By definition, feminism is the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. Feminism includes fighting against gender stereotypes and trying to establish equal educational and professional opportunities. Although feminist advocacy is, and has been, mainly focused on women's rights, an ever-growing number of feminists argue for the inclusion of men's liberation within its aims because they believe that men are also harmed by traditional gender roles implied by majorly patriarchal societies. In fact, studies show that men make up only a third of counselling service clients. I personally believe that men are allowed to show their vulnerability and should not hold back from seeking psychological and emotional help.

My colleague stated that men are statistically 25% less likely to finish college. A study led by Rachel Dwyer, a sociology professor at the Ohio State University, found the reason why so many men started dropping out of college. A blatantly shallow person would say that the reason would be that men are slackers or not ambitious or competent enough. However, this is not the case, even though, biologically speaking men tend to be more prone to ADHD, dyslexia and other learning disabilities (Marder, Levine, and Wagner). The reason why so many men are dropping out, especially in America and other highly developed countries where college is very expensive, is because they are less willing to tolerate the high levels of debts that come from student loans. Men tolerate about $2,000 of debt less than women. Furthermore, in the short term men without college degrees can earn the same salary as college graduates, which makes it tempting to avoid debt and start working instead. The same is not true for women. Men who drop out face no financial penalty in their entry-level salaries. Women, on the other hand, are financially penalized for dropping out right away, earning an average of $6,500 less in their starting salaries than women college graduates. Ironically, this initial advantage for men imposes considerable long-term costs in the long run, with drop outs earning on average $20,000 less yearly by midlife than men that own a degree. It may be harder for men than for women to see the advantage of staying in college because in the early years after college, men who complete college make no higher pay than men who drop out.

Dwyer and her colleagues show that looking at gender differences can’t be reduced to ‘winners’ and ‘losers.’ Women’s recent advantage in college graduation rates is associated with their relative disadvantage in the job market. At the same time, men’s seeming advantages in the short run can lure them away from a surer path, which is finishing college, to longer term economic insecurity.

When it comes to suicide rates being higher in males than females studies found that even though women are biologically more prone to mental health disorders (20-40% more likely than men), the reason why men make up the vast majority of fatalities inflicted by suicide is because they tend to use violent means, such as use of firearms or hanging, while women tend towards nonviolent ones, such as overdosing, which are less likely to result in death.

Regarding the prison gender gap, I didn’t find any research that explained why the gender gap exists and therefore a bias towards men could be the case, although, incarceration rates for women have been growing in the last years. But the conditions women live in while being in prison often deprive them of basic necessities like pads and tampons during menstruation as most prisons don’t provide enough of them or any at all. Also, because there are far fewer women’s prisons, women are more likely to be incarcerated far from home, which makes visits difficult and expensive.

In conclusion, it is only right to criticize forms of feminism that focus only on white, middle and upper class, college educated women because feminism should include all women no matter their race, sexuality and economic status and therefore the fight for equality between genders should also become a fight for equality between ALL people. I know I haven’t mentioned all the topics my colleague found statistics for because I believe I made my point with what I said. And for those who aren’t sure what the point I wanted to make with this is, is that inequality and discrimination exist for both genders just in different aspects of life and that we shouldn’t give more importance to one than the other or neglect any kind of discrimination, and not only gender based at that. I’m sure that my colleague didn’t have bad intentions with what he did, but approached the statistics in favor to himself, which is a daily occurrence in the media and therefore is completely normal and in a way expected. What I hope we all learned from this is that we should always look at both sides of the story and respect our differences instead of pointing fingers at each other and therefore only creating unnecessary drama.

Thank you for your attention.

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