

"THE AMBITIOUS JOURNEY TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY"

Outline:

1. Introduction

- a. Hook : Virginia Woolf's book "Monday or Tuesday"
- b. General Statements
- c. Thesis:

Gender Inequality is one of the many problems faced by many societies. Pakistanis society is one of them. Health, Education, Politics, Media, Literature and Work Places are some of the sectors where gender inequality could be found.

2. Main Body

a. Historical Journey

Women started Suffragete (The right to vote).

b. Different Feminist Perspectives

Liberal, Radical, Marxist

Date _____

c. Current Gender issues faced in different sectors:

i - Health

ii - Education

iii - Politics

iv - Media and Literature

v - Work Place

3. Conclusion

Thesis restated

Summary of the essay

Future recommendations

Virginia Woolf, a prominent 20th century literary figure, in her collection of short stories 'Monday or Tuesday' discusses the role of women in different phases of life. She says, "Once a girl starts to read, ask her to believe in herself." Unfortunately, that is not the case. Women have suffered historically and even now they have still not achieved the status of being human in many third world countries. Pakistan is one of them. One can find gender inequalities not just in various public sectors like health, education, politics, media and literature, work place but also in domestic life as well. Therefore, the journey towards gender equality is still in process.

Historically, the academic study of gender has a relatively short history. It emerged in late 1960s, and its development triggered by second wave of Feminism. Women have been largely ignored through out their life but disciplines like social sciences

and sociology in particular also ignored the term gender. The people, these disciplines studies were all men and the topics it focused were aspects of the social world, especially significant for men, such as paid work and politics. Women, on the other hand, were almost invisible in pre 1970s' gender blind sociology, only featuring in their traditional roles as wives and mothers within families. Differences and inequalities between women and men were not considered as real issues in sociology and weren't addressed as well. Thus, in Sociology during the 1970s, differences and inequalities between women and men came to be regarded as real life problems, especially by women sociologists.

Furthermore, women had to stand up for their right to vote in general and local elections. Prior to 19th century, most of European Super Powers didn't give the right to vote to their women. United States also excluded women from voting. The

Date _____

movement of suffrage started in the early 19th century. Elizabeth Cady Stanton along with Lucretia Mott issued a call for convention to discuss the issue of women's rights which came to be called as 'Seneca Falls Convention'. Women had to fight a long battle to gain their right to vote and at last by the early years of 20th century, women had won the right to vote in national elections in countries like New Zealand and Australia. World War I and II and their aftermaths also speeded up the process of gaining a vote in different parts of the world.

Moreover, it wasn't just the achievement of having the right to vote, but critical feminist thinkers had also played their part in this long, troublesome journey towards gender equality. Liberal Feminists like, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor focused on eliminating female subordination which is socially constructed. Their main goal was to achieve a just and compassionate society in which freedom flourishes.

Radical Feminists fought for the eradication of patriarchy. They believed that the root cause of women's oppression is patriarchy and eliminating patriarchy will liberate everyone from an unjust society. On the other hand, Marxist feminists are primarily concerned with the division of labour that keeps women in the domestic chores and men in the workplace. Therefore, all the three perspectives empowered the journey of gender equality along with multiple challenges.

In Pakistani context, the journey of gender equality is a myth. It is not based on reality because in Pakistani society many gender inequalities are present. Most of the women in remote parts of Pakistan still suffer from these gendered stereotypical roles. Girls aren't allowed to receive primary and secondary education, women at a very young age are forced to give births without health care facilities, few women serve in politics, even fewer women are literary figures, on

top of that religion and the holy scriptures are misinterpreted and misunderstood as well.

First comes the health sector. Women, in general, play a great role in this sector but unfortunately women doctors are only gynaecologists and dermatologists. Here, especially in Pakistan, medical field is also gender stereotyped. Women, in larger parts, don't even pursue or practice their field after marriage. Moreover, the role of being a nurse is also given to a female worker. Hence, in Pakistan, the health sector must bring changes in order to empower its women. Changes like; encouraging women to choose medical fields other than gynae and skin care, encouraging women to practice and pursue their careers after marriage and children, would be very beneficial for the journey towards gender equality.

Next, comes the education sector. Education plays a very important part in the development of

personality but that is not the case here. In Pakistan, there are many women who belong to humble places and they don't get the opportunity of having primary and secondary education because in most parts it is a stereotypical thinking that a girl must not receive education or she would be a rebel. In other parts, girls don't receive education because they have to sacrifice for their brothers.

As Fahmida Riaz, presents the remote parts of Sindh and their stereotypical thinking in her famous short story "Daughter of Aai". However, women also serve in education sector as well. Like in health sector, mostly women are gynaecologists and dermatologists, here in education sector, women serve as teachers and principals.

Few women are the head of notable universities like AKOR. Thus, we have to still continue the journey towards gender equality.

In Politics, we've seen historically that women have served with men. Women like Fatima Jinnah, and

Benazir Bhutto are the greatest examples one can see. In current times, Maryam Nawaz, Asifa Bhutto Zardari and Maryam Aurangzeb have also started a political cult in Pakistan. They are also considered as the symbol of women empowerment in politics. But, unfortunately, they all belong to notable elite class families and are a product of nepotism. The general masses of Pakistan won't find any woman from humble background serving the nation on such platform. Hence, gender equality's journey is hindered due to these factors.

Next comes media and literature as a sector. Although, one can say that there are many prominent figures in media like Mahira Khan and so many others. However, female media stars are not treated equal as compared to male superstars. Their pay is also less and they also face biased attitude of general public. In literary sectors, there are fewer noticeable personalities as per say. Fatimah Bhutto, Fehmida Riaz, and

Date _____

Sabyn Javeri are just three writers found in Pakistani Literature Curriculum. Therefore, it can be said that ~~in~~ Pakistani society must go through the changes and the changes must be in the favour of women.

In conclusion, it can be said that women have suffered a lot at all times. They had to start a movement in order to achieve the right to vote. Then, women also stated the root causes of their oppression and tried eliminating that. The journey is still on going. Moreover, it is also true in the content of Pakistan as well. Pakistan, being a patriarchal country, also suffers from the problems of gender inequality in different sectors of life. Be it health, education, domestic affairs, work places and many aspects as well. With time, the society evolves and a good society emerges when women are empowered and given their due credit.