

# NASHIK YOUTH MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2026

## STUDY GUIDE- UNW



### Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It is our immense pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Women (UN Women) Committee for this Model United Nations conference. As members of this committee, you will engage in one of the most pressing global discussions of our time — addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in conflict zones, with special focus on Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Sudan.

Conflict disproportionately impacts women and girls, exposing them to violence, displacement, exploitation, denial of education, and systemic discrimination. Across the world, millions continue to face the devastating consequences of war and political instability. Through this committee, delegates are expected to critically analyse the root causes of these challenges while collaboratively proposing practical, humanitarian, and policy-oriented solutions.

UN Women serves as the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The committee aims to foster diplomacy, negotiation, and international cooperation while encouraging delegates to balance national interests with humanitarian obligations.

As delegates, you are encouraged to:

- Conduct in-depth research on your assigned country's policies and stance.
- Understand the socio-political dimensions of gender inequality and conflict.
  - Engage in constructive debate and diplomatic negotiations.
  - Draft innovative and feasible resolutions.
- Uphold professionalism, inclusivity, and respect throughout committee sessions.

This committee is not merely a platform for debate but an opportunity to explore real-world humanitarian crises and the international community's response to them. We encourage delegates to think beyond traditional solutions and focus on long-term peacebuilding, women's participation in governance, protection mechanisms, and access to justice.

We hope this conference challenges you intellectually, enhances your diplomatic abilities, and inspires meaningful dialogue. The Executive Board eagerly looks forward to witnessing passionate discussions, collaborative policymaking, and exceptional diplomacy from all delegates.

We wish you the very best for your preparation and look forward to an engaging committee session.

Sincerely,

The Executive Board  
UN Women Committee, NYMUN 2026

### **Detailed Introduction to the UN Women Committee**

UN Women, officially known as the *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, is a specialised entity of the United Nations dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women worldwide. It was established by the United Nations General Assembly on **2 July 2010** through Resolution 64/289 as part of a major UN reform agenda aimed at strengthening the organisation's work on women's rights and gender issues. UN Women became operational in January 2011 with the objective of creating a stronger, more unified global body capable of addressing the persistent inequalities faced by women and girls across political, economic, and social spheres.

Before the creation of UN Women, gender-related responsibilities within the United Nations system were divided among several different agencies and offices, which often led to fragmented action and limited coordination. To improve efficiency and impact, the UN merged four major bodies into one unified organisation: the *Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)*, the *International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)*, the *Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)*, and the *United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)*. The formation of UN Women marked a significant milestone in the global effort to institutionalise gender equality within the UN system and provide stronger international leadership on women's rights.

UN Women functions as a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly and works closely with other major UN organs and agencies, including the United Nations Economic and Social Council, United Nations Human Rights Council,

UNICEF, UNHCR, and the World Health Organization. The organisation coordinates international efforts concerning women's empowerment and ensures that gender perspectives are integrated into UN policies, humanitarian missions, peacekeeping operations, and sustainable development goals.

The core motive of UN Women is to achieve a world where women and men enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and participation in society. Its mission revolves around eliminating discrimination against women and girls, promoting women's political and economic participation, protecting women from violence and exploitation, and ensuring equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and justice. UN Women also plays a major role in humanitarian and conflict situations, where women often become disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence, displacement, trafficking, forced marriages, and denial of basic rights.

One of the committee's most important areas of work is the **Women, Peace, and Security Agenda**, strongly linked to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Through this framework, UN Women advocates for the participation of women in peace negotiations, conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, and peacebuilding initiatives. The organisation believes that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the active involvement and protection of women.

Today, UN Women operates in more than 90 countries and works alongside governments, NGOs, civil society organisations, and international institutions to implement gender-focused programs and policies. The committee addresses issues such as gender-based violence, child marriage, unequal pay, lack of political representation, reproductive rights, refugee protection, climate justice, digital safety, and women's leadership in governance. Within Model United Nations simulations, the UN Women committee provides delegates with a platform to debate complex global issues related to gender inequality, humanitarian crises, and human rights while developing diplomatic, negotiation, and policy-making skills.

## **Agenda: Assessing Performative Feminism and Beauty Standards in the Digital Age and Their Role in Reinforcing Existing Patriarchal Structures.**

### **Understanding the Agenda:**

#### **What Are Beauty Standards?**

Beauty standards are socially constructed ideas about what is considered attractive, desirable, feminine, or socially acceptable.

These standards are not universal or natural. They are shaped by:

Culture, Media Historical systems, Colonial influence, Economic interests, Gender norms, Entertainment industries and Technology and algorithms.

Examples of common beauty standards include:

Fair skin, Thin body types, Youthful appearance, Clear skin, Specific facial features, Long hair, Hairless bodies, Hyper-feminine presentation.

Beauty standards differ across cultures and historical periods. However, in the digital age, globalization and social media have increasingly standardized beauty ideals worldwide.

### **Beauty Standards in the Digital Age:**

Before the rise of digital media, beauty standards were primarily spread through: Television Magazines, Fashion industries, Film industries, Advertising campaigns.

Today, digital platforms have transformed the scale and intensity of these standards. Major digital influences include:

Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Beauty filters, Artificial intelligence editing tools, Influencer culture, Online advertising algorithms.

Digital platforms create constant exposure to idealized appearances and encourage users to compare themselves with curated and often heavily edited content.

## **Key Features of Digital-Age Beauty Standards**

### **1. Algorithmic Amplification:**

Social media algorithms prioritize content that generates engagement.

Conventionally attractive appearances often receive more Likes, Shares, Comments, Visibility As a result, algorithms repeatedly promote Thin body types, Eurocentric features, Sexualized content, Unrealistic facial symmetry, Digitally edited appearances.

This creates a cycle where certain appearances become normalized and socially rewarded.

### **2. Influencer Culture:**

Influencers often build careers around appearance, lifestyle, and beauty-related branding. This can turn beauty into economic capital Encourage users to commodify their appearance Increase pressure to maintain “perfect” online identities Promote consumerism linked to beauty products and cosmetic procedures.

### **3. Beauty Filters and Artificial Intelligence:**

Digital filters and editing tools can alter facial structure Smooth skin Lighten skin tone Change body proportions Remove perceived imperfections

Repeated exposure to edited images can contribute to:

Body dissatisfaction, Low self-esteem, Anxiety Body dysmorphia.

This phenomenon is particularly concerning among adolescents and young adults

#### **4. Globalization of Beauty Ideals**

Digital platforms spread dominant beauty ideals globally.

As a result local beauty traditions may become marginalized, eurocentric standards may become dominant, colorism and appearance-based discrimination may intensify Many countries continue to experience strong social preference for fair skin, western facial features, thin body types.

### **Understanding Patriarchal Structures**

Patriarchy refers to systems in which men disproportionately hold power, masculinity is privileged socially and economically, women are judged more heavily through appearance and behavior.

The agenda asks delegates to analyze how beauty standards reinforce these systems.

#### **How Beauty Standards Reinforce Patriarchal Structures?**

##### **A. Objectification of Women**

Women are frequently evaluated based on appearance rather than intelligence, Leadership Capability, Professional achievements.

Digital culture can intensify objectification by rewarding women primarily for visual appeal.

##### **B. Social Surveillance of Women's Bodies**

Women online often experience:

- Body shaming
- Harassment
- Appearance-based criticism
- Pressure to maintain socially accepted beauty norms

This reflects broader patriarchal traditions where women's bodies are constantly monitored and judged.

##### **C. Economic Exploitation**

The beauty industry profits heavily from insecurity. Industries involved include cosmetics, Skincare, Plastic surgery, Weight-loss products, Fashion, Wellness industries. Women are often expected to invest significant time and money into appearance-related labor.

#### **D. Unequal Gender Expectations**

Although men also experience appearance pressure, beauty expectations disproportionately affect women.

Women are often expected to maintain youthfulness, Follow beauty trends, Present themselves attractively in professional and social settings.

Failure to conform can result in social exclusion, Cyberbullying, Reduced opportunities, Lower self-confidence.

#### **E. Intersectional Discrimination**

Not all women are affected equally. Beauty standards may disproportionately marginalize women of color, Darker skin tones, Disabled women, Older women, Indigenous women, Trans women, Plus-sized individuals.

This demonstrates the intersection between beauty standards and Racism.

### **Possible Moderated Caucus Topics:**

#### **1. Empowerment vs Social Conditioning:**

One major debate is whether beauty practices are genuinely empowering or shaped by societal pressure?

#### **2. Freedom of Expression vs Regulation:**

Should governments regulate beauty filters or would such measure violate freedom of speech?

#### **3. Corporate Responsibility:**

Should social media companies be responsible for harmful beauty algorithms and mental health impacts of the same?

### **Portfolio Examples**

The following examples help delegates understand how different countries may approach the agenda.

Example Portfolio 1: Republic of Korea (South Korea)

South Korea has a major beauty and cosmetic industry, Strong influencer culture, High cosmetic surgery rates, Global entertainment influence through K-pop and media.

Likely Concerns South Korea may discuss are pressure created by digital beauty culture, Mental health concerns among youth, Influence of entertainment industries, economic importance of beauty industries.

Possible Positions South Korea may support are Mental health awareness programs, Responsible advertising standards, Digital literacy campaigns.

Example Portfolio 2: India

India experiences strong colorism issues, Massive social media usage, Growing influencer economy, Large beauty and skincare industries.

Likely Concerns India may discuss are Fairness standards and discrimination, Social pressure on women, Harmful online beauty trends, mental health among adolescents.

Possible Position India may support is awareness campaigns against colorism, Digital education programs, Women's mental health initiatives, Greater platform accountability.

## **Understanding Performative and Pseudo-Feminism**

'Feminism,' in simple terms, means that no individual of a particular sex should be treated with any injustice, and indubitably, they should receive equal treatment. However, lately, we can witness the emergence of a new version of feminism that is termed pseudo feminism. A pseudo feminist is a person who claims to be a feminist yet ignores the primary purpose of feminism, which is equality. The principle of pseudo-feminism supports the advancement of females ahead of other genders and the active targeting of males to right the wrongs of the past.

Pseudo-feminists have a deep desire to remedy all the injustices inflicted on women, often by lashing out and demeaning men. What they usually forget is that the fundamental essence of the movement towards feminism was equality. We frequently don't realise it, but pseudo feminism is all around us, clandestinely hidden in the garb of feminism. While women are raising slogans demanding fair rights, they don't waste a minute asking a man sitting on a lady's reserved seat to vacate it.

The very basis of the foundational idea of the feminist movement is the demand for equality of treatment between genders. However, pseudo feminists believe that women deserve more respect than people of any other gender or orientation. Living in a culture and society where women often face a lot of challenges in daily life, the goal of equality of rights is hindered by the act and interpretation accorded to the term by the pseudo feminists. Anyone who only propagates or supports the rights of women above others and engages in male bashing whenever women face an atrocity or hardship is tagged as pseudo feminist or pseudo feminists. They do so without recognising the true meaning of being a feminist, which often hurts the cause of the feminist movement. On the social media scene, hardly any person knows what being a true feminist is about, and thereby the end of being a pseudo feminist by promoting a superior position for women.

**Do pseudo-feminists want equal treatment?** — No, they want to create a world governed only by women. Will a woman be getting away with any wrongdoing? A specific set of women identifying as feminists want preference and superiority over equality.

Pseudofeminism is sometimes assigned to a branch of feminism with which some disagree. Many feminists incorrectly interpret the definition of feminism, taking the goal as not the upliftment of women but rather of pulling men down. As they claim, a few rotten eggs ruin the pot, and people will sometimes use pseudo-feminist reasons to point out non-existent inconsistencies in the very idea of feminism. Supporting an idea and propagating it is one thing, but spreading hatred and discord meaninglessly in its name would only destroy all the good that was done before in the name of that idea.

## **Social Media and the Commercialization of Feminism**

You must be able to explore severe contradictions in both feminisation of beauty and messages of marketing where commercialisation has become key to promoting theories of feminist performance. One such example is:

Many influencers promote messages such as:

- “Love yourself.”
- “Be confident.”
- “Support women.”

At the same time, they may market:

- Diet products
- Cosmetic procedures
- Skin-lightening products
- Anti-aging treatments

The feminist language encourages self-acceptance, while the business model profits from women’s insecurities.

You should ask: Is this empowerment, or is feminism being used as a marketing strategy?

## **The Fake-Male Performative Feminism; why should criticism be limited to one gender?**

Performative male feminism occurs when men publicly present themselves as supporters of gender equality primarily for social status, personal gain, reputation management, or romantic/sexual advantage, rather than from a genuine commitment to feminist principles.

**1. Feminism as a Personal Brand** - Some influencers build audiences by appearing progressive and socially conscious. Is advocacy genuine if it generates followers and profit AND can activism and self-interest coexist?

**2. Feminism for Social Capital** - In some online communities, openly identifying as feminist may increase because of popularity, professional opportunities and fake social approval. The concern is that support for women's rights becomes a tool for reputation enhancement rather than social change.

**3. Feminism as a Dating Strategy**- A controversial discussion in digital spaces involves men who adopt feminist rhetoric to appear more attractive, trustworthy, or morally superior. This is often used to manipulate trust and conceal sexist attitudes and thus exploit feminist spaces for personal benefit. One of many uses for such a derogatory approach may be considered both in contexts of the ill effects that arise post dating such partners or the change in personal identities after long term effects!

## **Things to think about when undertaking research into the topics of discussion for fake feminism and their ill effects:**

1. Corporate feminism and Commercialisation
  - The use of feminist messaging in advertising and branding.
  - "Femvertising" and profit-driven empowerment campaigns.
  - Do corporations advance gender equality or exploit feminist movements for revenue?
2. Influencer Culture and Feminist Branding
  - Feminism as a personal brand.

- Monetization of activism through sponsorships and partnerships.
- The tension between awareness-raising and self-promotion.

### 3. Men, Allyship, and Performative Support

- Public displays of allyship for social capital.
- Accountability mechanisms for influential figures.
- Distinguishing genuine support from reputation management.

## Questions a Resolution Should Address:

Delegates should attempt to answer:

- How can digital platforms reduce harmful beauty pressures?
- Should edited images require disclosure labels?
- How can countries promote inclusive beauty representation?
- What role should schools play in digital literacy?
- How can mental health support be improved?
- What responsibilities should technology companies hold?
- How can online harassment and appearance-based bullying be addressed?

## How to research?

Delegates are encouraged to research their country's:

- beauty industry
- Social media regulations
- Online harassment laws
- Mental health policies
- Representation in media
- Colorism and cultural beauty standards
- Technology and AI policies
- National gender equality frameworks

### Delegates may also refer:

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) CEDAW encourages states to eliminate discriminatory practices affecting women.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) Addresses representation of women in media, Gender stereotypes, Women's empowerment.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Relevant SDGs include:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being.
- SDG 5: Gender Equality .
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

**Suggested Reading:**

- UN Women reports on gender and media.
- UNESCO reports on digital well-being.
- WHO reports on adolescent mental health.
- Research on social media and body image Studies on colorism and gender discrimination.

## **Conclusion**

Beauty standards in the digital age are no longer limited to fashion or entertainment. They are deeply connected to technology, gender equality, mental health, economics, human rights, global power structures.

Digital platforms have amplified both opportunities for self-expression and harmful systems of exclusion and pressure. Delegates must therefore assess how modern beauty culture influences women's rights, reinforces patriarchal expectations, and impacts societies worldwide.

The challenge before this committee is to create balanced solutions that protects human dignity, Freedom of expression, Mental well-being, Gender equality while promoting a safer and more inclusive digital environment.