

"One is not Born a woman, But Becomes One" - Simon De Beauvoir

The Outline

(1) Introduction

(2) woman possesses equal intellectual capability and cognition as a man
(Saying of Prophet Muhammad PBUH)

(3) How one is not born a woman but becomes one

(a) Through socio-cultural construction of gender in a society
(Social Learning Theory, sex and gender: The construction of masculinity and femininity by Robert J. Stoller)

(b) Repetition of gender stereotypes transforms rigid stigmas for women into cultural norms.

(Gender performativity theory by Judith Butler)

(c) Women are barred from decision

making roles both in public and private sphere
(United Nation's report on women in parliament)

(d) Financial dependency on men undermines women's freedom and equality, reinforcing feminine roles in society.

(e) Patriarchal resistance on education of women perpetuates wide gaps between men and women

(Literacy gaps between men and women in Pakistan, Pakistan Economic survey's report 2024-25)

(f) Religious beliefs and language differences create structural flaws that portray women as fragile creature in a society
(concept of Sati in Hinduism)

(g) ~~weak~~ ^{Inadequate} implementation of laws allows objectification of women, weakening women's role in a community.

(Honour killings in Pakistan despite formulation of laws for protection of women)

(h) Media's portrayal of women instills orthodox femininity and masculinity

(4) Counter argument

(4) Biological differences exist between men and women

Reputation: Biological differences ^{don't} ~~doesn't~~ determine ultimate destiny of obedient women and dominant men

(5) Recommendations to reshape women's status in a society

(a) Providing gender sensitive education at primary and secondary level and tertiary levels

(b) Challenging patriarchy and structural flaws to endorse women as equal as men (Feminist movements)

(c) ... Enhancing awareness in the society about ramifications of women's subservience and benefits of women's empowerment for a nation

(d) Promoting equality at national and global levels

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	(sustainable Development Goal 5 of United Nations)	
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(e)	Implementing laws and gender sensitive policies to reinforce gender equality	
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The Essay

There are biological differences between men and women, yet these distinct genetic characters don't conclude ultimate role of women in a society. Women are born with distinct physical differences, but their role is developed and reinforced through multiple aspects in a society. Patriarchal societies and cultural stereotypes shape women as fragile, dependent, and obedient. So, Simon

De Beauvoir, a feminist, stated that, "one is not born a woman but becomes the one". The driving factors for reinforcing femininity include socio-cultural construction of gender and repetitive performance of gender stigmas that become a norm. Additionally, limited role of women in decision making and financial dependency on men perpetuate patriarchy. Similarly, gender biasness in curriculum and religious practices further shape women's role in society. Apart from this, media portrays women as domestic worker and fragile. These factors design women's status in a distinct way. To redevelop their role as equal being, both individuals and institutions must take multi-faceted steps. Therefore, one becomes a woman through socio-cultural construction, religious, and patriarchal differences.

First of all, women have equal intellect and cognitive capability as men irrespective of their gender. It is highlighted in liberalist perspective that they

Possess the same intellect as men. Behavior, thinking patterns, and actions alter ~~at~~ because of societal expectations and training as particular genders. Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) highlighted this as he stated that no one is superior to others in any aspect except by piety. It means only virtuousness determine superior status and not the sex or gender.

Woman becomes the one through socio-cultural construction of gender. Societal expectations, roles, and gendered accountability shape women's behaviour in a society. A girl acquires role of her mother. She is trained to do house work, remain obedient, and pursue dependency on ^{the} ~~partner~~ male guardian of the family. Since childhood, she has been given dolls, utensils, kitchen items, and boys play with trucks, and cars and trained to be aggressive, decision-makers and independent. This is evident from social Learning Theory and explicitly explained in

the book "Sex and Gender: the Development of Masculinity and Femininity" by Robert J. Stoller. To continue these roles, gender normative behaviours are (encouraged)* incentivised and deviant behaviours are sanctioned. Resultantly, women repeat these roles throughout generations.

Additionally, repetition of gender stereotypes transforms rigid stigmas for women into cultural norms, encouraging their acknowledgement. For instance, in traditional societies women don't make decisions or work outside. They can't be dominant or dress in certain way. Additionally, some^{of the} jobs are suitable for them while excluding others. Smoking is suitable for men only. If women ~~as~~ smoke, they are judged on basis of their character. These all are gender stereotypes that have been repetitively performed. Owing to frequent performance and acceptance in society, these stigmas shape women's role in a distinct way. Deviation

from them are unacceptable and sanctioned. It was highlighted by famous feminist Judith Butler in her Theory of Gender Performativity. Therefore, woman is not born ~~to~~ with these stigmas rather repetitive performance ~~makes her~~ designs her role as woman.

Apart from this, women are ~~barred~~ from decision-making roles both in public and private spheres, ~~reinforcing~~ ^{traditional} femininity in society. In most of the traditional societies, women act as homemakers and child carers, and men act as breadwinners and decision-makers. It has been continued since ^{past} history. These historical roles are instilled in families even today. On the other hand, these roles spread in public spheres, institutions, organizations, and states. As most of the state decisions are taken through parliament. According to a report of United Nations on women, only 26% of the parliamentarians are women globally. This highlights

how structural flaws perpetuate women's role as follower instead of equal part of society. Consequently, it illustrates that ~~women~~^{one} is not born woman but becomes one through societal designs.

Financial dependency on men undermines women's freedom and equality, reinforcing ^{traditional} femininity in society. It is a norm in patriarchal families that men earn, and women depend on them for their sustenance. For example, women ~~de~~ are reliant on men for food, clothes, education, shelter, and health services. To acquire these necessities, she is compelled to follow and remain obedient. There are thousands of women ~~who~~ who tolerate violence, and disrespect because they have no alternate avenues for their sustenance. As a result, it ~~is~~ curtails their freedom, and whole society pursue these roles, ~~are~~ shaping women as reliant on men.

Moreover, patriarchal resistance on education of women and gendered curriculum perpetuate ~~gg~~

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gaps between men and women. Most of the curriculums across the world portray women as fragile, care givers and docile who are protected by strong men. These perspectives strengthen patriarchy in minds of new generations. Both boys and girls develop their minds and acts according to their genders. Likewise, they themselves hold accountable for their appearance and attire. Additionally, patriarchal resistance of education for women also amplifies the differences. According to Economic survey of Pakistan report (2024-25), only 44% of female are literate. Consequently, women are not born in that way but trained in certain way in a society.

Furthermore, religious beliefs and language differences create structural flaws that construct women as fragile creature in a society. It is not only socio-cultural construction but also religious and linguistic development

of gender. A Religion is an institution that has pivotal role in construction of gender. A pertinent example is Hinduism in which concept of Satti demonstrate how ~~so~~ religion augment gendered biasness. In this practice, if a woman's husband dies she is also burnt ^{alive} along with her husband. Similarly, religions define certain actions, clothes, limitations, and appearance for women, ~~amplifying~~ deepening women's gender discriminations. Likewise, linguistic differences also shape these gaps. Hence, as a consequence of these challenges, Simon De Beauvoir highlighted that one is not born a woman but becomes one.

Objectification and commodification of women weaken their role as ~~equal~~ part of a community. Historically, they have been objectified ~~as~~ on the name of honour and respect. Society has created beauty standards for women. For example, beauty contests, models, and certain appearance of body are designed by the society. Likewise, women are

used as commodities, such as ~~sex~~ women trafficking, sex workers, labourers, servants, and prostitutions. In local traditional communities, they are seen with lens of honour. In case of ~~a~~ deviation from their established roles, they are deliberately killed in the name of honour, famously known as Karo Kari. In today's era, laws have been formulated against such acts; however weak implementation and fragmented institutions allow their continuity. Consequently, it demonstrates that women ~~are~~ ^{is} not born as objects but becomes one as a result of rigid norms of community.

Also, media's portrayal of woman instills traditional femininity and masculinity. Both social media and traditional media fortify men's role as protector and provider and women's role as weak and docile. They show ^{that} heroens depend on their heroes for protection. This ~~strengthens~~ deepens

traditional roles in minds of children. It results in psychological development of brain, and consequently children also start to act in certain ways. Hence, one is not born women but becomes one through media's role as well.

Undoubtedly, there are biological difference between male and female. Genetically, male is more muscular, has more weight, possesses visual-spatial capabilities. On the other hand, female is less muscular, contain ^{strong} verbal capability as compared to male. Likewise, there are different chromosomes, hormones, secondary sexual characters, and appearances. However, these characteristics don't determine ultimate fate of women as dependent and lower in status as in front of men as portrayed in traditional societies. Hence, it proves that one is not born women but becomes one due to socio-cultural construction and patriarchy.

To reshape women's status in society, there must be curriculum reforms to encourage gender-sensitive education at primary, secondary and tertiary level. Curriculum should be neutral without gendered biasness. Both genders must be encouraged in education, politics, social, and economic roles. One such example is Scandinavian model of education where institutions provide gender neutral education. Also, these countries give parental leave to both men and women. Ultimately, they spread message that childcare is not only responsibility of a mother but also that of a father. In this way, womanhood can be redeveloped in societies.

Likewise, institutions and organizations must challenge patriarchy and structural flaws that to endorse women as equal as men. It is widely deep patriarchy is deeply rooted in traditional societies. without challenging

them at root levels, gender discrimination persists. Feminist movements and waves of feminism have countered various structural flaws. For example, women have acquired right to vote, education, equality in wages, jobs and political spheres. However, most of these ^{rights} ^{still} have remained symbolic.

Therefore, patriarchal behaviours must be challenged to ensure gender equality.

States must spread awareness regarding benefits of women empowerment for the whole country. Most of the communities in rural areas are unaware about instrumental role of women in transforming nation's fate. Educating a woman can improve maternal healths, maternal mortality rates, infant mortality rates, health of children, nutrition, and even education of children. ~~As~~ Subsequently, women build families and communities, developing whole nations. Therefore, states must encourage men as equal partners to ensure maximum

benefit ~~for~~ society.

Additionally, institutions and communities must promote gender equality at both national and global levels. There have been laws on gender equality, such as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and equality in Human Rights Declaration (1948).

The need of the hour is to implement these laws uniformly ^{ly} across rural and urban areas. Through ensuring gender equality, stigmas on women can be countered, empowering women in the society.

Lastly, authorities should implement laws and gender sensitive policies to reinforce gender equality, undermining patriarchy. For example protection of women laws against workplace harassment, domestic violence, honour killing, and acid attacks must be executed. It will ensure predictability ~~and~~ in

case of violation. Additionally, policies and laws must be reformed into gender neutral perspectives. Curriculum reforms, wage disparities, employment opportunities, decision-making roles and social responsibilities must be ~~not~~ neutral irrespective of gender biasness. Consequently, it will encourage gender equality and remove stigmas from women in a society.

In essence, womanhood is not a genetical process, but it is socially constructed ~~as~~ ~~Patriarchal~~ norms, religious beliefs, media's portrayals, and institutional flaws design womanhood in an inferior, dependent, and obedient way. These templates can be countered through gender neutral education and policies. Additionally, institutions must spread awareness about impact of women empowerment on a nation. Similarly, media should also ~~st~~ halt biased roles of male and female. They should show that a female can be a hero

and a male can be emotional. Through this flexible approach, patriarchy and rigid norms can be challenged. Resultantly, societies can counter Simon De Beauvoir's concern "One is not born woman, but becomes one".

