wave of Feminism**

* The earliest feminist movements emerged during the Enlightenment period in Europe in the eighteenth century. Women began to challenge traditional gender roles assigned to them by society and demanded more rights and freedom. Mary Wollstonecraft’s book, “A Vindication of the Rights of Women,” is often regarded as the first feminist text.
* Among the names of notable activists were Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady, Mary Wollstonecraft and Alice Paul. The fight for women’s rights gained momentum in 1848 with the first convention held at Seneca Falls, New York, which was aimed at granting voting rights to women

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**Second Wave of Feminism**

The second wave of feminism began in the 1960s and lasted until the early 1980s. It focused on broader issues such as gender equality at workplace, reproductive rights of women and their sexuality. Key figures of this wave include Betty Friedan and Simon de Beauvoir.

**Third Wave of Feminism**

The third wave of feminism emerged in the 1990s and is still ongoing. It seeks to focus on intersectionality, inclusivity and the fight against gender-based violence. Notable figures of the movement are Kimberle Crenshaw and Audre Lorde.

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**"We Should all be Feminists"** written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

An insightful and thought-provoking essay by Chimamanda Ngozi that delves into the issues of feminism and its relevance in contemporary.

The essay is divided into several sections, each exploring a different aspect of feminism. In the first section, the concept of feminism has been elaborated. At its core, it is about the belief of social, economic and political equality of the sexes. Further, feminism is not about hating men but about advocating for the rights of women and dismantling the pervasive patriarchal structures that inhibit women's progress.

The second section focuses on how patriarchal structures in the Global South or mostly in African countries are shaping gender roles and limiting women's potential to thrive. The author, Ngozi, reflects on how the gender inequalities in Nigeria are mirrored in different ways in societies across the globe.

The third section in the essay largely addresses the issue of gender inequality in workplace. The prevalence of gender discrimination and the "glass ceiling" that prevents women from advancing their careers. The author points out the double standards in the workplace when it comes to gender and success - women are often labeled as "bossy" and "pushy" when they assert themselves in the workplace, while men who do the same are praised for their ambitions.

Last, men's inclusion as allies in the feminist cause is crucial for overall success of the movement.

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**Book - The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf**

Beauty industry has a negative impact on women’s lives, contributing to disempowerment of women and perpetuating gender inequality.

Beauty myth is a form of social control, keeping women preoccupied with their appearance and creating unrealistic and unattainable beauty standards. This puts social pressures on women to conform to these standards through media, advertising and fashion industry.

The economic and political factors solely drive the beauty and fashion industry. The beauty industry is linked to the larger economic system, as it is part of the consumer culture. Further, it is driven by the desire to create and maintain consumer demand, and that this is achieved through advertising, media, and other means of influencing consumer behavior. Additionally on political part, the rise of neoliberalism and globalization, have influenced the beauty industry. She argues that the beauty industry has become a globalized industry that profiteers from selling the idea of beauty as a way of life, rather than just a product.

The book "The Beauty Myth", by Naomi Wolf, is a seminal work in the feminist literature that makes a clarion call to challenge the fashion and beauty industry that portrays woman as a sex object. It encourages women to work towards a society that values skills, talent and contributions of individuals rather appearances in determining their fate in society.

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**Nordic Model of Social Welfare**

When the world is grappling with issues such as skyrocketing inflation, ageing population, disrupting global energy systems, immigrations, off-shoring and global warming the Nordic model of social welfare has managed to sustain itself.

Perhaps the most prominent aspect of the Nordic model of social welfare is the large public sector and its role in the overall economy. Critics often argue that such a large public sector is run through higher taxes in the Nordic nations. Notwithstanding, proponents contend that progressive taxation is an essential part of an economy which enables investments in human development sectors and prevents market failure often stemmed by underinvestment. With this view, higher taxes are not deemed a hindrance in overall sustainable economic growth. Instead, they are seen as a mechanism that supports equal opportunities and fosters overall national competitiveness.

The model differs primarily from other welfare state models because of its universalism regarding the rights to services and benefits, the role of large public sector in providing these rights and the importance of redistribution as a principle of providing benefits.

Compared with other countries, the Nordic nations spend both on healthcare and education generously, averaging around twelve percent of their gross domestic product. This places them at the top in the list of OECD countries. Underlying idea is that a healthy and educated workforce can drive productivity and ultimately lead to high income. Another benefit cited by the proponents is the fact that the healthcare is provided through public sector, helping ensure equal opportunities and promoting social mobility. Further, proponents of the Nordic model contend that investment in such a key public service of providing quality education – along with childcare, health care and job training – helps increase productivity and employment.

* International comparison of public spending on active labor market programs as percentage of GDP (OECD)

Denmark 3.3, Finland 2.9

* Percentage of female workforce employed in various nations (ages 15-64) (OECD)

Iceland 90%, Sweden 80%, Denmark

The Nordic countries have been able to achieve a high level of prosperity, while simultaneously securing a more even distribution of income with less difference between high- and low-income groups. The level of income per capita places Nordic countries in the top ranks of OECD nations, along with the US, Germany, Switzerland and Luxembourg.

Increased productivity is the main contributor of economic growth and increased prosperity. Measuring the GNI per hour worked indicates the extent to which a country can generate income for every hour worked.

Top 30 countries rated as having the happiest populations - OECD

Top 30 countries rated on social progress - OECD

1. **Topics**

**Women University as Agents of Change**

**Gender Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow**

**Greater political power alone will not improve women’s plight (done)**

* Political Power is Not Enough

Examples of countries with high levels of female political representation but still low gender equality (e.g. India, Saudi Arabia)

Discussion of how political power alone does not address systemic issues such as economic inequality and cultural attitudes towards women

**Body Paragraphs on above two points:**

While the representation of women in politics has increased globally, this alone has not resulted in significant improvements in gender equality. A notable example is **India**, where the proportion of female lawmakers in the lower house of parliament has risen from 5% in 1952 to 14% in 2019, yet the country still ranks 112th in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. The reason for this is that women's political representation does not necessarily translate into gender-sensitive policies, as political structures and societal attitudes often perpetuate gender bias. Furthermore, women in politics are often relegated to lower positions of power and decision-making, leaving the majority of political power in the hands of men. In such scenarios, political power alone does not address the larger systemic issues of gender inequality.

Moreover, countries such as **Saudi Arabia**, where women were granted the right to vote and stand for election only in 2015, still have deeply entrenched patriarchal systems that restrict women's autonomy and independence. Political power alone is not enough to overcome the cultural attitudes and discriminatory social norms that are prevalent in such societies. Even with the increase in female political representation, gender inequality persists due to the lack of structural change, as women continue to face economic and social barriers that impede their progress. Without addressing the underlying issues such as unequal pay, limited access to education, and a lack of legal protections, women cannot fully benefit from the gains in political power. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that political power alone cannot improve women's plight unless it is complemented by larger societal and structural changes.

* Changes are needed in accessing quality education and healthcare, mainstreaming gender stereotypical behaviors towards women and challenging pervasive patriarchal structures of societies that are impeding women progress and empowerment.

**The causes of female backwardness in Pakistan and an appraisal of the contribution that women can make to the national development effort.**

**Should men be involved in feminist activism, and if so, in what ways? (done)**

**Does the term "feminism" still accurately represent the movement for gender equality, or does it need to be updated to reflect intersectionality and inclusivity? (done)**

**Plight of Women and Moves for their Empowerment**

**The controversial issues of feminism in the contemporary women’s rights movements. (done)**

**Women in Sports: A new challenge to cope with**

**New Waves of Feminism and Our Culture (done)**

**Feminism is not really a Third World Issue (dome)**