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Name: Abeera Asim

Subj: Essay

Date: 12. Jan. 2025

Roll No: 017

Girls are weighed down
by restrictions, and
boys with demands -
two equally harmful
disciplines.

"OUTLINE"

1)

Introduction :

Thesis Statement

It is a fact that girls are subjected to more restrictions than boys and boys to societal expectations, which ultimately

plays a major role in shaping the course of their life, respectively.

2) How girls face restrictions across multiple domains in life:

2.1) Girls, as opposed to boys, always have to obey a bigger set of rules.

(2.1.a) Not given permission to go everywhere

e.g. In South Asian cultures specially, letting your daughters go to concerts, cinemas, with no strict curfew, is highly frowned upon.

(2.1.b) The idea also arises from the perception of girls being too weak to protect themselves when alone.

2.2) The mindset that "Girls do not have to necessarily attain education," has killed more dreams than one can count.

(2.2.a) Across ^{all} the countries globally, the illiteracy rate is higher in women than men. (UN)

(2.2.b) Women are perceived to have

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become "too modern" and liberal if they acquire knowledge.

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2.3)

Those who do manage to attain it are also restricted from going out and working in the patriarchal world.

(2.3.a) Not allowed to put their degree and years of hardwork to use.

(2.3.b) The concept of independent women is discouraged in many underdeveloped and developing countries globally.

2.4)

A shared trait in many cultures is early marriages of girls

(2.4.a) Girls, in most cases, are not allowed to object. — have to obey irregardless of what they want.

(2.4.b) Very common in parts of Africa, South Asia and some Middle - Eastern countries.

(2.4.c) Frequently observed in Muslim communities by extreme Islamists.

2.5) Participation in politics, governance, sports, etc., is also not appreciated — they are all considered a job not fit for women.

3) How boys struggle under the burden of expectations:

3.1) Since teenage, boys are expected to develop interests across multiple domains — and participate in them.

(3.1.a) Expected to develop a knack for a promising future and to set upon it from early on.

3.2) Greater pressure of achieving good grades.

(3.2.a) Good grades meant bigger opportunities from better institutes — hence, a decent job.

(3.2.b) A study shows that boys are more prone to anxiety and borderline depression due to the pressures of meeting the societal expectations (New York Times)

3.3) Boys eventually have to provide for their families — and the sole pressure of that has proven risky for them.

(3.3.a) Pakistan's case study:

Men have a life expectancy of 66 years, over a decade less than that of women.

(3.3.b) Factors contributing to it, ^{among others,} are:

Stress, societal expectations and pressures — ultimately leading to health issues.

3.4) Managing the household chores, bills and other expenses.

(3.4.a) If a husband and his wife are both employed, the bills ascribed to men range across a large domain.

3.5) The obligation of being able to sustain a comfortable life for himself and his family even post - retirement.

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Conclusion

Throughout their lives, girls and boys are put through different trials which have the potential to make them as well as break them.

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A society is formed by the joint efforts of everyone who is a part of it. According to the English literature writer, Anna Powell, a society is a house and its people are the building blocks of it. As per a very famous concept of sociology called conformity, men and women tend to adapt to conditions that are already set for them. They oblige to what their elders and ancestors preach, leaving little room for them to have an opinion of their own. In a very similar manner, girls and boys are conditioned to various behaviours and expectations that are expected from them. It is not uncommon for girls to face a way more stricter set of rules and obligations than boys. They are also expected to act better, behave better and rebel lesser.

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than the opposite gender. On the other hand, boys are always dismissed for their behaviour as being innately naughty. Yet, they are projected to a lot more responsibilities as compared to the opposite gender. From expected to get an exceptionally good degree that offers them a handsome income in the future, boys are pressured under the role of being a provider and breadwinner for the rest of their lives. It is a fact that girls are subjected to more restrictions than boys and boys to societal expectations, which ultimately plays a major role in shaping the course of their life, respectively.

To begin with girls, for starters, it is very well known fact that they are expected to be more

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obedient and rule-abiding than boys. Just like that, boys, although more deviant and rebellious, are still trusted more capable of keeping themselves safe and secure. It is very common for girls to be restricted from going wherever, whenever. Be that late-night or night-time functions, international trips, concerts etc, it is mostly considered unwise to let a woman be on her own. A lot of it is seen very commonly in backward societies and cultures. In Pashtan culture, for instance, giving your daughter or sister or wife the independence of having a good time on her own is thought of as a menace. Some of these mindsets also arise from the perception of women as being too weak to protect themselves against

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any harm that comes their way. Hence, opting to refrain them from going out too often and putting strict curfews is preferred.

In a very similar fashion, many people worldwide are of the perception that letting a girl get education is just a waste of time and money.

The idea that girls ^{don't} have to necessarily attain education has killed innumerable dreams.

According to a report issued by the United Nations, the ratio of illiteracy is way higher in women than men, globally. This shows that no matter how advanced or developed a country may be, its ability to provide equal access of opportunities to all is still a major concern. The issue with educated women is not just a violation of rights,

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but also a higher ratio of uneducated mothers: when a mother is not literate enough, she lacks the ability and skill set to care for her children effectively. She may also produce who are less literate for their age. It's a vicious cycle that impacts the generations to come. Therefore, it is safe to say robbing a girl of her education is not just a loss for her, but the society itself.

Yet, it would be unfair to generalize illiteracy amongst women. Many women and girls around the world do have the good luck of chasing their dreams and pursuing their goals. They get the chance to enroll in their preferred courses in a reputable institution.

But, another issue that arises in many cases is when a girl completes her education,

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she is not permitted to get a job. Initially, when they cross the barriers of restrictions in other domains, they are faced with the tough decision of not putting their knowledge to good use. All the years of hardwork and determination goes down the drain, majority of the people, who discourage women participation in this male-dominated society, are of the view that women are supposed to be "The breadmaker, not the breadwinner" (Tribune). This highlights the radicalism and sexism girls have to face. One needs to understand that girls are as developed cerebrally as men; if men can be both a father and a working ^{man}, a woman can be both employed and a mother as well.

Along the lines of this, another restriction imposed on

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girls is the practice of early marriage. Since girls are not expected, in most areas around the world, to run households and earn, they are susceptible to marriage at an early age. The most concerning part of this discipline is that girls have to obey to commit, regardless of what they wish for or plan to do instead. Committing to a man is preferred over building a career, which also breaks the hopes and dreams of many. This is a very common tradition in parts of Africa, South Asia and some Middle-Eastern countries. This is even more prevalent in extremist-Islamist households where girls are married off as teenagers or young adults in the name of religion, and sometimes, without consent.

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Similarly, women participation across different fields and occupation is also frowned upon. Women in politics are considered too foolish and weak to "know better", let alone run a state. Other than that, women are restricted from being a part of administrative roles of a state for the sake of their own safety. This is puzzling to hear because no women should be unsafe and prone to potential threats if she is advocating in favor/against something. But since it does happen, instead of fixing the hazards and ills in the society, women are expected to retreat.

In the discussion above, the impact of unnecessary restrictions and harsh disciplinary methods was seen on women. But, the opposite gender also struggles

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from a lot of societal pressures and demands.

The very basic thing that boys generally have to deal with is developing a winner's attitude in life. meaning, that from a young age, boys create a perception in their minds that they are expected to do really well in life. The very same is expected from girls as well. But the difference is that girls have a choice in it, boys don't. They look at their elders, fathers, uncles, grandfathers, etc, and understand early on that a man is the head of the family. He is breadwinner, and the nurturing of his family is his responsibility. As a teenager, they assumed to develop an interest in any field in order

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to apprehend where their abilities lie. Then they are assumed to aim towards that in life by getting a degree and a probable career in it. Therefore, it is safe to say that a boy's career's planning starts very early on and he begins to feel the pressure of it too.

Since girls score naturally better than guys, guys are more pressured to score good.

A girl who does well academically is not appreciated much, since girls are always expected to do well. But when guys score exceptionally good, they are applauded for it. All of it roots from the fact that boys are subjected to a greater pressure of getting good grades. The vicious cycle in a man's life is that only good grades meant good

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opportunities — and good opportunities promised a decent job and hence, a handsome income package. But these demands have a negative plunge on their mental health. A recent study¹ showed that men and boys are more prone to anxiety and borderline depression than women^(New York Times). This is because in the race for life, they are pressured to do well and be ahead. They are also expected to do well financially and lead a stable life. This takes a toll at their mental health and puts it at risk.

Eventually, men get married and start a family. The sole strain of keeping up with that new set of liabilities also adds to their stresses. This does not just impact their health, but also has

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a negative impact on their overall wellbeing. For example, one can consider the case study of Pakistan. The life expectancy rate of men is 66 years. This is over a decade and a half less than that of a woman. Although factors like terminal diseases, natural causes and unavailability of modern medical technology plays a role in it. Yet, study shows most men develop issues of blood pressure and cardiac arrests from early on and all of these are a direct by-product of taking too much stress in life. Hence, even in adulthood, men are struggling to meet the demands of the society.

In a similar fashion, men also worry more because of the fact that

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their set of financial responsibilities is also larger than that of a woman. Even if the wife and husband both are employed, the man wears the pants in the family and has to take care of a lot more matters.

From managing the household chores, paying the bills, doing groceries, meeting the deadlines and fulfilling health expenses, his responsibility becomes a lot more weary and worrisome. In countries where economies are failing or slipping, men struggle even further to provide for their families.

Last, but not the least, is the duty of sustaining a comfortable life even post retirement. The constant fear of an early demise leading towards his family struggling

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in any aspect whatsoever is a concerning thought for men. Therefore, from performing well academically, to getting a good degree, getting a good job and then a good sum of income, boys also worry about life after retirement. This shows how boys are subjected to an endless cycle of societal expectations that may shape their future, but also has a negative impact on them.

Throughout their lives, girls and boys are put through different trials which have the potential to make them as well as break. The society tends to forget that their set of expectations and restrictions, though meant for disciplinary purposes, may also portray an adverse effect on an

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individual's life. Hence, it
can be said that despite
being fruitful, these harsh
disciplines also have their
share of negatives