

According to Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “we should all be feminists”. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

When Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie entitled her essay “*We Should All Be Feminists*”, she started from the realisation that, today, not many people understand or perceive the structural misogyny in our society. To what extent is feminism still necessary today, and why does it concern us all?

For a few years, a misogynistic backlash has been taking place to attack feminist achievements in the Western world. Women’s rights have been reduced (Roe v. Wade was overturned in 2022); Donald Trump has rolled back measures that helped women gain more power in male-dominated areas; and more generally, there is growing criticism of feminism. For many, feminism has “gone too far”.

Yet striving for gender equality is still necessary today. The gender pay gap hasn’t disappeared, and the majority of victims are still women. There is a spectrum of violence against women that can be identified—from denigrating what is feminine to actual femicide—and this needs to be addressed by all. First, because society would actually be better with more equality—not just for women, but also for men, who feel the pressure of masculine stereotypes and are encouraged to pursue dangerous behaviour. Second, because this inequality has an economic cost. (In her research, Lucile Peytavin has indeed estimated the cost of promoting a certain type of “virility” as a model of masculinity.)

Fighting for gender equality is all the more urgent as feminism is being attacked by powerful men whose influence is growing (tech billionaires, masculinist influencers, etc.). Not embracing feminism has both a metaphorical and a literal cost for our societies. (241 words)

Chapter 5 - ANSWERS

DOCUMENT 1

- March 8 is International Women’s Day.
- Misogyny: dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.
- The writers have decided to study how everyday misogyny becomes violent extremism.
- All extremist movements have in common a vision of women and their role and place in society.
- An incel is an online member of a community of mostly male and heterosexual people. They define themselves as unable to find a sexual or romantic partner and they blame women (and feminism) for it.
- Incels are part of the manosphere, which is a broader community of men who promote masculinity, misogyny and opposition to feminism.

See: [Louis Theroux: Inside The Manosphere | Official Trailer | Netflix](#)

- It reveals that feminism today is more and more openly criticised.

- The writers' research reveals that a large proportion of teenage boys supports violence to resist feminism: almost a third.
- The writers refer to men's place in society, which many resent. Online communities and content reinforce this perception of men as victims of feminism and offer a solution: resistance.
- The writers have identified a whole spectrum of violence against women, from restrictions to actual violence. In the public sphere and in the private sphere. Thus misogyny could lead to violent extremism and is therefore a matter of national security.

DOCUMENT 2

2) a) These are recent examples of measures taken by governments to limit women's rights or measures that go counter to recent feminist actions.

b) Adopting the feminine version of a title suggests that its feminisation is a sign of weakness. Actually, in language, the feminine form of a word is often carries a negative connotation – which feminists try to challenge. Thus, language perpetuates the idea that what is feminine is weaker.

c) The writer mentions the film industry because significant progress has taken place in this field thanks to the MeToo movement, which started in 2017. That year, film producer Harvey Weinstein was accused by many celebrities of sexual assault and harassment. What may have been seen as isolated incidents actually revealed a structural problem—not only in the film industry but more generally in the workplace: men in positions of power often take advantage of women.

Yet, despite this progress, the movement is now waning, and powerful men accused of sexual misconduct are still given centre stage.

Yet despite the progress made, today this movement is waning and powerful men, accused of sexual misconduct are still given central stage.

d) The term “backlash” was popularised by Susan Faludi in 1991 to describe the erosion of women's rights after a period of progress. She was referring to the progress made in the 1970s, especially in 1973 with *Roe v. Wade*, and the subsequent backlash in the 1980s, when conservative Americans gained ground during the Reagan administration.

3) a) 2022–2023 were pivotal years for feminism: while progress had seemed constant, a misogynistic backlash emerged. A similar pattern occurred in the 1980s after a decade of significant advances in women's rights. Today's backlash is driven by the rhetoric that women are now unhappy because of feminism. This movement encourages women to embrace more traditional and stereotypical roles.

4) a) Trump is trying to reverse crucial strides in women's rights. It has targeted the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor and other federal programs that help women get high-paying jobs in male-dominated industries. More generally he promotes archaic gender roles. He represents a specific type of masculinity which is dangerous for women (*The Conversation*)