

Essay:

One is not born a woman,
but becomes one.

① Introduction:

Thesis Statement:

womanhood is not a biological destiny but a social-cultural, psychological, and intersectional construction, shaped by institutions, expectations, and upbringing - making gender identity a learned role rather than innate trait.

② Social Construction of Gender Roles:

(2a) Gender as a learned behavior not biological.

(Simone de Beauvoir)
view 1949

(2b) Role of family and upbringing

91% of people hold at least one gender biased attitude in pakistan.

(UNESCO 2023)

(2c) media and cultural stereotypes

only 29% of STEM in media

are women.

(Geneva Davis Institute 2022)

③ Institutional Shaping of Women

③a Education and curriculum bias.

only 22% of girls in pak reach to Grad 10.

(UNESCO 2020)

③b Influence of Religion, laws and social norms:

honor killing and early marriages still prevalent.

(Human Rights Watch 2019)

③c Patriarchy in Workplace structure

women make up only 22% labor force.

(World Bank 2020)

(4) Deconstructing Gender and Empowering identity.

④a Feminism and Gender Movements.

Aurat march and #MeToo.

- (4b) Role of education in
conscious Gender identity.
Girls with 12 years of quality
education earn 20% more
than uneducated peers.

(Malala Fund)

- (5) (4c) Unapologetic Embrace
of Diverse womanhood.

Women in leadership roles
increase by 30%.

(UN Women 2022)

(5) Intersectionality and the Diversity of Women's Experiences.

- (5a) class and Economic Inequality
Women in poorest household
are 3 times more out of
School.

(UNESCO 2023)

- (5b) Ethnicity, Race, and marginalized
identities

Indigenous women face higher
rates violence.

(UNPFII 2020)

- (5c) Disability and Gender Based
Exclusion:

only one in ten women with
disabilities access reproductive health (WHO
2021)

She was dressed in pink before she could speak, handed a doll before she could walk, and told to be nice before she even understood what it meant. From her first breath, her world was shaped by expectations, not by who she was but by who she was supposed to be. This is not coincidence - it is social construction. The idea that womenhood is purely biological has long been used to justify inequalities in society, politics, and culture. However, as feminist philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir (1949) argued in *The Second Sex*, "one is not born but rather becomes a woman. Gender is not a fixed truth; it is a social script written by families, institutions, and culture, performed daily under silent pressure. From childhood, women learn roles, responsibilities, and behaviors expected of them. Therefore, womenhood is shaped by upbringing, schooling, laws, and cultural norms.

It is learned through experience, and societal expectations, rather than being determined by biology. Understanding this helps us recognise inequality and the ways women can be empowered to choose their own paths.

To begin with, gender ~~understood~~ is not something a person born with. It is society that assigns her specific duties, and roles. However, supporting this a feminist philosopher, Simon de Beauvoir argued "that no one born a woman but becomes one, highlighting the core idea that gender roles are socially constructed, not biological given. Such role is tied with specific responsibilities, duties, and restrictions. Therefore, womanhood is shaped by experience rather than by a natural role...

Moreover, family and its upbringing plays pivotal role in shaping

the role of men and women. According to UNESCO (2023) 91% of people hold at least one gender biased attitude in Pakistan, highlighting how gender preference practice is following in societies. Many families prioritize men over women, neglecting their equal treatment, rights, and choices. This idea also play a crucial role in highlighting women place in the society. If a person is treated unequally in family, society builds his role accordingly. Therefore family is the main reason behind the gender construction.

Similarly, ~~Environment~~, media and cultural stereotype reinforces gender portrayals. According to Geneva Davis Institute 2022, only 29% of STEM ^{characters} in media are women, highlighting underrepresentation. Televisions, movies, and digital programs limited the role of women. They basically show some specific

and appropriate jobs for women while kept them aside from hard and and particular roles assigned especially to men. Therefore, it is reinforcing cultural expectations for which essential steps should be taken to diminish the difference between men and women.

Furthermore, educational system reinforces gender inequality by shaping and creating ^{used} limiting opportunities for girls. According to United Nation Education Scientific cultural organization (2020) only 22% of girls in Pakistan can reach to Grade 10, proving that ^{with} women are ^{not} providing the equal opportunities and facilities as men. Curriculum and school practices are completely fail to challenge gender norms. Therefore, limit access to education and lack of opportunities restrict women to gain more education and participation in educational activities.

Additionally, the influence of religion, laws, and social norms are also playing important role in enforcing social roles of gender. According to Human Rights Watch (2019), Honor killing and early marriages are still prevalent in Pakistan, proving that social and cultural norms are enforcing gender expectation and their ~~two~~ roles tied to them. Women are often restricted to gain education or participate in any social activities, especially in rural areas. in the name of honor and respect. Hence, ~~the~~ religion, laws, and traditional roles are considered the main part in supporting women specified roles.

Similarly, workplaces ^{structure} also reinforce gender inequality. Women are not given equal opportunities and roles to men. World Bank 2022 mentioned, that women make up only 22% labor force, showing

that all the well and high profiled positions are taken by men. Similarly International labor organization mentioned that women earn approximately 80% less than men for the same job. It highlights how patriarchal structure limits the role of women and decide what they can achieve what not.

Furthermore, women identity differ based on class and economic inequality. According to United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural organization (2023), women in the poorest household are 3 times more likely to be out of school, representing that women of the poor families are left behind in the competition of wealthy women regardless of their potential and skills. Economic disadvantages restrict their education, healthcare, and life opportunities restrict them from wealthier women. Therefore, class and economic inequality enhances ~~lower~~ gender inequality.

Additionally, Ethnicity, race, and marginalized identities drastically influences women gender identity and society assigned roles. According to UNPFII (2020), Indigenous women face higher inequality and rates of violence

, showing that ethnicity takes a powerful place in promoting gender inequality. Discrimination based on identity adds another layer to the sole of women they occupy. Marginalized communities often leave and ignore women to get high positions and participation in the development of society, and social mobility. Hence intersectionality is a key to understanding the diversity of women.

likewise, women with disabilities face unique barriers. as they are firmly restricted to access any developmental activities. According to World Health Organisation (2021), only one in ten women with disabilities access reproductive healthcare. physical, social and institutional barriers limits their participation and opportunities to for

these women. They are strictly prohibited to participate in any activity. Along with they are not provided fully with quality healthcare, showing that womenhood ~~are~~ is affected by multiple overlapping factors. Therefore social policies must ensure and implement strong reforms to address all forms of disadvantages and promote equitable opportunities.

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that all the well and high profiled positions are taken by men. Similarly International labor organization mentioned that women earn approximately 30% less than men for the same job. It highlights how patriarchal structure limits the role of women and decide what they can achieve what not.

Furthermore, feminist movements challenge traditional roles and empower women. Accordingly Aurat March emphasized reclaiming public spaces and womanhood. Similarly, #MeToo movement globally shown how women assert their rights and demand justice. This is how women question norms and socially constructed roles via such platforms. This activism plays a vital role in deconstructing gender imposed roles. Thus, feminism and different gender movements can demolish gender inequality.

and promote equality.

Moreover, education helps a woman recognise and embrace their potential. According to Malala Fund 2021, girls with 12 years of quality education earn 80% more than uneducated peers, highlighting the importance of education especially for women across the world. Education brings confidence, power to make independent decisions, uniqueness, and make informed choices about their lives. Hence, schooling is not merely about learning educational skills but also a tool to develop women a conscious and empowered gender identities.

Similarly, embracing diverse roles of women, strengthen them to adopt multiple roles in society. As UN women⁽²⁰²²⁾ mentioned that women in leadership roles increase community develop-

development by 30%. which shows that providing them with diverse and multiple roles and positions strengthen their roles and helped in breaking traditional roles. Women as CEO's, activists, athletes, and scholars, breaking the gender stereotype and mold their identity to potentially bright side.

In conclusion, ~~in addition~~ womanhood is not something that is fixed at birth but something that is shaped throughout life by society, culture, and institutions. From family upbringing to education, media, and the workplace, women are taught how to behave, what to value, and where they belong. These learned roles often limit their choices and reinforce their inequality. However, when these social constructions are challenged and questioned, women get freedom to define themselves on their own terms. Feminist

movements on their own terms, education, and greater awareness have shown, the greater roles can change and empowerment is possible. Recognizing intersectional differences also helps us understand that women experience oppression in different ways based on class, ethnicity, and ability. Therefore, understanding that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" is essential for breaking harmful stereotypes and building a fairer society. True equality begins when womanhood is seen not as a restriction, but as a diverse and evolving identity shaped by choice, dignity, and opportunity.