

## Co-education: Merits and Demerits.

Your outline is fine and all points are relevant

### Outline

Coherence and use of transitions are well

#### (A) Introduction

• Thesis statement: Co-education's merits include fostering social confidence, raising educational awareness and providing opportunities to excel in a competitive and cost-effective educational settings. In contrast, its demerits include cultural hindrances, an increased likelihood of unnecessary arguments, social challenges for female students and male dominant educational activities.

But weak attention grabber. Try to make a little bit strong hook so to attract the attention of the examiner

#### (B) Merits of co-education

Avoid your grammatical mistakes mainly subject verb agreement mistakes...

#### (B) Merits of co-education...

(i) Cost efficient education system.

(ii) Helps to achieve gender parity in education

↳ Pakistan educational statistics report 22-23

(iii) More comfortability in working together in future

↳ Harvard University research.

(iv) Equal educational standards will provide equal opportunities for both gender

↳ Pay gaps

(v) Increases educational standards by increasing competition.

↳ Finland case study.

(vi) Increase mutual respect, empathy and understanding about opposite gender

↳ Case study Greenwood High International School, India

(vii) Break stereotypes and gender biasness

↳ Egalia School, Sweden  
Case study



(c) De-Merits of co-education.

(i) Cultural norms resists co-education  
↳ Tribal areas of Pakistan.

Subject verb  
agreement mistake

(ii) More risk of involvement in unnecessary arguments that  
distract focus from studies.  
↳ Ipsos report of increasing polarisation  
among Gen Z men and women

(iii) Increase Social challenges for girls  
↳ Harassment issues, Guardian report of harassment  
issues in Australian school.

(iv) Dominance of male students in co-curriculum  
activities

↳ Universities of Pakistan and research on  
German schools

(v) Increased peer conformity that reinforce stereotypes.  
↳ Research by Abhinandita Chakraborty (2023)

(vi) Challenges in addressing gender specific <sup>issues</sup> needs.

(vii) Lack of proper guidance in early relationships.  
↳ Lack of sex education in single  
National Curriculum.

(D) Conclusion.



## The Essay

In the past, men and women were trained and educated differently in separate educational settings. Men, due to their physical superiority over women, were trained to perform arduous tasks like hunting, fighting and laborious work. On the other hand, women, due to their role in child birth and lower physical strength, were mostly confined to homes and were educated accordingly. However, with the advent of modern technology, most tasks can now be performed with equal accuracy by both men and women, as they require more mental capabilities than physical strength. As a result, a new concept emerged to educate men and women together in the same educational settings, known as co-education. This system is often debated for its merits and demerits. Its merits include fostering social confidence, raising educational standards, and providing opportunities to excel in equitable and cost effective educational settings. In contrast, its demerits include cultural hindrances, an increased likelihood of unnecessary arguments, social challenges for female students, and male dominant educational activities.

To begin with, co-education is a cost efficient education system. It does not require separate schools for boys and girls, thereby saving cost on infrastructure and teacher salaries. Moreover, this system is beneficial for countries whose educational systems are suffering from financial constraints. For example, Pakistan, which spends less 3% of its GDP on education, can use co-education to cut down infrastructural cost and expand access to learning in an efficient and economical manner. Thus, by lowering infrastructure and staffing



, co-education fosters a more affordable and sustainable educational framework.

Additionally, having the same school for boys and girls helps to achieve gender parity in education. In many developing countries, there is a significant gap in gender parity in education. The primary reason for this is a weaker educational infrastructure for girls compared to boys, as governments tend to prioritize boys' schools over girls' schools due to financial constraints. For instance, according to the Pakistan Educational Statistics 2022-23, out of total public schools, 60% of public-schools are designated for boys, leaving girls at a disadvantage. However, co-education, by allowing both genders to attend the same school, helps reduce discrimination in authorities' preference for gender over the other. Thus, co-education ensures equal access to education for both genders, promoting gender parity in education.

Moreover, co-education increases comfort for the opposite genders to work together in the future. In co-educational settings, boys and girls learn and practice in various educational activities, engaging in discussions and collaborations. Such practices foster familiarity and ease when working with opposite gender. For instance, Harvard Business School conducted research to examine the impact of co-education on workplace collaboration. The study concluded that individuals educated in co-educational environments have higher comfort level and improve team performance. This is attributed to early collaboration between the genders during their learning phase. Therefore, through increased interaction in educational activities, co-education engenders a conducive environment for opposite genders to work together in future.



In addition to this, equal educational standards for both genders ensures equal opportunities. Even in this modern world, women continue to face discrimination in the workplace. For instance, according to International Labour Organisation report from 2025, the global gender pay gap stands at 25%, meaning women earn 25% less than men per hour. However, co-education has the potential to reduce this gap. In co-educational settings, boys and girls attend the same classrooms, participate in the same activities, and have access to the same facilities, which provides an equal foundation for skill and personality development. This empowers women to become as valuable asset to their employer as men. Therefore, by offering equal educational opportunities, co-education help reduce workplace discrimination.

Besides this, co-education fosters competition in educational institutes. When both boys and girls compete in the same setting, the level of competition rises as more minds are involved. For instance, in a relative grading system, competition intensifies with number of talented minds competing in the examination. This system, when implements in co-educational classrooms, the exam becomes more challenging as boys and girls compete against each other. This pushes students to study harder to achieve better grades, ultimately raising educational standards. Therefore, co-education, by bringing together bright minds in a single classroom, enhances education through increased competition.



Furthermore, co-education fosters empathy, respect, and understanding between genders. In a mixed-gender environment, students work and communicate with members of opposite, which helps increase respect, understanding and empathy towards them. For instance, Greenwood High International School in Bangalore, India, has integrated a gender-inclusive curriculum and teaching practices across all grade levels. ~~Th. If~~ Teachers receive regular training on gender sensitivity and inclusive classroom management to ensure equitable participation opportunities for all students. Resultantly, the co-educational environment at the school has fostered a culture of mutual respect, collaboration and empathy among students—outcome that would be difficult to achieve without such an environment. Therefore, co-education encourages interaction and collaboration, enabling teachers to promote mutual respect and empathy.

Lastly, co-education is instrumental in breaking stereotypes and gender bias. In a conventional education system, there is a high likelihood of students adopting the gender discriminate gender roles set by the society in the past. For instance, girls may not consider themselves fit to pursue scientific fields like civil or mechanical engineering. Similarly, boys often view the arts as a field often & only suitable for girls. However, co-education helps reduce such bias by educating all genders in a gender-neutral environment. To illustrate, a school in Sweden Egalia school, in Sweden, has adopted a gender neutral strategy to counter traditional stereotypes. It has introduced gender-neutral terms, replacing "he" or "she" with "hen", preventing children from associating themselves with gender roles. Moreover, tradition-



al stories like Cinderella are replaced with gender-neutral stories to serve the same purpose. Consequently, such educational schemes have helped make Sweden one of the most gender-equal countries. Therefore, healthy interactions between opposite gender in gender-neutral co-education settings help break discriminatory stereotypes and gender bias, enabling students to excel in fields they deem fit for themselves.

In fact, co-education has its merits. However, there is no rose without a thorn; co-education is often debated for its demerits and impracticability in rigid societies.

Firstly, cultural norms in some rigid societies resist co-education, making parents reluctant to send their children to schools offering co-education. Unlike developed societies, mixed gender environments are still considered taboo in developing and under-developed societies. To illustrate, tribal areas of K.P.K are still highly reluctant to accept this new change. Dawn reported that in 2019, Tanzim-e-Usatza in Lower Dir rejected the K.P government's proposal to introduce co-education in primary schools. This highlights the reluctance of the people in that area to accept co-education. Therefore, in backward areas where access to education itself is a distant dream, co-education may only add insult to injury.



Moreover, in co-educational settings, there is an increased risk of the involvement of students in unnecessary arguments, which distracts their focus from studies. In the current era, polarisation between the two genders has increased due to the negative influence from social media and gender debates on feminism and LGBTQ rights. To provide evidence, according to Ipsos, a global <sup>research</sup> marketing and public opinion company, gender polarisation is increasing, especially among GenZ men and women. Such polarisations have the potential to distract young minds from studies by fanning hate and intolerance. Therefore, with increasing gender polarisation, a co-educational environment is not suitable for productive and efficient learning.

Besides this, co-education brings more social challenges for girls. In a society dominated by patriarchy, there is an increased chance that girls could face harassment from fellow male students. For instance, the Guardian reported that Australian school teachers have witnessed a culture of misogyny, sexual harassment, and gender based violence in Australian schools. According to the report, such behaviour is a result of exposure to violent pornography, social media influences, and post-pandemic behavioural changes. Such behaviour creates an unsafe environment for girls in co-educational classrooms. Hence, amidst increasing polarisation, co-education increases social challenges for female students.



Furthermore, another demerit of co-education is the dominance of boys over extra-curricular activities. Despite many efforts and debate over equal rights, patriarchal culture is still prevalent among the societies. Such a culture in educational institutes leads to unequal opportunities for women to excel. For instance, in one of the renowned university of Pakistan, Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute, the presidential positions of all students' societies are dominated by boys, depriving women of the opportunity to hone their leadership skills. Moreover, according to a research titled Gender Construction in Co Educational Physical Education: A Case Study of German Schools, reveals that PE classes in German schools tend to prioritise boys, resulting in the marginalisation of activities preferred by girls, such as dance and gymnastics. This is another example of male dominant extra-curricular activities. Thus, the dominance of male students over extra-curricular activities overshadows women's role in these activities.

Additionally, in co-educational settings, there is a high likelihood of peer conformity among students, which can reinforce stereotypes. Research titled "Social Conformity Among Peer Groups in Educational Institutions" argues that the desire for acceptance, or fear of rejection, increases the risk of negative consequences from conformity among students in co education. One of the main consequence is that, in order to increase chance of acceptance by other peer groups, students prioritise traditional gender roles, which reinforce gender biased stereotypes. Therefore, co-education can reinforce biased stereotypes by increasing peer pressure among students.



Lastly, co-educational systems faces challenges in addressing gender-specific needs. Discussing gender specific issues is often considered taboo in traditional societies, leading to a gap in addressing such issues. For instance, in Pakistan, societal and cultural norms dissuade girls from discussing issues like the menstrual cycle in front of the opposite gender. This leads to a lack of proper addressing and raising awareness about such issues in educational institutes — first place of learning after the home. Therefore, cultural and societal norms hinder the proper addressing of gender-specific issues in co-educational settings.

In retrospect, co-education has its own merits and demerits. On the one hand, co-education is a cost efficient educational system, which allows authorities to expand educational services to a wider and more diverse population. Moreover, it fosters equitable, conducive and supportive environment for the both genders. It also helps raising educational standards by increasing competition and breaks biased stereotypes. On the other hand, rigid cultural norms, gender polarisation and increased social challenges for girls in co-education hinders the overall progress of quality education. Furthermore, women face obstacles in fully participating in extra-curricular activities and addressing their gender specific issues. Therefore, co-education, with its merits and demerits, is not a perfect model — but one that must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of society. As Martin Scorsese aptly said, "All things must evolve to stay relevant".