**Paper 3 – Theory and Methods**

**Feminism**

Possible questions

**10 marks**

Outline and explain two feminist views of the position of women in society.

**20 marks**

**Item B3**

*Feminist see Society as based upon conflict between men and women. In patriarchal societies, men are able to dominate and exploit women and ensure that Society is run in the interests of men. However, different feminists have different views about the causes of male dominance and what should be done about it.*

Applying material from item B3 and your own knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of feminist approaches in understanding Society.

**Item B12**

*All feminists argue that women occupy and subordinate position in society and all feminists wish to end the state of affairs. However, they differ about both the causes of the problem and it's solution. For example, liberal feminist argue that traditional attitudes and cultural stereotypes about women's abilities have kept them subordinated, but that changes in laws, policies and socialization patterns will gradually bring about gender equality. However, boats radical and Marxist feminist argue that women's oppression has deeper roots and requires more fundamental, revolutionary changes in order to end it.*

Applying material from item B12 and your own knowledge Evaluate the contribution of feminists to our understanding of society.

**Item B19**

Feminism is a conflict theory that sees Society as being divided by gender. Feminists argue but as a result of patriarchy, women are subordinated and oppressed by men. However, different feminist theories have different views on how gender inequality is caused and how women can be liberated from this oppression.

Applying material from item B19 and your own knowledge, Evaluate the usefulness of feminist approaches to our understanding of the role of women in society today.

**What you need to know about Feminism for paper 3**

Marxist, liberal, radical, intersectional, difference and post-structural feminism.

Evaluation of liberal feminism?

Feminism sees society as and seeks to describe, explain and change the position of women in society. All feminists oppose women’s but there are diasgreements among them about is causes and how to overcome it.

**Liberal or reformist feminism**

Concern with human rights and civil rights. Progress towards equal rights should come from gradual reforms.

Law and policies

Cultural change

Sex and gender Anne Oakley said there should be a differentiation between the 2 meaning that

Attitudes are

Overall liberal feminists are optimistic and believe in progress. They think that

Functionalists saw gender roles as being divided into instrumental roles (public) and expressive roles (private). Parsons saw men as and women as

Liberal feminists critique this and think that

Remember although liberal feminism critiques this functionalist view, it is the closest we get in feminism to s ‘consensus’ theory. Why?

Emerged in 1970s – key concept is patriarchy. Radical feminists believe that patriarchy is universal, is the most fundamental cause of inequality. Men are women’s enemy. All me oppress women and benefit from patriarchy. Solutions include separatism (living apart from men), consciousness raising and political lesbianism. Theorists are Susan Brownmiller (1976) who claims that fear of rape deters women from going out at night. Adrienne Rich (1981) who claims that men force women into narrow and unsatisfying ‘compulsory heterosexuality’. Germaine Greer (2000) argues for the creation of all female households.

Evaluation of Marxist feminism. Economics is in all areas of life so Marxist feminists are right to emphasise he role of capitalism in the oppression of women. BUT what about women’s subordination in non-capitalist societies? Unpaid labour may be important for Capitalism but why do women do it? Marxist feminism does not look enough at the ways that men oppress women (not just capitalism).

**An alternative dual systems feminism** looks at the economic system (capitalism) and the sex-gender system (patriarchy). Walby argues that capitalism and patriarchy are interrelated but the interests of the two are not the same so should be examined separately and capitalism is more powerful. Anna Pollert reminds us that patriarchy is just a descriptive term whereas capitalism is a system.

Bartlett claims we should look at non-economic factors to understand women’s oppression. Looks at **ideology** which maintains women’s oppression. Ideology presents the nuclear family and the division of labour as natural and normal. Patriarchy is very deeply rooted in our consciousness.

Marxism Feminism reject liberal feminist view and radical view. Instead they believe that women’s subordination is rooted in , although individual men benefit from women’s position, capitalism benefits the most. Women are unpaid homemakers so depend on the rest of the family. Cheap labour for employers (as there is an assumption they will depend on husband’s earnings. Reserve labour, reproduce workforce (nurture and socialise children to become workers), absorb anger Fran Ansley describes wives as ‘takers of shit’ – they soak up their husband’s frustration because of exploitation at work. Marxist feminists argue that if capitalism as overthrown then women’s lives would be better.

Evaluation of radical feminism?