

- Forum:** UN Women
- Issue:** Ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life.
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Introduction

The issue of gender equality and how women want to have equal opportunities in most, if not all aspects of life has been a problem to address throughout history. The gender equality movement finally started gaining traction nearing the 20th century with New Zealand being the first country to allow for women's' suffrage in 1893 . As for the United States, through the hard work of people like Susan B. Anthony and other courageous women who gathered at the Seneca Falls Convention, the right for women to vote was granted in 1920. Other countries began to follow the same example and we have made a great amount of progress but we have not achieved complete gender equality in all realms, whether it be social, political or economic, yet. Even though women are as capable as men in most, if not all of fields, one of the examples suggesting that women are still being discriminated in the workplace is that only 5% of the CEOs in the Fortune 500 of the most successful companies in the world are women. Research by Huffington Post shows that women make only 80 cents for every dollar a man makes even though they are doing the same work. There are more obstacles than the wage difference for women to be equal to men in every field possible such as the basic rights that are restricted for women in Middle Eastern countries. But even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, we must persist in order for these women to enjoy the rights they deserve in every possible way. Women are equal to men in every single way in that they also deserve the opportunities that are available on the job market as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares “equal rights of men and women”. Therefore, women should have the equal access to all the opportunities that are available in the job market and beyond but that is just not the case. Society as it is now, even though there has been a lot of progress, there are still a ways to go in terms of gender

equality in order to ensure that all men and women can prosper and succeed for the success of all of mankind.

Definition of Key Terms

Gender Equality

Equal opportunities for both genders in all realms, whether political, social, or economic.

Political Representation

The activity of making citizens' voices, opinions, and perspectives “present” in the public policy making processes, the ability to make a change in the country’s government

Gender Inequality Index (GII)

A composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. The higher the value, the more unequal the country is regarding opportunities for men and women

Sharia Law

The set of principles that govern the moral and religious lives of Muslims. The Sharia Law also serves as a legal framework for the lives of Muslims.

Atypical Work Arrangement

All of the situations of work employment that fall outside of the standard employment relationship which would be defined as full-time and indefinite. Some examples of atypical work arrangements would be part-time, casual work. The danger of these arrangements would be that on the one hand they are flexible but less secure.

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Key Issues

Gender Inequality in Developing Countries Versus Developed Countries

In general, there is a correlation between less economically developed countries (LEDCs) and gender inequality. This is not to say that developed countries do not have

Caption 1: Countries by the Gender Inequality Index

problems with gender inequality, but developing countries tend to have a higher gender inequality index due to the fact that they still hold cultural norms that favour males over females in all aspects of society, such as education, employment, and the control over one's life. One major basis that determines gender equality is education. In developing countries, adolescent girls face economic and social demands that disrupt their educational opportunities, as child labour, and marriage is common. Furthermore, it is evident that women participation in the workforce is uncommon in developing countries. India for example, has an extremely low male to female ratio of those in the labour force. Men are three times as likely to work than women, meaning that most women remain sheltered away from public life, and instead tend to their responsibilities within the private sphere in the household. This ratio is also unusually low in the Middle East and North Africa.

Economic

Worldwide, the wage gap between men and women still remains abnormally large despite recent progress, and for women of colour, the gap is even greater. According to the

Caption #1: Men and Women Wage Gap Worldwide (Bank of America)

World Bank, between 2011 and 2014, for every 100 US dollars a man was paid, a woman was paid just 76 dollars worldwide. Because of various misconceptions, women often receive less pay than men. One often cited reason is that fact that men are more educated than women. But according to a report from the White House Council of Economic Advisers, women are graduating from college at higher rates than men. Despite this, women with higher degrees than men are earning still receiving lower wages. A 2011 study carried out by Georgetown's Center on Education revealed that "women have to have a Ph.D. to make as much as men with a B.A." Another

commonly cited reason is that men work harder than women, in terms of hours. However, according to a study carried out by the American Psychological Association, men who stay after hours at work were rated 14% more favourably than women who did the exact same thing. Moreover, many believe women leave the workforce earlier than men, due to the fact that they cannot balance work-life responsibilities, and thus it makes sense that they earn less than men. In reality, women do often leave the workforce earlier, with thirty being the average age. However, it is not because they prefer to work within the household, but it is because they are finding it difficult to compete with men in the job market, and are often being paid less for the same amount of work.

Political Representation

The political realm has always been largely dominated by men, as shown by the low percentage of women in legislature, which currently stands at 22 percent as of 2014. With a stunning 64 percent, Rwanda currently leads the world in the political representation of women in government. One major factor for this disparity is the fact that incumbents are have strong advantages for re-election. Men held positions in office long before women did, and thus non incumbent women would find it challenging to compete against them. Not only that, but the issue of gender parity plays a role in the uneven representation of women in politics. For those running for office, media is an important platform to gain voter approval. Generally, women receive less media coverage than men, thus giving men an advantage. Due to the fact that men are more successful in politics, there is a significant gender gap in political ambition between men and women. A study conducted by the Women and Politics Institute at American University surveyed 4,000 potential candidates, and found that only 46 percent of women had thought about running for office compared to 62 percent for men. It is true that recently, women have been gaining more leadership positions in corporations and other aspects of public life, but it is important to realize that there are still social norms that associate women with working within the household. This also affects women in their own perceptions of themselves, as many young

Caption #1: Country By Percentage of Women In Legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

women tend to think that they are incompetent for running for office. A possible way to alleviate this is by promoting politics for women at a young age, through education at schools and colleges worldwide.

Sharia Law

Many countries around the world follow Sharia Law. In countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where the tenets of Islam are emphasized, women's rights are still under development. Women are expected to lead a domesticated life under the Sharia Law. Under Sharia Law

Caption #4: Use of Sharia Law by Country (

women cannot work outside, interact with men besides their husband, and have to remain completely covered at all times in public areas. This system of governance leads women to believe that they are subservient to men, sheltering them from all aspects of political, economic, and public life.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

UN Women

UN Women is the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which seeks to support intergovernmental bodies in their formulations of policies and norms, help Member States implement these standards set forth, and lead and coordinate the UN's progression on gender equality. There are four distinct parts of this UN branch: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Each respective branch is responsible for carrying out tasks specific to their degree of expertise. For example, one of INSTRAW focal points is taking care of the issue of Human Security, reducing the number of violent incidents in the home, at work and on the street. Additionally, The HeForShe Movement was created by the UN Women organization that

similarly advances the goals of UN Women, advocating for gender equality and has influenced and garnered support from influential people like Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe, President of Finland Sauli Niinisto and Actor Emma Watson.

Human Rights Watch

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental human rights organization that often collaborates with local human rights groups to promote human rights and justice around the world. They focus on women's empowerment and gender equality, specifically sex slavery and access to education.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Date	Description of event
1791	Declaration of Rights of Women and the Female Citizen in the French Revolution
1848	Seneca Falls Convention
1916	Jeannette Rankin of Montana is the first woman elected to the U.S. congress
1920	19th Amendment in the United States (Established Voting Rights for Women)
1931	Jane Addams receives first Nobel Prize for Peace
1934	Frances Perkins is appointed Secretary of Labor by Theodore Roosevelt. She is the first woman to be appointed to the cabinet in the U.S.

1945	Eleanor Roosevelt becomes the delegate of the United States of the United Nations
1966	National Organization of Women founded
1968	Soong Ching-Ling is name co-chairwoman of the People's Republic of China. She is the first non-royal woman to lead the State of China
1969	Golda Meir becomes Israel's first female prime minister
1977	Discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status is prohibited by law in Canada
1977	Nigerian women gain the right to vote
1992	Rita Johnston is the first female premier of Canada
2009	Lilly LedBetter Pay Act passed by the Obama Administration in making workers can make complaints about equal pay discrimination
2010	UN Women Organization Established
2016	Tsai- Ing- Wen elected first woman president of the Republic of China (Taiwan)

Relevant UN Treaties and Documents

1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)-This resolution helps define what constitutes as discrimination for women and sets up plans and goals for gender equality and measures to achieve those goals. It is seen as the founding document for all further actions regarding achieving gender equality .

UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and Security (2000)- This resolution emphasizes the need for women in negotiating peace in an event of a conflict and urges member nations to implement measures to incorporate women in peace and security operations in the UN. Furthermore, it implements measures to protect women and girls from abuses such as rape in events of conflict.

Security Council resolution 1820 (2008)- This resolution continues and reaffirms the resolutions 1325, 1612, and 1674, such as urging member nations to act immediately towards all acts of sexual violence. In addition, this resolution strongly requests Secretary-General and relevant UN agencies to remain involved and develop necessary mechanisms to combat these problems.

Security Council resolution 1888 (2009)- In this resolution, it reconsiders the prevalence of rape and other forms of sexual violence when imposing or renewing targeted sanctions in situations of armed conflict, as well as strengthening the monitoring and reporting of these sexual crimes.

Security Council resolution 1889 (2009)- This resolution urges Member States, UN bodies, donors, and civil society to ensure that women's protection and empowerment was taken into account during post-conflict needs, which should be factored into subsequent funding and programming.

Security Council resolution 1960 (2010)- This resolution is a blueprint for gender and peacekeeping work for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which was the first to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. It stresses the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an integral document for guiding the fight for gender equality. CEDAW's principles have in fact

been implemented into resolutions through amendments in countries such as Brazil, Columbia, and South Africa, and was a useful tool for campaigners. In addition, CEDAW has inspired many other treaties, such as the UN declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) and Belém do Pará Convention.

UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and Security (2000)- This resolution was the first of it's kind in terms of women's rights in areas of conflict, but it was largely ineffective in protecting women from sexual violences and internal displacement. This resolution does not address forced displacement as an issue of protection, instead focusing on the protection of women AFTER they have been displaced. This resolution did inspire the protection of women, however, it did not manage to make a large enough impact.

Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) and Security Council resolution 1888 (2009)- Both of these resolutions represented building blocks of a potentially powerful system for equalizing women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, for strengthening women's protection during and after conflict, and for ensuring long-term prevention of conflict.

Security Council resolution 1889 (2009)- This resolution did in fact urge Member States, United Nations bodies, donors and civil society to ensure that women's protection and empowerment was taken into account during post-conflict needs assessment and planning, opening a large array to help combat these issues.

Security Council resolution 1960 (2010)- This resolution helped to reaffirm previous resolutions and called for further action on the protection of women in war zones, along with the lines outlined in previous resolutions.

UN Resolutions

Besides UN resolutions stating general guidelines that Countries don't have to follow, there has also been individual efforts by countries themselves and organizations such as the National Organization for Women and the League of Women Voters that have used their individual

resources and manpower in order to further the progress of women in the fight for equality. After all, even if most of the work these organizations do are based off of the UN's guiding documents, the UN documents are still just that, outlines that have no binding effect on member nations which means that there must be more willing contributions on their own part in furthering the progress of gender equality. Additionally, collaboration between governments and NGOs could be extremely crucial in getting ideas across and coming up with the best solutions possible that are realistic for both sides to contribute to.

Possible Solutions

Empowerment of women is a key aspect in solving the issue at hand, with many UN resolutions already implementing various methods involving UN bodies, donors, and more. Not only that, ensuring that women are able to receive a full education and balance their duties at home is also an important factor to consider. By providing viable options for maternity leaves could allow women to balance their work and family life. Another option for ensuring women have a balance between work and family life, more so focusing on furthering the career of women, would be creating unique ways for women to have access to educational opportunities besides the conventional day school; For example, Night schools that could also allow for women to bring their children and possibly learn along with their parents, preventing the possibility that these women will lack the knowledge to stand up for themselves on the different gender equality issues. Building acceptance of women taking on stereotypical male dominant jobs is also an obstacle that the society needs to overcome. Specifically, a possible solution would be workshops that would be mandatory for workers in various companies that would most likely be mandatory depending on the quality of the work environment which would be checked on by UN officials. By providing women with more opportunities in these male dominant jobs while ensuring an equal pay between both genders, it could stimulate a change in society's perception of a certain job and promote more equality between the two genders. A more immediate solution would be encouraging governments to pass or enforce laws in workplaces that ensures equal pay between genders. A more difficult task would be changing the perspective of different social spheres and if more and more workplaces accept this new norm of gender equality, this goal would be achieved.

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