

**Delhi International Model United Nations 2020**



UN Women : UN Entity for Gender Equality &  
Empowerment of Women

**Agenda** : Tackling the issue of Radical Feminism

**Background Guide**

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## Letter from the Executive Board

Respected Delegates,

On the behalf of the entire Executive Board of the UN Women, I would like to welcome you all to Delhi International Model United Nations 2020.

I am sure it will be a great learning experience for the delegates both experienced and the ones who will experience it for the first time, I would want you to embrace this opportunity and participate enthusiastically. From each of you, we expect impeccable diplomacy, high levels of debate, and of course, zeal to find solutions to the given problem posed before you. Knowledge of international politics, the state of global affairs is required to make constructive progress to complex multi-lateral problems. Remember, it's the delegates who set the level of debate and maintain the flow of it.

The agenda as a whole is also is one of the most fascinating topics as it deals with various aspects of logic, reasoning and most importantly International law. I suggest all delegates to focus on the topics (divided further in the background guide) as a singular topic and research accordingly, however a division in regards to the approach shall also be welcomed. The Background Guide is intended to give you an insight as to what we as the Executive Board expect from you in terms of what to debate upon, and we hope you do not base your entire research on this document. Feel free to revert back to the executive board for any queries or for any form of assistance you shall need.

Furthermore, the agenda is quite deep and a thorough understanding of the concepts of "Radical Feminism" along with its historical significance and long term implications needs to be made a primary focus in order to facilitate productive and constructive debate throughout the duration of the conference. Take note of the fact that logical debate with a solution oriented approach is always better than a legal approach of things, as a strong loop of logic is quintessential to effective law making.

As delegates, you will be expected to be thorough with your research and base your analysis and conclusions on the same during debate. Please remember, a Council is only as strong as its individual delegates, and that the Executive Board is here merely to guide debate, not to take part in it. Looking forward to 2 days of impeccable diplomacy and meaningful debate! Best of preparations!

**Shubham Gaddi**

**Chairperson**

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### Introduction to the Committee

UN Women is the global champion for gender equality, working to develop and uphold standards and create an environment in which every woman and girl can exercise her human rights and live up to her full potential. UN Women is the trusted partner for advocates and decision-makers from all walks of life, and a leader in the effort to achieve gender equality.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action

UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality, and in all deliberations and agreements linked to the 2030 Agenda. The entity works to position gender equality as fundamental to the Sustainable Development Goals, and a more inclusive world.

Over many decades, the United Nations has made significant progress in advancing gender equality, including through landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Working for the empowerment and rights of women and girls globally, UN Women's main roles are:

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- To help Member States implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- To lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality, as well as promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

The current directorate of the UN Women has "Ms. Phumzile Mlambo – Ngcuka" serving as the Executive Director, "Ms. Asa Regner" and "Ms. Anita Bhatia" as the Deputy Executive Directors.

## **United Nations Women**

The primary principles and beliefs of UN Women is to empower women all around the world and provide them with equal opportunities in all domains of life. The committee is a part of a multi – tier governance model within which it reports to the UNCSW [United Nations Commission on the Status of Women] and the UNGA – ECOSOC [United Nations General Assembly – Economic & Social Council]. The executive board of the committee along with these two bodies makes all the decisions.

For further reading about the body use the reference link provided below :-

<https://www.unwomen.org/en>

<https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/07/un-women-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women/>

For any further doubts or questions regarding the committee, its mandate, accountability , governance etc that is not solved through further reading and needs further clarification , feel free to reach out to the Executive Board.

We shall all try to the best of our abilities to provide answers to all the delegates and make sure that this is not only a good competitive environment but also a great learning environment for each and every delegate participating.

## Introduction to the Committee



# RIANOVOSTI

Evidence or proof is acceptable from sources:

### 1. News Sources:

a. **REUTERS:** Any Reuters article which clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council. (<https://in.reuters.com/>)

b. **State Operated News Agencies:** These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any Country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are,

i. RIA Novosti (Russia) - <http://en.rian.ru/>

ii. IRNA (Iran) - <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>

iii. BBC (United Kingdom) - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

iv. Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China) - <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>

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**2. Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.

**However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information.** Examples are, United Nations Human Rights Council

**a. Government Websites** like the State Department of the United States of America (<http://www.state.gov/index.htm>) or the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (<http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>)

**b. Ministry of Foreign Affairs** of various nations like India - (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>) People's Republic of China - (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>) France - (<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/>) Russian Federation - ([http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/main\\_eng](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/main_eng))

**c. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports**

(<http://www.un.org/en/members/>) provides the list of all members of the UN. Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative.

**d. Multilateral Organizations like the following:-**

**i. NATO** - (<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>)

**ii. ASEAN** - (<http://www.aseansec.org/>)

**iii. OPEC** - ([http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/))

**3. UN Reports:** All UN Reports are considered are credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the UNHCR.

**a. UN Bodies:** Reports by UN bodies such as:

**i. UNSC** - (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>)

**ii. GA** - (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>)

**iii. HRC** - (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC.aspx>)

**b. UN Affiliated Bodies:** Reports by agencies like the following:

**i. International Atomic Energy Agency** - (<http://www.iaea.org/>)

**ii. World Bank** - (<http://www.worldbank.org/>)

**iii. International Monetary Fund** - (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>)

**iv. International Committee of the Red Cross** - (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>)

**c. Treaty Based Bodies:** Reports from bodies like the following:

**i. Antarctic Treaty System** - (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>)

**ii. The International Criminal Court** - (<http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menu/ICC>)

**Under no circumstances** will sources like **Wikipedia** (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), **Human Rights Watch** (<http://www.hrw.org/>) or newspapers like **The Guardian** (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>), **Times of India** (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>), etc. **be accepted.**

## Defining Radical Feminism

The different branches of feminism were all controversial for their times, but none of them were as provocative with their theories and as extreme with their solutions as radical feminism.

**Radical feminist** beliefs are based on the idea that the main cause of women's oppression originates from social roles and institutional structures being constructed from male supremacy and patriarchy. The main difference between radical feminism and other branches is that they didn't concentrate on equalizing the distribution of power. Instead, they focused their efforts on completely eliminating patriarchy by transforming the entire structure of society. More specifically, they wanted to get rid of traditional gender roles.

**Radical feminism** was a branch that formed during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. At this point in time, women had won the right to vote and were working more outside of the home. In addition, the United States had gone through the sexual revolution which had lowered the pressure for people to be strictly monogamous and had given them more room for sexual expression.

In other words, life for women had greatly improved over the previous half century. However, women still experienced oppression on a regular basis. Would you have felt satisfied knowing that you could now work outside the home but would not be viewed as equal? Or knowing that you were going to be paid much less than a man that did the exact same job as you?

The sexual revolution had also brought some freedom to sexual expression. However, there was still a lack of reproductive rights. For example, how would you have felt if you didn't have the right to access birth control? Radical feminists believed that these were deliberate power plays by men and that the institutions and systems that supported this oppression were just the tools they used to maintain control.

Unlike other forms of feminism that viewed power as something positive as long as it was evenly distributed, radical feminists believed that power was mostly something experienced in a dualistic system of domination and subordination, with one party always experiencing oppression. This system was an outrage to radical feminists, and as a result, they tended to be militant with their efforts, calling for direct action against patriarchy and male supremacy. They organized sit-ins and demonstrations at various events that they felt supported these systems and institutions of oppression.

One of the most memorable demonstrations was the **Miss America protest** of 1968 which was staged by the New York Radical Women. This event was what gave birth to the mythical image of the 'bra-burning feminist'. Bras were not burned at this demonstration, but they were tossed into a trash can with other items including high heels, eyelash curlers, cosmetics, wigs, and magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Playboy*. This was done in protest against what was seen as the ridiculous standards of beauty to which women were held.

## Relevance in Contemporary Times

One of the questions that need to be kept in mind while preparing for any agenda is its relevance to modern day issues and politics. In recent years the concepts of equality and women empowerment have been spreading among people like a wildfire partly due to the increasing crimes against women.

Increased in the number of cases of sexual harassment, domestic abuse, unequal wages and many more such problems have only been rising in even the most developed countries of the world and because of the same, people have been taking actions based on their beliefs in the same. On one hand we have the community of orthodox people who still believe in concrete gender roles and on the other we have people with a wider outlook who have been trying bring equity to the every gender.

However, every coin has 2 sides and similarly even people with wide outlooks have varying opinions and beliefs. There is a community of people who blame the societal norms, practices and concepts such as patriarchy and wish to distribute power more evenly among both genders whereas there is another community that looks to reverse the scale completely and bring down a scenario where men become the oppressed gender.

One of the most common reasons for this is that a lot of people have never understood the concept of feminism and often confuse the same with the concepts of *Misandry* and *Misogyny*. This leads to a complete spiral which ultimately leads to people misunderstanding a concept and then making demands that do not do justice to the core principles of feminism.

One of the major aims of this committee as a whole is to try and pinpoint the causes of such misunderstandings, and propose solutions for the same. This goes hand in hand with understanding where the fine line between constructive feminism and pseudo feminism lies exactly. The agenda was chosen to be such due to rising issues that have coming up on social media and the overall situation around multiple nations around the world where women struggle even to get the basic human rights.

Keeping in mind the problem and the feasibility and practicality of things, the delegates are expected to have a solution oriented approach in their research that will allow for constructive criticism of the current system and practices and try and modify/replace them with viable alternatives.



## **Second Wave of the Feminism Movement**

The second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s is back when the concept of “Radical Feminism” first popped up. Instead of blaming the institutions and organizations for their discriminations this ideology proposed Patriarchy to be the root cause of the problem. The ideology of rule by fathers was thought to have only one purpose – dominate and manipulate women as per the needs of men and thus a the movement drew a lot of attention.

The primary players and the pioneers of this second wave of feminism included Shulamith Firestone, Kathie Sarachild, Ti-Grace Atkinson, Carol Hanisch, and Judith Brown. Many local women's groups in the late sixties, such as the UCLA Women's Liberation Front (WLF), offered diplomatic statements of radical feminism's ideologies.

These women helped secure the bridge that translated radical protest for racial equality over to the struggle for women's rights; by witnessing the discrimination and oppression to which the black population was subjected, they were able to gain strength and motivation to do the same for their fellow women. They took up the cause and advocated for a variety of women's issues, including abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, access to credit, and equal pay. Most women of colour (who were predominantly working-class) did not participate in the formation of the radical feminist movement because it did not address many issues that were relevant to those from a working-class background. But for those who felt compelled to stand up for the cause, radical action was needed, so they took to the streets and formed consciousness raising groups to rally support for the cause and recruit people willing to fight for it. Later, second-wave radical feminism saw greater numbers of black feminists and other women of colour participating.

Radical feminists introduced the use of consciousness raising (CR) groups. These groups brought together intellectuals, workers, and middle-class women in developed Western countries to discuss their experiences. During these discussions, women noted a shared and repressive system regardless of their political affiliation or social class. Based on these discussions, the women drew the conclusion that ending of patriarchy was the most necessary step towards a truly free society. These consciousness-raising sessions allowed early radical feminists to develop a political ideology based on common experiences women faced with male supremacy. Consciousness raising was extensively used in chapter sub-units of the National Organization for Women (NOW) during the 1970s. The feminism that emerged from these discussions stood first and foremost for the liberation of women, as women, from the oppression of men in their own lives, as well as men in power.

Some of the key actions to take note of that took place during this movement are as follows :

- Self – Incrimination
- Leaving Church in Groups to Protest the Abortion Ban
- Genital Self-Exams (Led to Founding of Feminist Women’s Health Centre)
- Protests in Courtrooms and Press Councils

## **United Nations Women**

The reason for this movement being extremely significant while talking about “Radical Feminism” is the fact that this is where the movement started and thus all reasons for the nature of the ideology lie in this period. One cannot simply understand the concept of Radical Feminism without understanding how the movement originated and what were the major factors that this movement was originally combating – Abortion Ban , Reproductive Laws etc.

### **Support from the LGBTQ+ Community**

The most significant fact about the second wave of feminism was that the movement was supported by the LGBTQ community and most significantly by the lesbian women all across the world. The magnitude and impact of the ideas of “Radical Feminism” were so appealing that it caused every oppressed community to step into the light and raise their voice against their oppressors.

The LGBTQ community, just like women were met with a lot of discrimination in the past and still are in a lot of countries to this date. Similar to the feminist movement, the LGBT movement too saw its roots embedded in the 1960s when people started voicing their concerns and a large number of people started coming out as homosexuals. Although homosexuality was treated as a grave crime and even heroes from the wars who were homosexuals were treated harshly with death penalties or extreme hormonal treatments, people took the leap of faith in their communities and stepped out. This led to a great increase in the number of protests taking place all across the world. Significant people who contributed.

Due to the support from the LGBTQ community, the revolution was a great success and a lot of states and countries saw women and openly homosexual people come into positions of power in the government, voting rights were made available to all regardless of their gender and many more significant developments were made during the same time.

One question that might come up here is that why and how is this data useful in terms of the agenda. The support from the LGBTQ+ community back in the 60s helped shape the world as we know it today and to a great extent carved a direction for feminism to follow. The significance of this data is hidden in the extent of its contribution in the movement. How this is supposed to be used by the delegates is subjective but a good example would be to consider the involvement of the LGBTQ+ community in the modern day feminist movements and their contributions to contemporary radical feminism.

## **Radical Feminism – Good or Bad**

One of the most important questions that the committee as a whole is supposed to answer is if the concept of Radical Feminism should be more widespread or should it be something that needs to be erased from existence. Over the years there have been multiple significant debates over the concept of Radical Feminism being good or bad.

The argument supporting Radical Feminism says that when we look at the society today, patriarchy is essentially the root cause of all problems. It not only oppresses women but also leads to increased and unreal expectations from men and thus having a revolution or a movement to eradicate patriarchy will end up resolving all problems that are being faced by all genders in one go. Their aim is to reverse the scenario as it is today completely and their methods often lead to men being oppressed.

On the contrary, the group opposing Radical Feminism uses the argument that the problem of women being oppressed is not solely due to patriarchy but due to the belief system certain systems and organizations. They believe that certain roles are usually better suited for certain genders and that patriarchy as a concept is not the root cause of inequality between different genders. Their aim is to change the ideology of people and create a system that does not look at gender and rather looks at credibility and eligibility. They strive to create a system where there is equity and equality between all the genders.

One of the aims of the committee as a whole is to come to a conclusion on what they believe to be the more accurate argument and provide a justification for whatever option they end up choosing. This will help in creating a definitive direction on what the committee wishes to do as a whole – promote the concept or try to shun it or refine it.

## **Concluding Note**

This background guide has been made solely to provide a basic idea to all delegates about what the agenda means and how it is supposed to be dealt with. This is not meant to be a document that is supposed to help the delegates with their research. The executive board is always available to provide support and clarify any and all doubts that the delegates might have. Do not treat this as a source of research but rather think of this as a kick starter to give you a basic idea of what the agenda as a whole is and what are the major factors associated with it.

Feel free to reach out to any of the executive board members for any doubts and clarifications. We are always here to help. The contact details for the Chairperson have been provided in the beginning of this guide.

Given below are certain links for further reading and also a few questions that the committee as a whole should be focusing upon.

## **Links for Further Reading**

<https://knightlifenews.com/13302/opinion/the-difference-between-feminism-and-radical-feminists/>

<http://www.yorku.ca/mlc/sosc3990A/projects/radfem/radfem2.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koufxBIkn3E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt5TG3E4rnE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niuQFoggABM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOoD-XZOqAc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iI28IrXGeOc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwkAh3pWBgc>

## **Questions to Ponder Upon**

- Is “Radical Feminism” the way to go with in the future?
- Does “Radical Feminism” help all sections of the LGBTQ+ community? If so, then how? If not, then how can it be made more inclusive?
- Was the concept of “Radical Feminism” wrong right from the start or did it lose its meaning somewhere in its journey?
- Is Radical Feminism the same as being an “Anti – Patriarch” ?
- Is there a way to draw a compromise between the “Radical” and “Non – Radical” aspects of feminism?
- Is the concept of “Radical Feminism” being misunderstood by the current generations? If so, then what is the reason behind the same?
- What areas in the modern society need “Radical Feminism” and what parts of the society don’t?