STUDY GUIDE

Unwomen

Promoting Women's Involvement and Empowerment, Eradicating Violence, and Achieving Gender Equality

HAS-MUN 25

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Secretary-General ……1

Letter from the Chair …….. 2

Introduction to the Committee: UN Women …… 3

Introduction to the Agenda Item …… 3

Overview of the Agenda Item …… 4

Historical Background …… 5

Challenges and Barriers to Women's Participation and Empowerment …… 6

Case Studies …….. 30

Initiatives from Various Countries ……30

Key Points for a Resolution …….. 31

Further Reading …….. 32

Bibliography …… 34

LETTER FROM SECRETARY-GENERAL

Dear Delegates,

I am thrilled to welcome you to the first session of HAS-MUN 2025! As your Secretary-General, it is a true honor to lead this incredible event, which stands as a testament to our school's dedication to promoting global awareness and developing diplomatic skills among our students.

This year’s conference gathers young leaders from various backgrounds, all united by our common goal of tackling the urgent challenges our world faces today. The issues we will address demand innovative thinking, collaboration, and a commitment to finding solutions that reflect our shared humanity.

Hosting HAS-MUN is not just a privilege; it comes with great responsibility. We strive to foster an environment that promotes respectful debate, critical analysis, and the spirit of cooperation that the United Nations represents. I encourage each of you to seize this opportunity to learn, grow, and engage with your fellow delegates in a passionate and thoughtful manner.

As you prepare for the conference, I urge you to approach your research with curiosity and an open mind. Familiarize yourself with your assigned country's position and be ready to advocate for its interests while also considering the viewpoints of others. Remember, effective diplomacy relies on negotiation and compromise.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our organizing committee, faculty advisors, and volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to making this event a reality. Their commitment ensures that HAS-MUN 2025 will be a memorable and impactful experience for everyone involved.

Let us unite to make history at HAS-MUN 2025. I eagerly anticipate witnessing your passion and dedication as we embark on this journey toward understanding and cooperation.

Warm regards,

Rozita CAN
Secretary-General,
HAS-MUN 2025

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings, Honorable Delegates

I am delighted to welcome you to this important UNWOMEN Committee session. As we come together to discuss our agenda, "Promoting Women's Involvement and Empowerment, Eradicating Violence, and Achieving Gender Equality," we are very well aware that the decisions and discussions we have today will have a significant impact on a future free of structural barriers, violence, and discrimination against women and girls.

Despite the progress thorough decades, gender inequality is still a global issue. Aside from economic disparities and alarmingly high rates of gender-based violence, women continue to be underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles. They are further prevented from fully engaging in society by institutional biases, cultural norms, and discriminatory laws. As representatives of this committee, we must move forward with confidence to remove these obstacles and empower women in all spheres of life if we are to attain true gender equality.

This committee provides an essential forum for fruitful discussions, teamwork, and the development of successful laws aimed at promoting gender equality. One of your most important duties as delegates is to have meaningful conversations, offer creative and workable solutions, and strive for the measurable results that will result in long-lasting alterations. In addition to resolving current injustices, our goal is to create a solid basis for women to prosper in a future where their rights, voices, and opportunities are completely recognized and safeguarded.

You should all approach this session with respect, dedication, and a common goal of making progress. Collectively, we possess the ability to effect significant change and guarantee equal rights, opportunities, and protections for women worldwide.

I eagerly await for your contributions and a productive session ahead.
Sincerely,

Duru TÜRER
Chair, UNWomen
HAS-MUN 2025

Introduction to the Committee: UN Women

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, commonly referred to as UN Women, was established on July 2, 2010. Its primary purpose is to advance and strengthen the rights and status of women globally. This organization was formed by merging four distinct UN entities that focused on women's rights and gender equality:

- **DAW (Department for the Advancement of Women)**: This department worked to promote women's rights.
- **INSTRAW (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women)**: An institute dedicated to generating and disseminating knowledge aimed at empowering women.
- **OSAGI (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues)**: This office was responsible for advancing gender equality within the UN framework.
- **UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women)**: A fund that implemented projects aimed at enhancing the economic and social circumstances of women.

The integration of these departments allowed UN Women to operate with a larger budget and a more robust mandate, focusing on establishing global benchmarks for achieving gender equality. The organization collaborates with governments and civil society to ensure these standards are effectively enacted, supported by appropriate laws and policies, to benefit women worldwide.

UN Women has developed various programs to empower women socially and economically, while also working to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, thereby protecting their dignity. The organization actively promotes the establishment and enforcement of policies that advocate for gender equality and women's rights, ultimately striving for a more just and inclusive world.

Introduction to the Agenda Item: Enhancing Women's Participation and Empowerment, Eliminating Violence, and Ensuring Gender Equality

A. Overview of the Agenda Item

1. **Significance of Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality**

In Western societies, female empowerment is often linked to specific historical phases of the women's rights movement, which is frequently categorized into three waves. The first wave, occurring in the 19th and early 20th centuries, focused heavily on suffrage. The second wave, which emerged in the 1960s, addressed issues related to sexuality and women's societal roles. The third wave, recognized as beginning in the 1990s, has cultivated a broader global movement advocating for women's rights and empowerment, highlighted by observances like International Women's Empowerment Day. Diane Elson, a consultant for UN Women, argues that the disproportionate burden of unpaid labor on women significantly hampers their ability to realize their rights. Both men and women need time for caregiving and personal relief.

Women's empowerment is crucial for achieving sustainability. Gender equality contributes to stronger and more sustainable growth, making it not only a pressing moral and social concern but also a significant economic challenge. Gender equality is a fundamental human right essential for fostering a peaceful and prosperous world. Nevertheless, women and girls still face substantial challenges globally. They remain underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making, often receive unequal pay for comparable work, and encounter legal and systemic barriers that restrict their employment opportunities. In many developing nations, girls and women are frequently deemed less valuable than their male counterparts, leading to forced domestic responsibilities or early marriages before they reach adulthood. Annually, up to 12 million girls are married before the legal age. While progress is evident in various regions, significant work remains to combat gender inequality. No country has achieved complete gender equality. Scandinavian nations like Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden lead global efforts to bridge the gender gap, exhibiting nearly equal distributions of wealth, resources, and opportunities. Conversely, regions such as the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia experience the most significant gender disparities; however, certain countries within these areas—like Lesotho, South Africa, and Sri Lanka—outperform the United States in gender equality metrics.

In South Sudan, for instance, it is rare for girls to complete their education due to conflict and poverty; only 30% of school-aged children are currently enrolled. Gender inequality exacerbates the situation, with only one in seven girls finishing primary school.

The UN World Survey (2014) on the “Role of Women in Development” indicates that empowering women is synergistically linked to economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Women’s active involvement in decision-making effectively directs public resources toward vital human development areas, including education, health, nutrition, employment, and social protection.

In 2012, UN Women spearheaded the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW). This landmark plan operationalized the 2006 UN System-wide Policy on GEEW, implemented by the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) chaired by the UN Secretary-General. For the first time in UN history, UN-SWAP provided a systematic and measurable approach to integrating gender issues into all major institutional functions of UN entities.

B. Historical Context

1. **Brief History of Women’s Rights**

From ancient civilizations, women's rights have been severely restricted, with many treated as property. During the Renaissance and Middle Ages, women’s roles were largely confined to domestic duties, although some women from noble families had greater societal influence. In Europe, women's rights were tightly controlled by religious institutions and patriarchal systems.

The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in the USA marked a pivotal moment in the first wave of feminism, considered the first women’s rights convention. The idea stemmed from discussions among friends,

leading to an advertisement for a convention to discuss women's social, civil, and religious conditions, ultimately laying the foundation for the feminist movement. By the early 20th century, many countries granted women the right to vote. However, this newfound freedom often led to resentment from men in various societies. The onset of World War I saw women entering the workforce en masse, demonstrating their capabilities in roles traditionally held by men, which helped acknowledge their social roles beyond domestic spheres.

The second wave of feminism (1960s–1970s) focused on issues of equality such as sexuality, reproductive rights, and equal pay, building on the first wave's achievements. This phase emphasized women's active participation in social life and their desire for equitable treatment, reproductive rights, and a challenge to traditional gender roles.

2. **Key International Agreements and Frameworks**

Significant legislation such as the **Equal Pay Act of 1963** prohibited employers from paying women less than men for equal work in the same role. An amendment to **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** further prohibited sex-based discrimination in the workplace and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1965, enhancing women's access to job opportunities across various sectors.

- In 1966, the **National Organization for Women (NOW)** was founded by activists in response to the absence of a strong national feminist organization to advocate for women's rights and address systemic gender inequalities.
- In 1973, the landmark case involving Jane Roe led the Supreme Court to recognize abortion as a fundamental right on January 22, 1973.
- The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, adopted on December 10, 1948, by the United Nations General Assembly, is a pivotal milestone in human rights history, motivated by the aftermath of World War II and the need to prevent future atrocities.

3. **Recent Developments and Movements**

In recent years, women's rights have improved significantly due to the influence of women's movements and societal changes. Women have gained the right to vote in numerous countries, and their participation in education and the workforce has increased. The second wave of feminism, beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, led to the enactment of laws promoting gender equality, while various recent laws and policies have aimed to enhance women's representation in social, economic, and political spheres. Issues such as women's participation in the workforce, equal pay, and improved working conditions are now prioritized in many nations. Gender quotas have become more common to boost women's political representation, especially in Northern Europe. The #MeToo movement and UN Women's initiatives are critical milestones in the fight against sexual harassment and violence.

Despite advancements, many challenges remain. While progress has been made in women's rights worldwide, ongoing efforts are essential to combat gender-based violence and discrimination.

Although many past obstacles have been overcome, the struggle for women's rights continues. UN Women recently reported a widening gender gap in social protections, leaving women and girls more vulnerable to poverty.

C. Challenges and Obstacles to Women's Participation and Empowerment

Women encounter numerous challenges that hinder their equality and empowerment in political, economic, and social spheres. These obstacles are often interconnected, creating significant barriers to women's full empowerment and active participation in society. Cultural norms and stereotypes regarding gender roles restrict women's entry into new roles and limit their involvement in traditional occupations, thereby impacting their leadership and public participation. These harmful associations align with institutional barriers, discriminatory laws, unequal access to resources, and limited opportunities for advancement. Intersectionality complicates these issues, as different levels of discrimination based on race, class, or sexual orientation can further hinder women's progress.

Resistance to change is perhaps the most profound and persistent barrier, manifesting in various forms, including the glass ceiling effect, violence against women, and income disparities. Historical and cultural reinforcement of societal norms often defines women's "traditional" roles as subordinate to men, relegating them to domestic duties. These roles create stereotypes that view women as caregivers rather than leaders, limiting their educational and career advancement opportunities. Moreover, violence against women—whether domestic, sexual, or economic—diminishes their strength, health, and societal contributions. Economic barriers, such as the gender pay gap and limited opportunities for financial independence, further support women's oppression in contributing to economic development and sustainability. These barriers are not merely personal; they represent systemic issues requiring collective action to dismantle.

Education, political representation, and access to healthcare are critical areas where inequalities persist and demand urgent intervention. Educational disparities, including high dropout rates among girls, prevent many women from reaching their potential. Cultural and religious barriers further complicate matters, with traditional beliefs often opposing the principle of gender equality. Health inequalities, including inadequate access to reproductive health care, adversely affect women's well-being and productivity. Additionally, media representations continue to project gender stereotypes, shaping public perceptions of women's roles.

1. **Resistance to Change**

Among the various obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment, resistance to change stands out as a major barrier. Societal and institutional systems perpetuate long-held traditional structures that disadvantage women and sustain inequality. Despite global efforts for women's rights, many societies continue to resist altering fixed gender roles and norms. This resistance is not merely an individual attitude but a systemic issue rooted in cultural, social, and institutional frameworks

developed over centuries. Overcoming this resistance requires addressing its fundamental causes and implementing comprehensive system-wide measures to challenge these barriers.

UN Women has undertaken significant actions to combat resistance to change by addressing societal norms and institutional barriers that maintain gender inequality. It organizes global advocacy campaigns, collaborates with governmental and organizational partners, and implements targeted community-based programs to challenge stereotypes and advocate for systemic reform.

a) **Societal Norms and Gender Norms**

Societal norms and gender expectations significantly influence perceptions of women's roles and responsibilities. Many cultures assign traditional roles to women as homemakers and caregivers while designating leadership and decision-making responsibilities to men. These norms discourage women from pursuing education, careers, or leadership positions, fostering a culture of conformity that diminishes their ambitions and capabilities. Societal backlash against women who defy traditional roles further restricts their rights and actions, hindering their personal and professional growth.

UN Women has launched the **HeForShe** initiative to challenge societal and gender norms by engaging men and boys the as allies in promoting gender equality. This campaign seeks to mobilize men to adopt non-discriminatory lifestyles and challenge stereotypes within their communities, fostering a culture of empowerment. Additional programs, such as **Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces**, encourage grassroots collective actions against harassment and violence toward women in urban areas.

Women community leaders are collaborating with local governments and civil society to create safer environments for women, thereby challenging traditional gender roles. UN Women also implements gender-sensitive education programs in rural communities, focusing on integrating gender elements into curricula and training teachers to address gender biases, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. These efforts aim to reshape perceptions of women's capabilities from an early age, fostering a generation that values equal opportunities for all genders. Awareness campaigns and capacity-building workshops help communities recognize the negative impacts of rigid gender roles and inspire equitable practices.

b) **Institutional Barriers**

Resistance to change is often further entrenched by institutional frameworks, laws, and policies that codify discriminatory practices. Women often face inadequate pay, limited maternity leave, and inflexible work conditions due to these institutional disadvantages. In political and governance structures, women encounter barriers that restrict access to decision-making roles, such as lack of financial support for female candidates and inequities in the electoral process. Discriminatory curricula

and insufficient support for girls in educational settings also perpetuate institutional barriers. These obstacles not only deny women opportunities but also reinforce societal systems that hinder gender equality, necessitating reforms in policies and structures to facilitate inclusive participation.

UN Women has made strides in eliminating institutional barriers through policy advocacy and legislative reforms. The endorsement of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** is a key achievement. By engaging governments to align national laws with international standards, UN Women has successfully eliminated discriminatory policies in numerous countries. For instance, in Kenya, UN Women worked with lawmakers to address constitutional inequalities regarding women's inheritance and property rights.

Furthermore, UN Women advocates for gender-responsive budgeting to ensure national and local budgets allocate resources that address women's needs. In India, for example, they support initiatives that prioritize women in national development plans, including budgetary interventions for women-led enterprises and vocational training. In political contexts, UN Women collaborates with electoral commissions to enhance women's representation in leadership. Their efforts in Afghanistan involve training women candidates and funding their campaigns to counter systemic biases in political institutions.

These examples illustrate UN Women’s commitment to transforming both societal and institutional barriers. By integrating international advocacy with localized efforts, the organization works to create pathways for sustainable change and ensure women can fully access all facets of society.

2. **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is a crucial framework for understanding the multifaceted experiences of women globally. It recognizes that a woman's identity is shaped by various factors, including race, class, sexual orientation, and disability. Developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is essential for understanding how different forms of discrimination and privilege intersect to affect individuals, particularly women. It is vital to recognize that marginalized women often experience compounded discrimination that is overlooked in mainstream gender discussions.

Women of color, Indigenous women, LGBTQ+ women, migrant women, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often face unique barriers, such as limited access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, coupled with justice systems that fail to protect them. By incorporating intersectionality into its initiatives, UN Women ensures that all programs, policies, and advocacy efforts are designed to support women at various intersections of identity and address the root causes of their marginalization.

Intersecting identities can lead to challenges that cannot be fully understood or addressed through a gender lens alone. For instance, a woman of color may face discrimination based not only on her gender but also on her race, resulting in unique forms of oppression. Women who belong to multiple marginalized groups, such as those who identify as LGBTQ+ and disabled, often encounter obstacles

distinct from those faced by more privileged women. Addressing gender equality requires an intersectional approach, ensuring that all women have access to their rights.

By adopting an intersectional lens, organizations like UN Women can better understand the nuanced needs of women facing multiple forms of oppression. This approach ensures that women experiencing compounded discrimination can access healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Emphasizing intersectionality amplifies the voices of women historically excluded from decision-making processes, fostering a society where women can thrive according to their unique identities.

Therefore, it is imperative to incorporate intersectional perspectives into national policies and actions to adequately address the unique struggles faced by each woman. An intersectional approach enables society to elevate the voices of the most vulnerable women and ensures that their leadership is central to the global agenda for gender equality.

a) **Diverse Experiences Based on Race, Class, and Sexual Orientation**

The diverse experiences shaped by race, class, and sexual orientation are pivotal in defining the struggles and opportunities of women worldwide. The women's rights agenda is often presented with a singular voice advocating for gender equality, yet this does not reflect the reality faced by many. The intersection of race, class, and sexual identity accounts for the varying hurdles women encounter, compounding discrimination and exclusion. For instance, a woman of color may grapple with both racism and sexism, exacerbated by economic inequality, limiting her access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Similarly, LGBTQ+ women face discrimination not only based on gender but also due to homophobia or transphobia, compounding their challenges.

UN Women actively advocates for policies and programs that promote equal rights and inclusion for all women, fighting for the rights of women globally, regardless of their socio-economic background, sexual orientation, race, or ethnicity. The **HeForShe** campaign aims to involve men and boys in gender advocacy, emphasizing the importance of addressing issues of race and class to foster an inclusive and progressive society. UN Women also designs initiatives that amplify the voices of marginalized women—such as Indigenous women and those with disabilities—ensuring their needs and priorities are included in global development policies.

UN Women addresses violence against women through an intersectional framework, supporting numerous programs that assist those facing multiple forms of discrimination, such as vulnerable migrant women and women from racial or ethnic minorities who experience higher rates of domestic abuse. Through initiatives like the **Spotlight Initiative**, UN Women collaborates with governments and civil society to combat gender-based violence, recognizing the role of race, class, and sexual orientation in shaping the severity and prevalence of violence. By incorporating the specific needs of diverse women into its policies and programs, UN Women fosters sustainable change that benefits all.

b) **Addressing the Needs of Marginalized Women**

Addressing the needs of marginalized women is crucial for achieving gender equality and ensuring that all women can enjoy their rights and freedoms. Marginalized women—often including those who are disabled, migrants, or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—experience heightened discrimination, resulting in their voices and needs being overlooked in discussions about gender equality. They frequently lack adequate access to education, healthcare, and justice systems.

Targeted policy interventions are essential to meet the specific needs of marginalized women, ensuring their rights are protected and their contributions to society recognized. Many discussions surrounding women's rights tend to adopt a singular perspective, neglecting the intersectionality of oppression that marginalized women face. For a truly equitable world, it is imperative to address the unique needs of these women.

UN Women has pioneered campaigns to ensure marginalized women are not excluded from the global gender equality agenda. Their voices often go unheard, and policies addressing their specific needs are often lacking. One initiative, the **Joint Programme on Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Rights**, provides support and resources to marginalized women, including those within the LGBTQIA+ community, ensuring they receive vital sexual and reproductive health services.

Additionally, UN Women initiates programs aimed at economically empowering women from low-income communities. Initiatives like the **Global Programme for Women's Economic Empowerment** equip women, particularly those in rural or conflict-affected areas, with skills and access to markets, fostering financial independence.

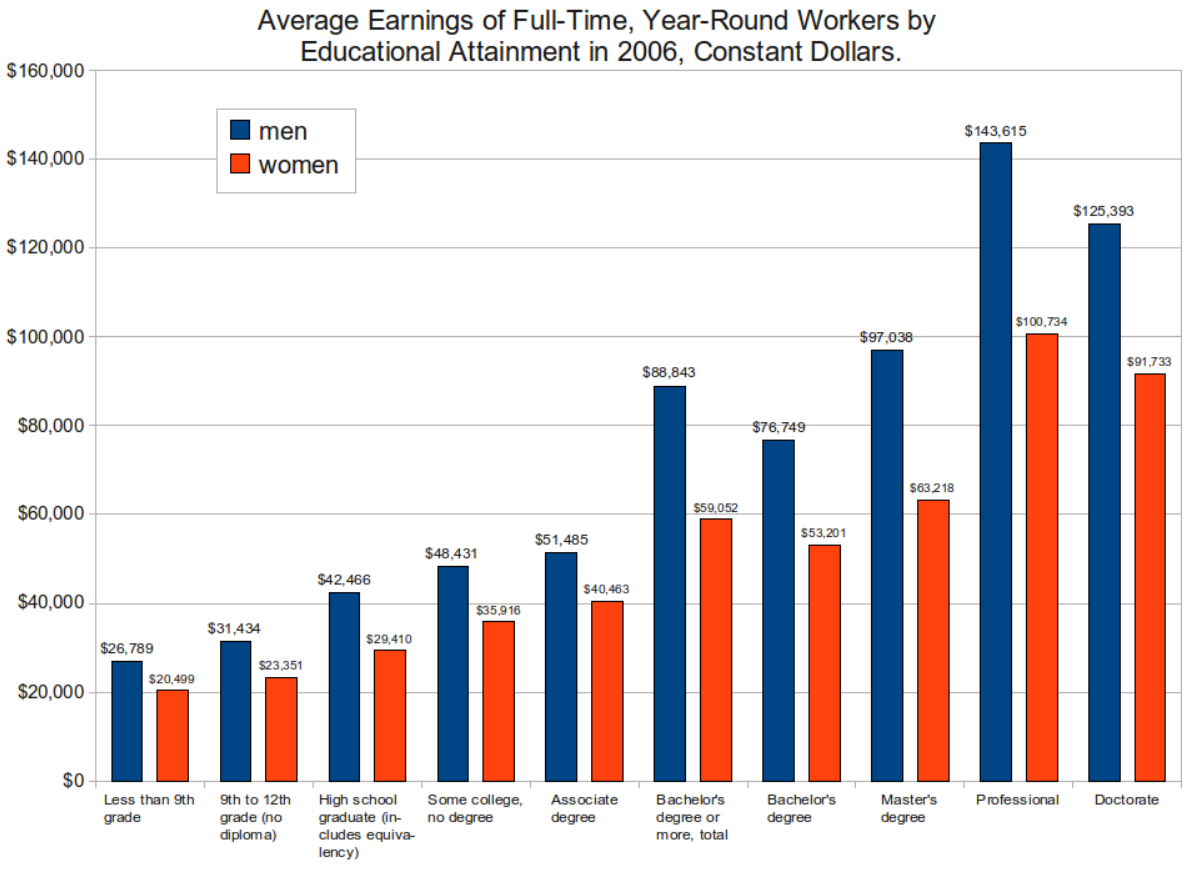
UN Women also actively combats violence against vulnerable women, a group that often bears a heavier burden regarding gender-based violence. Through the **Spotlight Initiative**, UN Women collaborates with governments and civil society organizations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, focusing on those facing multiple forms of discrimination. Programs like the **Refugee Women's Initiative** provide resources and support to help displaced women navigate the challenges they encounter in camps and new communities. To ensure that at-risk women receive comprehensive support while emphasizing the critical need for an intersectional approach, UN Women commits to creating opportunities for these women to thrive and fully engage in society.

The Glass Ceiling Effect

The concept of the "glass ceiling" refers to the hidden barriers that prevent capable women from reaching top positions in their fields. It highlights systemic gender bias and enduring inequalities present in workplaces globally. Women often face challenges compared to their male counterparts, such as wage disparities, fewer mentors, limited networking opportunities, and societal expectations, which hinder their career advancement. While progress has been made in various sectors, significant gaps remain, particularly in politics, corporate leadership, and academia.

Typically, the glass ceiling is seen as an obstacle preventing women from ascending to leadership roles. For many women, particularly those from diverse backgrounds or with disabilities, these barriers are compounded by additional forms of discrimination. This situation creates a "double bind," requiring them to navigate both gender-related and identity-based challenges. Addressing these issues calls for integrated and intersectional strategies to promote equitable representation.

UN Women has emerged as a powerful advocate for dismantling the glass ceiling, championing equality and women's empowerment. The organization has launched numerous initiatives aimed at removing barriers to women's advancement, encapsulated in the "Women's Empowerment Principles" (WEPs) developed in collaboration with the UN Global Compact. These principles provide a framework for businesses to promote gender equality in workplaces, markets, and communities. Consequently, UN Women has driven transformative changes in corporate policies by advocating for equal opportunities, fair pay, and inclusive leadership.



Source: Statistical Abstract 2009.

The HeForShe campaign, initiated by UN Women, engages men and boys as allies in the pursuit of gender equality. Male leadership plays a crucial role in challenging stereotypes and fostering an environment where women can thrive. UN Women also collaborates with governments to enhance women's representation in leadership roles and to implement policies that ensure equal pay for equal work.

Through research and advocacy, UN Women seeks to raise awareness of the economic and social advantages of diverse leadership, asserting that "more diverse leadership leads to better organizational performance." The organization continues to pave the way for breaking the glass ceiling by fostering spaces where women can realize their potential across all aspects of life through dialogue, partnerships, and accountability.

Definition and Impact on Women's Career Advancement

The Glass Ceiling Effect metaphorically describes the often-invisible barriers that hinder certain groups, particularly women, from achieving leadership roles and influencing decisions in organizations and society. These obstacles stem from systemic biases, organizational practices, and social norms that disadvantage women.

This definition indicates that while women may see available opportunities, they are unable to access them due to these intangible barriers. Factors contributing to the glass ceiling include gender stereotypes, lack of mentoring, unequal pay, limited networking, and a discriminatory workplace culture. Women from marginalized groups face even greater challenges, further constraining their potential.

The Glass Ceiling Effect not only stifles individual potential but also undermines organizations and societies that seek diverse leadership essential for innovation, equity, and sustainable development. A significant aspect of this effect is its connection to economic inequality; globally, women earn less than men, particularly at higher management levels, exacerbating the gender pay gap. This disparity arises from unequal pay for equal work, fewer promotional opportunities, and underrepresentation in lucrative industries. Consequently, the glass ceiling discourages women from aspiring to leadership positions due to a lack of role models and mentorship.

The implications of the glass ceiling extend beyond individual careers, impacting organizational and societal outcomes. Research shows that companies with diverse leadership tend to perform better financially and are more innovative. However, the glass ceiling prevents these organizations from capitalizing on diverse perspectives, resulting in a lack of innovation and perpetuating male dominance in decision-making roles. This situation hinders global progress toward gender equality and sustainable development, as defined in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5), due to the underutilization of women's talents.

To dismantle the glass ceiling, a variety of approaches are necessary, including equitable workplace policies, mentorship programs, and fostering an inclusive culture. These measures can ensure that women have equal opportunities for career advancement, allowing them to contribute fully to economic growth, innovation, and leadership.

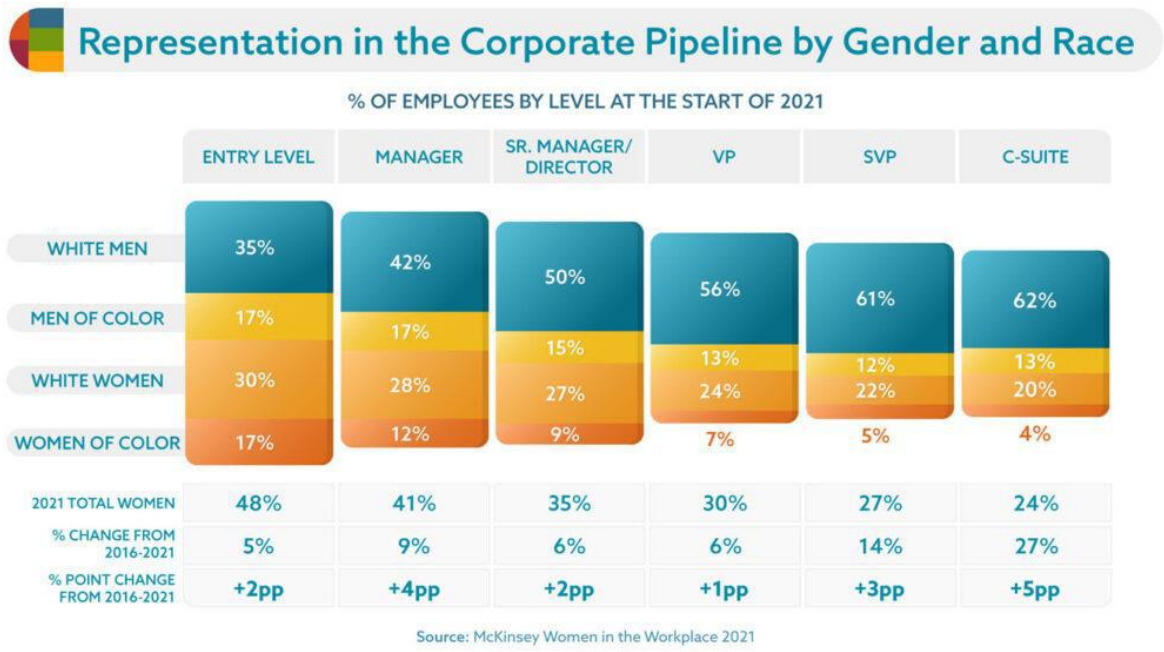
Case Studies on Corporate Leadership and Gender Representation

Examining corporate leadership and gender representation through case studies highlights the glass ceiling effect and the strategies companies are implementing to address it. Across all industries,

women's representation in senior roles remains low. For instance, women hold only a small percentage of CEO positions in Fortune 500 companies, despite representing nearly half of the global workforce, indicating systemic barriers to diversity and internal advancement.

One significant example is Norway's 2003 corporate gender quota law, which mandates that 40% of board members in publicly listed companies must be women. This legislative action led to a substantial increase in female representation on boards, demonstrating that legal measures can effectively reduce leadership inequality. However, critics note that while board representation has improved, progress at the executive level remains slow, suggesting the need for complementary approaches to address the leadership pipeline.

Private companies like Unilever have made significant strides toward gender parity by integrating it into their corporate strategies. Unilever has achieved gender balance across management levels through initiatives such as mentorship, flexible work arrangements, and leadership development for women. This case illustrates how prioritizing inclusivity and addressing organizational culture can help break glass ceilings.



The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) developed by UN Women further encourage gender equality within organizations. Companies such as L'Oréal and IKEA have adopted these principles, resulting in measurable improvements in gender representation across all organizational levels. Strategies implemented include equal pay audits, anti-discrimination training, and transparent recruitment processes, showcasing how corporate accountability frameworks can dismantle the glass ceiling.

Additionally, the UN Women's Global Innovation Coalition for Change promotes female leadership in male-dominated fields like technology. Partners such as Microsoft and SAP have established

mentorship programs for women innovators and initiatives to increase female participation in STEM fields, addressing gender imbalances in leadership roles within the tech industry.

In summary, these case studies demonstrate that combining policy reforms with corporate initiatives and cultural changes is not only feasible but essential. While quotas can serve as legislative measures to ensure representation, effective pathways require corporate accountability and innovative partnerships for sustained progress.

Violence Against Women

Globally, one in three women experiences physical or sexual abuse, often perpetrated by an intimate partner. Violence against women and girls constitutes a violation of human rights, leading to devastating immediate and long-term physical, sexual, and mental health consequences, including death. Such violence hinders women's full participation in society and adversely affects their overall well-being. Women may encounter violence in both public and private settings, impacting their families, communities, and entire nations.

Among the 165 countries with domestic violence laws, only 104 have comprehensive legislation addressing domestic violence. The repercussions of violence extend beyond individual victims to families, communities, and national development, imposing significant costs on healthcare systems, legal frameworks, and productivity. Although numerous laws exist to prohibit various forms of violence, implementation remains a challenge. Many women still lack access to essential services in healthcare, law enforcement, justice, and social support, which is crucial for their safety and rehabilitation.

The Beijing Conference established a progressive framework for advancing women's rights, placing violence against women at the forefront of the UN agenda. However, the Millennium Development Goals of 2000 overlooked this critical issue. The year 2013 marked a pivotal moment for efforts to combat violence against women and girls, as it became essential to integrate this concern into the post-2015 development framework. The conviction that all women and girls have a fundamental right to live free from violence is central to these initiatives. Yet, preventing violence remains the most significant challenge for sustainable progress.

Types of Violence (Domestic, Sexual, Economic)

Violence against women and girls encompasses any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to cause, physical, sexual, or mental harm to women and girls. This includes threats, coercion, and deprivation of liberty. Domestic abuse involves patterns of behavior aimed at controlling an intimate partner, encompassing physical, sexual, emotional, financial, and psychological acts.

Sexual violence, including rape, occurs across all social classes and societies. It comprises any unwanted sexual act, including situations where consent cannot be given due to various factors. This category also includes non-physical actions like catcalling and stalking. Economic violence refers to

actions that cause financial harm, such as restricting access to financial resources or failing to meet economic obligations.

Impact of Violence on Women's Participation in Society

The effects of violence against women are extensive, impacting their health and well-being in both the short and long term. In 2023, a woman is killed by a partner or family member every ten minutes. Gender-based violence is a pressing issue, with immediate and lasting consequences that can diminish women's quality of life and hinder their participation in various societal roles.

Women who experience violence are at a higher risk for physical injuries, chronic health problems, and disabilities. They may also struggle with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, which can further impact their productivity and employment. The cycle of violence not only reduces women's contributions to economic development but also reinforces damaging gender stereotypes and cultural norms that subordinate women.

Addressing violence against women requires collective action across all sectors of society, including individuals, families, governments, and global organizations. Without these efforts, the cycle of violence will continue, perpetuating its harmful effects on communities.

Legal and Social Barriers to Seeking Justice

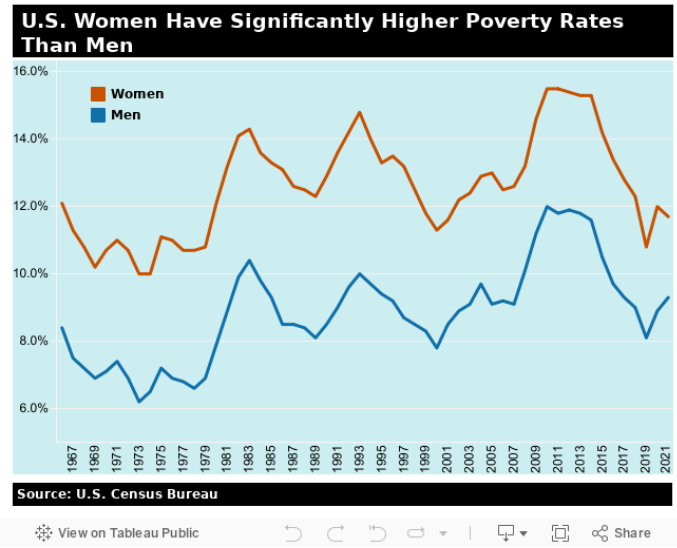
Access to justice is fundamental for upholding the rule of law, ensuring that individuals can voice their concerns and enjoy their legal rights. There exists a reciprocal relationship between enhanced access to justice and progress in social and economic spheres. However, many women face structural disadvantages that impede their access to legal resources and protections.

Unhindered access to justice is crucial for achieving gender equality, as it safeguards women's economic assets, bodily integrity, and political voice. Bridging the gap between women's legal rights and their real-world experiences is essential. In 2015, the CEDAW Committee provided a comprehensive framework outlining the necessary components for women's access to justice, emphasizing the need for justiciability, availability, accessibility, quality, remedies, and accountability.

5. Economic Disparities

Economic inequality between men and women persists globally, rooted in gender disparities woven into societal structures. A clear manifestation of this is the gender pay gap, where women earn significantly less than men for the same roles, averaging about 77 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. This disparity has far-reaching implications for financial independence, family welfare, and overall societal equity. Women often face numerous obstacles in securing decent employment, frequently finding themselves in informal or hazardous jobs without social protections or

benefits. Additionally, women contribute disproportionately to unpaid care and domestic work, limiting their opportunities for active participation in the formal economy.



Access to education, financial services, and land ownership further exacerbates economic disparities. In many developing nations, women encounter challenges in securing credit or UNESCO discriminatory lending practices and a general lack of collateral. These barriers to financial access perpetuate cycles of poverty and exclusion, adversely affecting not just women but their families and communities as well. Consequently, addressing these economic gaps is not only a matter of justice but also a crucial economic necessity. Research indicates that achieving gender parity in the workplace would enhance global economic health, which is currently hindered by these inequalities.

a) Gender Pay Gap and Employment Inequality

The gender pay gap is a significant issue of economic inequality, primarily affecting women worldwide. It represents the average difference between earnings of men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. According to the United Nations Gender Agency, women globally earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men, with this gap widening for women of color, migrant women, and those from low-income or rural backgrounds. Employment inequality contributes to this pay gap, as many women work in low-paying, insecure, or informal sectors, limiting their career advancement opportunities.

For instance, in developed countries, women often occupy roles in caregiving, hospitality, and education—industries that are undervalued compared to male-dominated sectors like technology and engineering. In developing nations, women comprise a significant part of the agricultural workforce but earn lower wages and have limited access to credit and land ownership. In Nigeria, women represent about 60% of the agricultural labor force yet own less than 20% of the land. In the U.S., full-time working women earn about 82 cents for every dollar earned by men, with Black and Latina women earning even less at 63 cents and 55 cents, respectively.

Despite being a large segment of the global workforce, women only hold about 25% of senior management positions. This glass ceiling restricts women's career progress and creates a cycle of unequal opportunities. Studies suggest that various factors contribute to this imbalance, including unconscious biases, discriminatory performance policies, and the unequal distribution of unpaid care responsibilities.

UN Women not only advocates for gender equality in employment but also implements systems to facilitate this equality. For example, the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) partners with governments, employers, and trade unions to promote equal pay for equal work. This initiative aims to develop tools and policies—including wage transparency laws and gender pay audits—to help close the pay gap. UN Women also champions programs that encourage women's entry into traditionally male-dominated sectors and leadership roles, such as the Women's Empowerment Principles, which guide companies toward gender equality in hiring, retention, and promotion. Thousands of businesses worldwide are now endorsing these principles.

Additionally, UN Women has introduced programs like the "Buy from Women Platform" in developing countries, connecting women entrepreneurs in agriculture with markets and financial services. This initiative enhances their income and provides training and mentorship opportunities. Moreover, UN Women advocates for gender-responsive social protections, including parental leave and affordable childcare, alleviating the burden of unpaid care work and allowing women to participate more actively in the workforce.

UN Women plays a crucial role in global policy advocacy, collaborating closely with the International Labor Organization (ILO) to develop ILO Convention No. 190, which addresses workplace violence and harassment disproportionately affecting women and contributing to workplace inequality. Through these efforts, UN Women is paving the way for systemic changes that ensure equal opportunities for women to thrive in the workforce. However, despite some progress, eradicating the gender pay gap and achieving employment equality will require ongoing advocacy, innovative solutions, and collective action across all sectors of society.

b) Access to Resources and Financial Independence

Access to resources and financial independence are essential for empowering women, yet they remain significant challenges globally. Systemic barriers, cultural norms, and discriminatory policies restrict women's access to education, credit, land ownership, and financial services. This lack of access hinders women's economic potential and keeps them trapped in low-income, unequal living conditions.

In regions like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, women often face legal barriers regarding property ownership and unsecured loans due to a lack of collateral. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that women make up around 43% of the agricultural labor force globally, yet they own less than 20% of the agricultural land. This inequity undermines women's ability to make independent economic decisions, invest in businesses, or improve their livelihoods. Furthermore, according to the World Bank Global Findex Database, over 1 billion women worldwide remain unbanked.

Education is a crucial asset that empowers women, yet access is often uneven. In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, girls face barriers to education due to early marriages, poverty, and gender norms.

This educational gap directly impacts women's ability to pursue high-paying jobs, entrepreneurship, or understand their financial rights. A UNESCO report indicates that women who complete secondary education are more likely to secure better economic opportunities, while millions of girls remain out of school.

UN Women actively campaigns to close these gaps, moving beyond advocacy to facilitate equal access to resources and financial initiatives that promote women's economic independence. Through partnerships with financial institutions, UN Women develops gender-sensitive financial products and services. The "Empower Women, Empower Economies" program, for instance, provides support to women entrepreneurs in terms of credit access, training, and mentorship, helping them grow their businesses and contribute to local economies, as seen in Uganda.

UN Women also advocates for policy reforms that incorporate women's land and property rights into economic initiatives. By collaborating with governments and NGOs, UN Women sponsors programs that offer legal assistance to women claiming ownership of land and assets. In India, for instance, UN Women has worked with local organizations to support women's inheritance rights, enabling them to secure property and achieve greater economic independence.

Furthermore, UN Women prioritizes education as a key indicator of empowerment. They assert that education is one of the most effective tools for financial empowerment. Programs like Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning offer women and girls opportunities to acquire marketable skills and complete their education, enhancing their employability. In Afghanistan, this initiative has successfully engaged tens of thousands of women, equipping them with skills for the job market and promoting self-sufficiency.

6. Political Representation

Political participation by women is essential for achieving gender equality and fostering genuine democracy. Historically, women have been excluded from politics, with their right to vote only granted in the early 20th century, and meaningful political engagement beginning in earnest during the 1960s. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 marked a significant movement toward legal unity and solidarity among women. The primary barriers to women's political involvement stem from entrenched gender norms and the disproportionate domestic responsibilities they bear. The long-standing perception that leadership is a male trait has led to women's subordination in political spheres. Additionally, a lack of education among women further impedes their participation. A report by Women Political Leaders and the Oliver Wyman Forum indicates that countries with greater female representation at high levels tend to eliminate legal inequalities between the genders.

Today, the negative and often sexist portrayal of female politicians in the media restricts their political participation and diminishes the visibility of women's rights issues in legislative discussions. The underrepresentation of women in politics compared to their actual population creates a significant representation problem in democracies. Data from UN Women reveals that most representatives

advocating for women's issues in parliaments are women themselves. Without their presence in political spaces, women's concerns would likely remain unaddressed.

New Zealand made history in 1893 by being the first nation to grant women the right to vote, becoming a symbol of the global women's rights movement. Other countries followed suit with significant reforms for women's political participation:

1. **United Kingdom (1928)**: The Representation of the People Act allowed women the right to vote, initially limited to women aged 30 and older who met certain wealth criteria. The Equal Franchise Act of 1928 extended full voting rights to women.
2. **United States (1920)**: The 19th Amendment granted women in the U.S. the right to vote, inspiring women worldwide to advocate for their rights.
3. **Saudi Arabia (2015)**: Following years of advocacy, Saudi Arabia permitted women to vote and run in municipal elections, marking a historic shift in its gender policies.
4. **India (1992)**: Although women hold only about 14% of seats in the national parliament, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act reserves one-third of local government seats for women, empowering them at the grassroots level.
5. **South Africa (1997)**: The South African Constitution enshrines gender equality, resulting in a high proportion of women in political positions. The African National Congress has implemented a 50% gender quota for its parliamentary candidates.
6. **Germany (1949)**: The introduction of the mixed-member proportional electoral system during WWII established a legal framework for women's representation. Angela Merkel's 16-year tenure as Chancellor exemplified female leadership in high political office.
7. **Kenya (2010)**: The 2010 Constitution mandates that no gender should exceed two-thirds representation in the national legislature, though full implementation remains a work in progress.

a) Underrepresentation in Government and Decision-Making Roles

The underrepresentation of women in government and decision-making roles is a widespread issue that hampers the development of truly inclusive and equitable governance. Despite advancements in gender equality across various sectors, women continue to occupy a disproportionately small number of political positions, limiting their ability to influence policies that directly affect their lives and communities. This underrepresentation is not merely due to individual choices; it is deeply embedded in a complex web of cultural norms, gender stereotypes, historical marginalization, and institutional barriers that hinder women's rise to power. Barriers include discriminatory laws, inadequate support for female candidates, insufficient campaign funding, and prevailing patriarchal attitudes that associate leadership with men.

The consequences of this gender imbalance in political representation are significant. Issues such as health, education, social security, and gender-based violence, which disproportionately impact

women, are often inadequately addressed in political platforms dominated by male perspectives. The lack of diverse viewpoints in political discourse perpetuates gender inequality and undermines effective governance. To tackle this challenge, some countries are implementing systemic changes to promote gender equality in political participation. Political institutions should adopt policies that create a welcoming environment for women, such as maternity leave for female politicians, equitable funding opportunities for campaigns, and the establishment of quotas in legislative bodies. Ultimately, achieving gender equality in political representation is not just a matter of justice; it is essential for building democratic systems that reflect societal diversity. Ensuring equal representation of women in politics is a crucial step toward fostering more inclusive, fair, and equitable societies worldwide.

b) Barriers to Political Participation

Barriers to women's political participation arise from various cultural and social factors. Economic, social, and political dynamics systematically prevent women from fully engaging in the political process. Societal norms and stereotypes that frame political leadership as a male-dominated field discourage women from pursuing political careers. This perception is reinforced by media portrayals and traditional roles that confine women to domestic responsibilities, limiting their access to the resources and networks necessary for political involvement. The primary barrier is the historical exclusion of women from political spheres, particularly in societies shaped by traditional and patriarchal structures. The prevailing notion that women are primarily caregivers has kept them from participating in public life, while the belief in women's leadership capabilities has not been adequately supported.

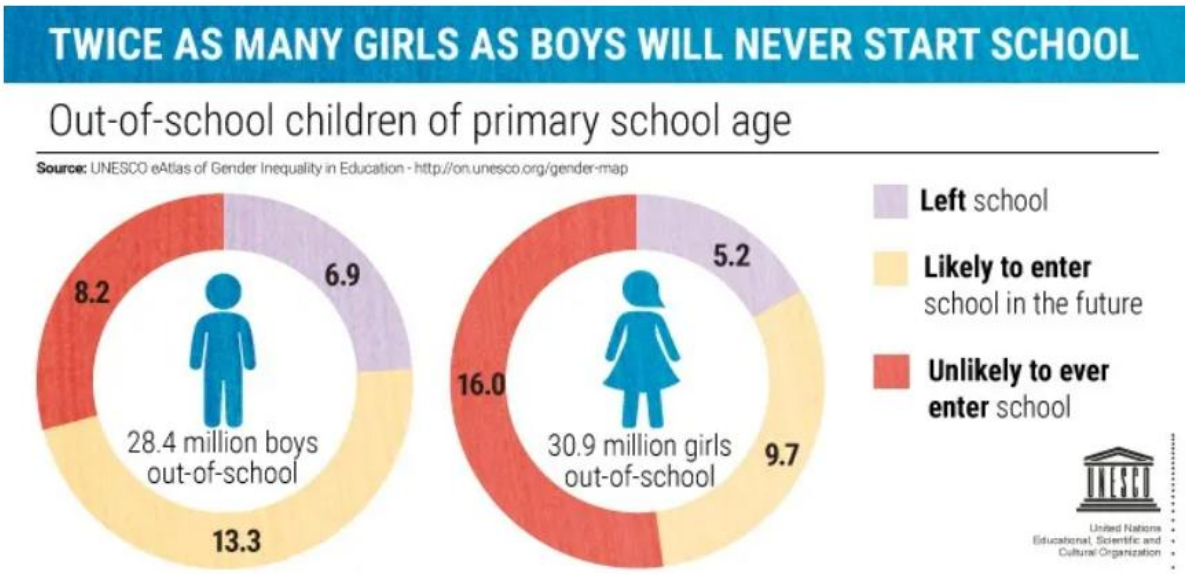
Economic and educational inequalities further complicate women's entry into politics. Women often face barriers due to lower educational attainment compared to men, as well as difficulties in accessing resources and opportunities. In developing countries, women encounter additional obstacles, such as financial constraints, family responsibilities, and societal expectations. Even when women enter politics, they must navigate discrimination based on their gender, societal disrespect, increased scrutiny compared to male counterparts, and questioning of their leadership abilities.

Many political systems, characterized by rigid structures, long working hours, and lack of family-friendly policies, are often hostile or inaccessible to women. In regions with institutionalized gender discrimination, women may encounter legal barriers, such as laws that limit their ability to own property, access education, or exercise voting rights. The underrepresentation of women in political leadership exacerbates this issue, as the absence of female role models discourages other women from entering politics, perpetuating a cycle of inequality. This lack of representation leads to women's concerns being inadequately addressed in political discussions, reinforcing policies that neglect or harm their interests. To overcome these barriers, it is vital for governments to implement comprehensive strategies, including gender-sensitive policies, legal reforms, quotas, and programs

aimed at enhancing women's leadership skills while providing financial support for their political endeavors.

7. Lack of Access to Education

Education is a fundamental human right and serves as the cornerstone for gender equality and women's empowerment. However, millions of women and girls around the globe are still denied access to education due to systemic barriers, cultural norms, poverty, and conflict. These obstacles not only create personal challenges but also perpetuate cycles of deprivation, inequality, and social exclusion. Currently, UNESCO reports that 129 million girls are out of school worldwide, including 32 million of primary school age and 97 million of secondary school age.



Cultural and social factors significantly contribute to the lack of educational access for women. In many regions, early marriage and gender-based violence force girls to leave school. For instance, in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 40% of girls marry before the age of 18, which disrupts their education. Economic pressures further exacerbate gender disparities, as families often prioritize spending on sons over daughters. Political instability and rigid social norms also prevent girls from attending school, particularly in places like Afghanistan, where many schools have been closed or girls have been banned from attending.

Education plays a crucial role in employment; thus, the lack of educational opportunities for women leads to higher unemployment rates, lower earnings, and increased poverty. The World Bank estimates that each additional year of schooling can raise a woman's earnings by up to 20%. Furthermore, educated women tend to have better health knowledge, have fewer children, and engage more in community and political activities, highlighting the wider societal benefits of education.

a) Educational Inequalities and Dropout Rates

Educational disparities and high dropout rates for girls in many societies reflect the prevailing gender biases. Economic hardships, cultural attitudes, and systemic injustices create barriers for women and girls within the education system, particularly in low-income countries, rural areas, and conflict-affected regions. UNESCO states that approximately 129 million girls worldwide are out of school, with many more at risk of dropping out due to factors like poverty, child marriage, and gender-based violence.

Economic instability often leads to increased dropout rates. Families living in poverty frequently prioritize boys' education, viewing them as future breadwinners. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, families might withdraw girls from school to cut costs or to have them contribute to household income. In countries like Niger and Chad, fewer than 20% of girls complete primary education. Additionally, many girls miss school during their menstrual periods due to a lack of affordable hygiene products. Consequently, they tend to leave school early and take on adult responsibilities at a young age.

Early marriage is a significant factor contributing to girls dropping out of school in South Asia. In Bangladesh, for instance, about 60% of girls marry before 18, which often leads to early pregnancies and the need to abandon their education. This cycle results in increased poverty and fewer economic opportunities. Research from UNESCO indicates that each additional year of secondary education decreases the likelihood of child marriage by 5%, underscoring the critical importance of educational access.

Conflict zones further illustrate the disparities in educational access for girls. After the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan in 2021, schools for girls were largely closed, leaving millions without educational opportunities and exacerbating existing inequalities. Similar situations occur in Syria, where ongoing civil war has displaced millions, severely impacting girls' access to consistent schooling.

In addition, inadequate access to sanitary facilities can hinder girls' attendance in schools, particularly in East Africa. UNICEF reports that one in ten African girls misses school each month due to menstruation, leading to prolonged absences and eventual dropouts. The absence of gender-sensitive facilities, such as private toilets, discourages girls from attending school.

Educational access for indigenous girls and those from marginalized ethnic groups is also severely limited. In Latin America, for instance, indigenous girls often face discrimination, language barriers, and geographical challenges. In Guatemala, indigenous girls average only 2.5 years of schooling compared to 5.7 years for their non-indigenous peers.

These examples highlight the complexities of educational inequalities and dropout rates for girls. Addressing these gaps requires tailored approaches that consider the economic, cultural, and political contexts influencing women's educational access.

b) Impact of Education on Empowerment and Employment

Education serves as a powerful tool for women's empowerment and economic participation. When women have access to quality education, they are better equipped to confront discrimination and advocate for their rights, ultimately contributing to society. Education enhances women's employment prospects by making their skills more marketable and expanding their job opportunities. According to the World Bank, each additional year of education can increase a woman's income by nearly 20%. Thus, education can help bridge the gender gap in employment while promoting economic independence for disadvantaged women.

Moreover, education empowers women to advocate for themselves and their communities. Women with higher levels of education are increasingly moving into high-paying fields such as technology, finance, and management. Evidence from Rwanda indicates that awareness programs for women have significantly increased the number of female entrepreneurs, contributing to national growth and community development.

Education is also crucial for amplifying women's voices in both their communities and beyond. Secondary education is a strong predictor of decision-making power, whether in households, government, or broader societal contexts. In Rwanda, for example, robust gender-sensitive education policies have resulted in a majority of women in parliament, demonstrating the societal impact of educating women. Educated mothers are more likely to prioritize their children's education, particularly for girls, thereby fostering a cycle of empowerment across generations.

c) Actions Taken by UN Women

UN Women regards education as a key driver of gender equality. They have initiated various programs aimed at improving access to quality education for girls and women, such as the Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning Program, which targets those who missed out on formal schooling. This program currently operates in countries like Jordan and India, offering digital literacy training, vocational skills, and mentorship to help women re-enter the workforce and achieve economic independence. Thousands of women in countries like Kenya and Morocco have gained vocational training in high-demand sectors, enhancing their employability and income.

UN Women also promotes initiatives to address early marriage and gender-based violence through legal reforms and community awareness programs in collaboration with governments and local organizations. Programs like HeForShe engage men and boys as allies in advocating for girls' education and challenging discriminatory norms. In Malawi, this initiative has successfully mobilized communities to end child marriage, enabling girls to continue their education.

Additionally, UN Women is working to establish safe learning environments for girls in conflict zones, in partnership with UN agencies and local organizations. These initiatives create temporary schools in refugee camps, providing educational resources, psychosocial support, and life skills training. For instance, one project focuses on supporting Syrian girls in refugee camps by offering educational resources and training to help them cope with the disruption of their education.

UN Women also advocates for gender-responsive education systems at the policy level, collaborating with UNESCO, UNICEF, and other partners to ensure that education policies are designed with a gender perspective. This includes advocating for investments in girls' education, scholarships, and financial incentives to reduce barriers leading to higher dropout rates.

Furthermore, UN Women is addressing institutional barriers by working with governments and educational institutions to develop gender-sensitive curricula, thereby equalizing opportunities for girls and boys. For example, they have helped establish STEM programs in Jordanian schools to encourage girls to pursue careers in technology and engineering.

By identifying and addressing the root causes of educational inequality, UN Women is breaking down barriers and creating pathways for the education that women and girls deserve. This not only empowers women but also has far-reaching positive effects on families and communities, ultimately contributing to societal development and gender equality. However, these efforts require ongoing commitment and collective action to dismantle entrenched cultural norms and systemic barriers that continue to deny millions of women the opportunity to learn and grow.

Some successful examples of gender-sensitive education policies from various countries that illustrate various approaches to promoting gender-sensitive education, emphasizing the importance of creating inclusive environments that encourage the participation of all genders in the educational system:

1. **Sweden**: Sweden has implemented comprehensive gender equality education in its curriculum, focusing on promoting gender awareness from an early age. Schools emphasize equal participation in all subjects and provide training for teachers on gender issues.
2. **Rwanda**: Following the 1994 genocide, Rwanda prioritized gender equality in education. Policies include a 50% gender quota in school leadership positions and programs to encourage girls' participation in STEM fields. The government also provides financial support for girls' education.
3. **Finland**: Finland's education system is known for its gender-neutral approach, where both boys and girls are encouraged to pursue all subjects equally. Comprehensive sex education is integrated into the curriculum, addressing gender equality and respect.
4. **India**: The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter) initiative promotes girls' education through awareness campaigns and financial incentives for families to keep girls in school. This program has seen increased enrollment rates for girls in various states.
5. **Germany**: The country has enacted policies promoting gender equality in education, such as funding for programs that support girls in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Gender-sensitive materials are also used in schools to challenge stereotypes.

6. **South Africa**: The National Policy on Gender Equality mandates gender-sensitive practices in schools, including training for teachers on gender issues and efforts to eliminate gender-based violence in educational settings.
7. **Nepal**: The government has introduced the "Girls' Education Project" to provide scholarships, mentoring, and community awareness programs aimed at increasing girls' enrollment and retention in schools, particularly in rural areas.
8. **Iceland**: Iceland has integrated gender equality education into its national curriculum, focusing on teaching students about gender roles, stereotypes, and the importance of equality, starting from primary education.

The measurable impacts of gender-sensitive education policies are significant and varied across different countries. Here are some notable examples:

1. **Sweden**:
   - **Increased Gender Awareness**: Surveys show higher levels of gender awareness among students, leading to more equitable classroom participation.
   - **Higher Academic Performance**: Studies indicate that both boys and girls perform better in subjects traditionally dominated by one gender, such as girls excelling in STEM.
2. **Rwanda**:
   - **Enrollment Rates**: The percentage of girls enrolled in primary and secondary education rose from 49% in 2000 to nearly equal levels with boys by 2019.
   - **Leadership Representation**: The 50% gender quota in school leadership has led to increased female representation in educational decision-making roles.
3. **Finland**:
   - **Academic Achievement**: Finland consistently ranks high in international assessments (e.g., PISA), with both genders performing well across subjects.
   - **Gender Equity**: A 2019 report indicated that Finnish students are among the least likely to hold traditional gender stereotypes compared to peers in other countries.
4. **India**:
   - **Increased Enrollment**: Programs like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have contributed to a rise in girls' enrollment from 81% in 2015 to 90% in 2020 at the primary level.
   - **Reduction in Dropout Rates**: The initiative has also led to a decrease in dropout rates among girls, particularly in rural areas.
5. **Germany**:
   - **Participation in STEM**: There has been a notable increase in the number of girls enrolling in technical and vocational education programs, with female enrollment in STEM fields rising by 30% since 2015.

- **Career Advancement**: More women are entering and advancing in technical professions, improving gender balance in the workforce.

6. **South Africa**:
   - **Reduction in Gender-Based Violence**: Schools implementing gender-sensitive policies have reported a decrease in incidents of gender-based violence, improving the overall safety for students.
   - **Improved Academic Performance**: Girls in schools with these policies show improved performance and participation in leadership roles.
7. **Nepal**:
   - **Higher Enrollment**: The Girls' Education Project has led to a 20% increase in girls' enrollment in schools in targeted rural areas.
   - **Community Awareness**: Increased community awareness has resulted in a cultural shift, with families more willing to invest in girls' education.
8. **Iceland**:
   - **Gender Equality Index**: Iceland ranks first in the Global Gender Gap Index, indicating successful policies in education and beyond.
   - **Reduced Gender Stereotypes**: Surveys show a decrease in traditional gender roles among youth, fostering a more egalitarian perspective.

8. Cultural and Religious Barriers

Women often face significant cultural and religious barriers that restrict their access to opportunities, rights, and resources, perpetuating gender inequality. These obstacles derive from long-standing traditions, social norms, and interpretations of religious teachings that uphold patriarchal systems. They manifest in practices such as child marriage, movement restrictions, limited access to education, and exclusion from decision-making roles, both within families and in society at large.

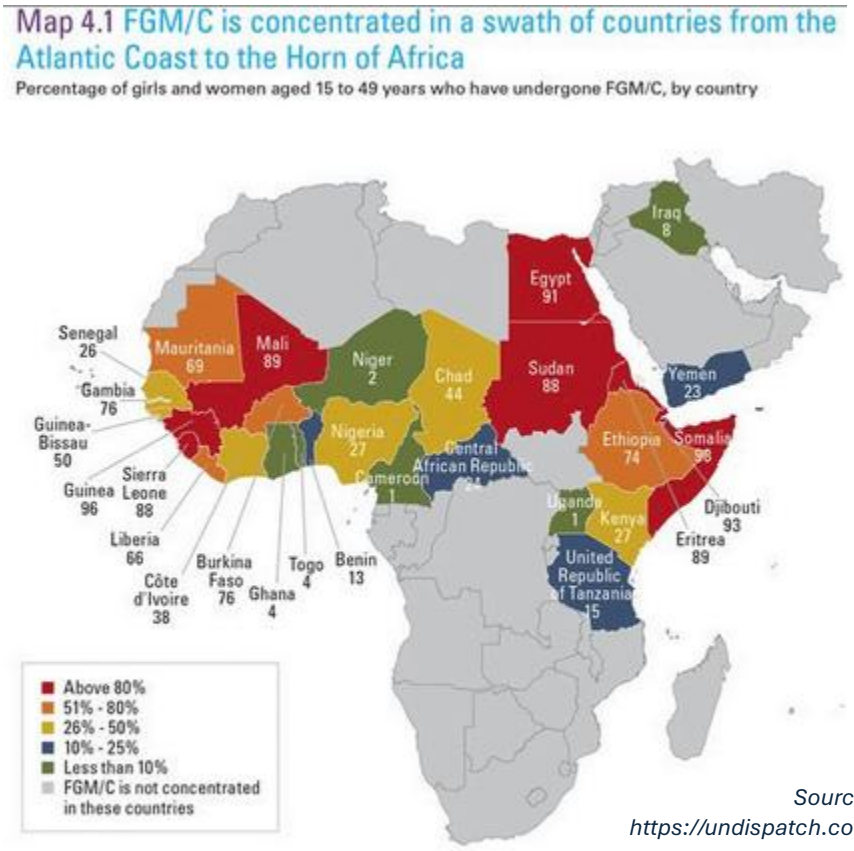
For instance, in many conservative societies, restrictions on women's mobility are prevalent. In Saudi Arabia, for example, women previously required a guardian's permission to travel, work, or seek medical treatment. Although some of these restrictions have been relaxed, cultural adherence continues to limit women's independence and participation in the workforce. A similar situation exists in Afghanistan, where cultural and religious conservatism severely restricts women's rights to education and employment, especially following the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

Child marriage, another cultural and religious issue, affects many girls in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In these regions, girls often marry before reaching adulthood, frequently resulting in truncated educational opportunities, early pregnancies, and associated health risks. For instance, in Niger, approximately 76% of women are married before the age of 18, with local customs and religious beliefs used to justify these practices. Such traditions perpetuate a cycle of poverty, denying women the chance to achieve financial independence.

Additionally, cultural constraints limit women's participation in political and economic spheres. In various Middle Eastern and North African nations, societal norms often confine women to caregiving roles, sidelining them from careers or leadership positions. This perception positions men as natural leaders, further alienating women from governance and decision-making processes.

a) Influence of Cultural Practices on Women's Rights

Cultural practices significantly influence women's rights and dictate societal expectations for both genders. While some traditions foster community solidarity, others reinforce systemic discrimination and gender inequality, impacting women's access to education, employment, healthcare, and decision-making opportunities. Harmful cultural practices are often framed as preserving heritage or social stability, yet they ultimately restrict women's freedoms and opportunities.



Source: https://undispatch.com

One notable example is female genital mutilation (FGM), practiced in many African and Middle Eastern countries. This procedure is often justified as a means of ensuring purity and readiness for marriage, but it results in severe physical and psychological harm. UNICEF estimates that over 200 million women and girls globally have undergone FGM, with Somalia's prevalence exceeding 90%. While some communities view it as a rite of passage, it violates women's rights to health, safety, and bodily autonomy.

Honor-based violence is another practice prevalent in societies where a woman's behavior is perceived to reflect her family's honor. In regions of South Asia and the Middle East, women may be punished for actions deemed dishonorable, such as resisting an arranged marriage or pursuing education. These actions not only infringe on women's rights but instill fear and diminish agency. Additionally, some indigenous communities in Latin America deny women inheritance rights to land, further restricting their economic independence and reinforcing patriarchal structures.

Polygamy and child marriage are also widespread forms of oppression in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, denying women equal rights within families. Child marriage, in particular, leads to early pregnancies, limited educational prospects, and increased vulnerability to domestic violence, as seen in Niger, where nearly 76% of girls marry before the age of 18.

UN Women recognizes the significant impact of culture on women's rights and promotes a culturally sensitive transformative approach. Collaborating with local communities and religious leaders, UN Women challenges harmful norms while respecting cultural contexts.

For instance, UN Women's initiatives against FGM include empowering grassroots organizations to raise awareness about health and human rights violations linked to this practice. Successful campaigns in Kenya and Sudan, led by women and girls, have introduced alternative rites of passage that promote health education and human rights awareness.

In Malawi, UN Women has partnered with communities and local leaders to raise the minimum marriage age to 18 and promote the importance of girls' education, resulting in a noticeable decline in child marriage rates in targeted areas. UN Women also advocates for legal reforms and community engagement to combat practices like child marriage.

Furthermore, UN Women addresses the economic implications of cultural practices. In Latin America, partnerships with indigenous communities promote women's land ownership and reform discriminatory inheritance laws, helping women achieve economic independence and challenge patriarchal norms.

These efforts aim to dismantle cultural practices that inhibit women's rights and facilitate their empowerment across various societies. By confronting harmful traditions, UN Women strives to create inclusive environments that uphold the principles of gender equality.

b) Navigating Religious Traditions and Gender Equality

Women's rights and gender equality are often influenced by traditional religious practices within specific cultures. While most religions advocate for equity, justice, and compassion, interpretations can restrict women's roles and opportunities. Such interpretations may lead to practices that discriminate against women, limiting their access to education, employment, and leadership roles. Balancing respect for religious traditions with the pursuit of gender equality is a delicate yet vital aspect of advancing women's rights.

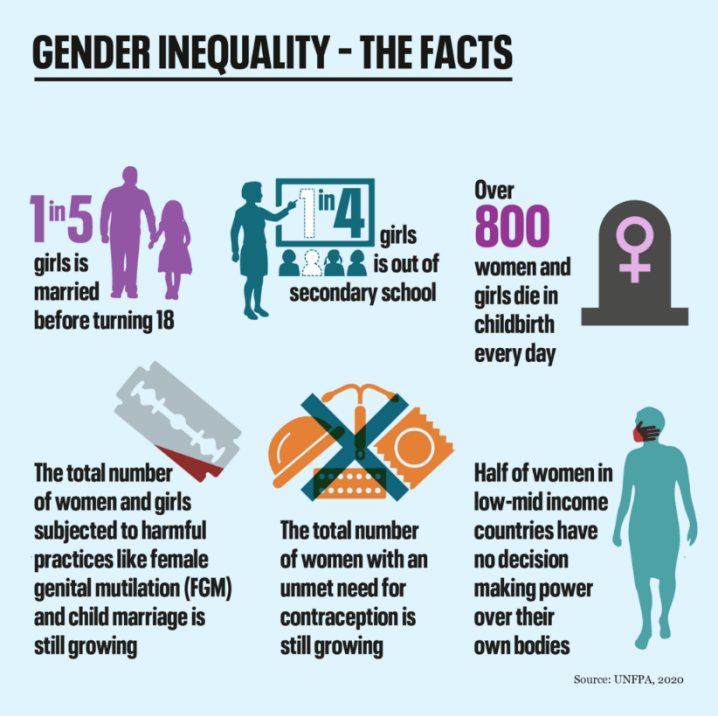
For example, in many religions, including Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, women have historically been barred from holding leadership positions, such as priests. In the Catholic Church, only men can be ordained, excluding women from spiritual and organizational decision-making roles. Conservative interpretations of Shari'a law in some Islamic communities also hinder women's participation in public life, despite historical evidence of influential women in early Islam, such as Khadijah and Aisha.

Dress codes dictated by religious traditions further complicate the relationship between faith and gender equality. In countries like Iran and Afghanistan, women are required to wear specific attire,

such as the hijab, to conform to notions of modesty. While many women view this as an expression of faith, legal or societal pressures can undermine personal freedom and agency. Similar constraints exist in some Orthodox Jewish communities, where women's clothing choices are strictly regulated.

Religious traditions also intersect with personal laws regarding marriage, divorce, and inheritance, often favoring men. In South Asia, for instance, religious laws typically grant men more rights in divorce and inheritance, leaving women economically vulnerable. In India, Muslim personal law traditionally imposes fewer divorce restrictions on men compared to women, although reforms are underway to promote equity.

Through dialogue and collaboration with religious leaders and communities, UN Women aims to reconcile traditions with gender equality. By interpreting faith through a lens of equality, UN Women seeks to challenge discriminatory practices while promoting justice.



One significant UN Women initiative involves partnering with faith-based organizations to combat gender discrimination and advocate for equal treatment of women. In Senegal, for instance, collaboration with Islamic scholars has helped discourage child marriage by referencing Quranic verses that emphasize the importance of caring for and educating girls. This approach has shifted perceptions and reduced instances of child marriage in targeted communities.

UN Women also collaborates with religious leaders to address gender-based violence. In countries like Uganda, training programs for religious leaders focus on advocating against domestic violence and fostering respectful family relationships. These leaders leverage their moral authority to challenge harmful practices and promote behavioral change within their communities.

Education is a crucial component of UN Women's strategy. Initiatives often empower women to advocate for their rights within their faith contexts. For example, in Afghanistan, UN Women has supported literacy programs that incorporate Islamic texts, helping participants understand their rights within their religious framework. By examining religious traditions through a gender equality lens, UN Women works to advance women's rights and promote lasting change in partnership with faith communities.

In this context, UN Women collaborates with religious leaders to combat gender-based violence. In countries like Uganda, they have provided training to religious leaders on advocating against domestic

violence and fostering respectful family relationships. These leaders leverage their moral authority to challenge harmful practices and encourage behavioral changes within their communities. UN Women also promotes reforms in personal laws to align religious practices with international human rights standards. For instance, in Tunisia, UN Women supported efforts to repeal laws that permitted rapists to marry their victims to evade punishment, working alongside both secular and religious stakeholders.

Education is another critical component of UN Women's strategies. These initiatives empower women to advocate for their rights while creating spaces within their faith traditions. A notable example is the support of women's literacy programs in Afghanistan, where UN Women incorporated Islamic texts into the curriculum to help participants understand their rights within their faith. By examining religious traditions through a gender equality lens, UN Women aims to advance women's rights and build sustainable partnerships with faith-based communities.

9. Health Inequalities

Women face significant health disparities influenced by biological, social, economic, and cultural factors. Access to healthcare services, exposure to risk factors, and health outcomes often display gender disparities, which are more pronounced in low- and middle-income countries. Structural barriers such as poverty, lack of education, cultural norms, and biases within healthcare systems contribute to these inequalities.

Maternal health exemplifies this issue, with an estimated 800 preventable deaths occurring daily due to pregnancy and childbirth complications, according to the World Health Organization. A staggering 94% of these deaths happen in under-resourced settings, with countries like Nigeria and India significantly contributing to these figures. Many women lack access to adequate maternity services and skilled birth attendants, and cultural practices like early marriage increase the risk of complications during childbirth.

In terms of sexual and reproductive health, many women worldwide lack access to contraception, safe abortion services, and comprehensive sexual education. In sub-Saharan Africa, unmet contraceptive needs lead to unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions, contributing to some of the highest maternal mortality rates globally. Restrictive laws and stigma surrounding abortion in countries like El Salvador further limit women's reproductive choices and jeopardize their health.

Chronic diseases and mental health issues also highlight gender disparities in health. Autoimmune diseases and osteoporosis are more common among women but receive less research attention and funding. Gender-based violence significantly impacts women's physical and mental health, with survivors often experiencing depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other chronic conditions.

a) Access to Healthcare Services

Access to healthcare is pivotal for women's overall health and well-being. However, millions of women face substantial barriers to obtaining necessary care, including distance to healthcare facilities, financial constraints, sociocultural norms, and discrimination within health systems. Limited access to healthcare not only undermines women's physical and mental health but also exacerbates poverty and inequality.

For example, in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, women often travel long distances to reach healthcare services, facing transportation challenges along the way. In India, poor maternal health outcomes are largely due to the inability of women in remote villages to access skilled birth attendants or emergency obstetric care. Similarly, in sub-Saharan Africa, the lack of access to antiretroviral therapy for women living with HIV compounds maternal mortality rates and worsens overall health outcomes.

Economic barriers further hinder women's access to healthcare. In many low- and middle-income countries, healthcare costs are prohibitive, especially for women who are not formally employed. For example, in Bangladesh, the high costs associated with prenatal care make it unattainable for many women, leading to complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Even in high-income countries like the United States, healthcare affordability remains a challenge for many women, particularly in marginalized communities.

Cultural and gender biases within healthcare systems also complicate access. In some conservative societies, women may require permission from a male guardian to seek medical care, severely limiting their autonomy. Some women may self-restrict their access to healthcare due to cultural norms. Moreover, male-centric healthcare needs often take precedence over those of women, delaying timely diagnoses and treatments. Studies in the UK and the US have shown that women's pain is frequently underestimated due to prevailing gender stereotypes.

b) Reproductive Rights and Health Education

Reproductive rights and comprehensive health education are essential for enhancing women's health globally. These rights grant women the autonomy to make informed choices regarding their reproductive health services, including access to contraception, safe abortion, fertility treatments, and quality maternal health care. However, socioeconomic, cultural, religious, and legal barriers often compromise these rights, disproportionately affecting women from underdeveloped communities, rural households, and minority ethnic groups. This inequity results in higher rates of unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and preventable maternal and infant mortality.

Empowering women with comprehensive knowledge about reproductive health is a key intervention for addressing these disparities. Understanding contraception, menstrual cycles, sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention, and safe pregnancy practices not only benefits individual women but also

their families and communities. Research indicates that women with accurate reproductive health information are more likely to seek timely medical help, reduce the likelihood of unsafe abortions, and effectively plan their families. Health education not only teaches reproductive health but also challenges harmful cultural and gender stereotypes by fostering discussions and promoting shared responsibilities among men and women.

While reproductive health education is crucial, it remains insufficient in many parts of the world due to political resistance, inadequate funding, and social stigma. The lack of education perpetuates cycles of inequality, leaving women vulnerable to misinformation, exploitation, and preventable health crises. Collaborative efforts involving governments, healthcare providers, and international organizations are essential to develop effective policies that ensure accessible reproductive healthcare services and inclusive educational programs.

Prioritizing gender-sensitive health education is vital for dismantling systemic barriers and addressing health disparities. Recognizing that reproductive rights and health education are integral to gender justice, these initiatives serve a broader socioeconomic purpose. They ensure that all women, regardless of their circumstances, have the knowledge and resources to exercise their reproductive rights and maintain their health. This focus not only fosters healthier societies but also contributes to poverty reduction and sustainable development. By investing in these critical areas, future policymakers and stakeholders can strive for a world where the health and well-being of every woman are prioritized.

10. Media Representation

Media representation plays a crucial role in shaping societal norms, yet it often fails to portray women accurately and comprehensively. Typically, women are relegated to secondary roles or depicted in ways that reinforce stereotypes, such as being overly emotional or dependent, and their worth is frequently assessed based on physical appearance. This misrepresentation limits the understanding of women's diverse experiences and achievements, thereby perpetuating institutional inequalities. Moreover, marginalized women, particularly those from various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, are often underrepresented or mischaracterized. Therefore, providing accurate, diverse, and empowering depictions of women can challenge the prevailing masculine narratives that shape public perception. Addressing this issue necessitates significant changes in content creation, increased representation of women in media leadership roles, and a commitment to equitable storytelling that reflects the complexities of women's lives.

a) Stereotypes and Misrepresentation of Women

The portrayal of women in the media significantly influences societal perceptions and individual self-image. Often, women are depicted through narrow stereotypes, such as caregivers, seductresses, or damsels in distress, which limits their representation and potential. Such portrayals not only normalize gender inequity but also reinforce harmful cultural practices that restrict opportunities for women and

sustain power imbalances. Misrepresentation can be particularly harmful to marginalized groups, as it further obscures their realities and perpetuates multiple forms of oppression. Challenging these stereotypes requires a conscious effort to amplify diverse narratives, highlight unheard voices, and foster inclusive media production structures. Moving away from traditional tropes is essential for creating a media landscape that promotes gender equity and honors the varied lives and contributions of women.

https://blogs.gre.ac.uk/diversity/page/1

b) Role of Media in Shaping Public Perception and Attitudes

Media is a powerful tool that shapes public opinions and attitudes toward gender roles and expectations. It has the capacity to either uphold existing norms or challenge them. When women's portrayals are empowering and feature them in diverse roles—such as leaders, innovators, and change-makers—they can help dismantle internalized biases and expand public perceptions of gender possibilities. Conversely, when media reinforces outdated stereotypes or presents women only in limited roles, it exacerbates systemic inequalities and hinders progress toward gender equality. Thus, media can play a vital role in crafting narratives that are inclusive, genuine, and reflective of various realities. Ethical storytelling combined with media literacy can foster transformative advocates for gender equality, countering harmful stereotypes.

D. Case Studies

Initiatives from Various Countries

UN Women has collaborated with nations globally to tackle gender inequality through targeted initiatives addressing key issues such as violence, economic disparities, political exclusion, health inequalities, and cultural barriers.

In Turkey, the "HeForShe" campaign has engaged men in the fight against domestic violence, while Mexico's "Spotlight Initiative" aims to combat femicide and empower victims. Rwanda focuses on economic empowerment through microlending and entrepreneurship, and India's WeEmpowerAsia strives to eliminate the gender pay gap.

Tunisia has implemented gender-parity laws, and Afghanistan has developed training programs to enhance women's leadership skills, both contributing to greater political inclusion of women. Educational programs in Pakistan and Malawi aim to lower dropout rates and prevent early marriage among girls. In Uganda, UN Women is working to improve access to reproductive health care, while in Brazil, the focus is on the health needs of marginalized women, particularly Afro-Brazilians and indigenous populations.

Media initiatives in Kenya and South Korea challenge stereotypes by promoting balanced representations of women. Additionally, programs in Morocco and Indonesia address harmful cultural practices by collaborating with religious leaders to align these practices with gender equality. These examples highlight the effectiveness of localized, multi-sectoral approaches in advancing women's empowerment worldwide.

V. Points a Resolution Should Cover

- What specific legal frameworks and policies can help prevent domestic, sexual, and economic violence against women?
- What strategies can be implemented to change societal acceptance of violence against women?
- What initiatives can be proposed to ensure equal pay for equal work across genders?
- How can countries enhance women's access to finance through loans, credits, and entrepreneurship programs?
- What training and mentorship opportunities can support women in entering high-demand industries and leadership roles?
- What mechanisms, like gender quotas, can boost women's representation in government and decision-making positions?
- How can member states tackle harassment and discrimination against women in political and public spheres?
- What initiatives could provide leadership training and resources for women aspiring to political positions?
- How can countries improve accessibility to education for girls, particularly those at risk of dropping out?
- What policies can address barriers such as child marriage, gender-based violence, and poverty affecting girls' educational completion?
- How can STEM education be enhanced to foster the development of young women in emerging fields?

- What targeted interventions can ensure universal access to reproductive healthcare services, including family planning and safe abortion?
- How can maternal health services be improved to reduce preventable maternal mortality rates?
- What specific programs can address healthcare disparities faced by marginalized women, including indigenous and refugee populations?
- What strategies can engage cultural and religious leaders in promoting gender equality and combating harmful practices like child marriage?
- What initiatives can foster balanced and gender-sensitive representations of women in the media?
- How can member states support campaigns that counter stereotypes and amplify women's voices?
- What role can media literacy programs play in enhancing public understanding of gender equity?
- How can legal systems be strengthened to protect women's rights and ensure accountability for violations?
- What gender-sensitive training programs can be developed for law enforcement and judicial personnel?
- What diplomatic initiatives could improve cooperation between countries in the field of women's empowerment?
- What successful examples of gender-sensitive policy implementation from member states can serve as models for others?

Additional Research/ Reading:

1. **USAID - Gender and Education**: This resource outlines USAID's efforts to promote gender equality in education globally, including their policies and measurable outcomes. It provides insights into various programs aimed at improving educational access for girls and women. https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/gender-and-education
2. **ALIGN Platform**: This platform offers a guide on education and gender norms, including toolkits and resources for promoting gender equality in educational settings. It highlights various initiatives and their impacts on gender-sensitive education. https://www.alignplatform.org/
3. **UNESCO - Promoting Gender Equality in Education**: UNESCO provides resources and reports on gender equality in education, including best practices and case studies from different countries. https://en.unesco.org/themes/gender-equality-education
4. **World Bank - Gender Data Portal**: This portal offers a wealth of data on gender disparities in education and other sectors, providing insights into the impacts of gender-sensitive policies.

   https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext/?f=1&v=1&l=1

5. **OECD - Social Institutions and Gender Index**: This project analyzes gender discrimination across various themes, including education, and provides country factsheets that can help assess the effectiveness of gender-sensitive policies.
6. https://www.oecd.org/gender/data/social-institutions-and-gender-index.htm
7. **UN Women - Gender Snapshot**: This annual report compiles gender equality data related to the Sustainable Development Goals, including education, and assesses progress and challenges. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/01/gender-snapshot-2023
8. **Population Council - Girl-Centered Program Design**: This resource provides toolkits and guidelines for designing programs that focus on the needs and rights of girls, including educational initiatives. https://www.popcouncil.org/

9. UN Women. (n.d.). Women's empowerment principles (WEPs). Retrieved from https://www.weps.org
10. UN Women. (n.d.). HeForShe campaign. Retrieved from https://www.heforshe.org
11. Catalyst. (2023). The glass ceiling: What it is and how to overcome it. Retrieved from https://www.catalyst.org
12. National Women's Law Center. (2021). The wage gap: The who, how, why, and what to do. Retrieved from https://nwlc.org
13. UNESCO. (2022). Education transforms lives: The benefits of educating women and girls. Retrieved from https://www.unesco.org
14. UN Women. (n.d.). Faith and gender equality: Partnering with religious leaders for change. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

Learn more:

1. Gender and Education | Education Links
2. 7. Useful resources | Align Platform
3. Overview of data resources on gender equality across the world

VII. Bibliography

1. Catalyst. (2023). The glass ceiling: What it is and how to overcome it. Retrieved from https://www.catalyst.org

2. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2019). Women in business and management: The business case for change. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org

3. UN Women. (n.d.). Education: End violence against women. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women/2014/education

4. UN Women. (n.d.). HeForShe campaign. Retrieved from https://www.heforshe.org

5. UN Women. (n.d.). The Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women

6. UN Women. (n.d.). Global programme for women's economic empowerment. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment

7. United Nations. (2015). The 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Retrieved from https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda

8. UN Women. (n.d.). Women's empowerment principles (WEPs). Retrieved from https://www.weps.org

9. Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1241–1299.

10. Crenshaw, K. (2018). Intersectionality: A transformative paradigm for gender equality in the 21st century. Feminist Theory, 21(4), 123–136.

11. Phipps, A. (2014). Intersectionality and women's rights. Cambridge Journal of Education, 44(4), 471–487.

12. Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. P. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. Sex Roles, 59(5–6), 377–391. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9424-4

13. Collins, P. H. (2000). Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment (2nd ed.). Routledge.

14. Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders. Harvard Business Review Press.

15. Kabeer, N. (2020). Reversing the narrative on marginalization: Gender and economic inequality. Routledge.

16. Lorde, A. (1984). Sister outsider: Essays and speeches. Crossing Press.

17. Sandberg, S. (2013). Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead. Knopf.

18. Food and Agriculture Organization. (n.d.). Women in agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development. Retrieved from http://www.fao.org

19. UNESCO. (2022). Education transforms lives. Retrieved from https://www.unesco.org

20. UN Women. (n.d.). Buy from Women: Digital platform for women in agriculture. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

21. UN Women. (n.d.). Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC). Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

22. UN Women. (n.d.). Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

23. Rwanda Parliament. (n.d.). Gender equality in governance: Lessons from Rwanda. Retrieved from https://www.parliament.gov.rw

24. UN Women. (n.d.). Empower Women, Empower Economies: Programs and initiatives. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

25. UN Women. (n.d.). Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning Program. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

26. UN Women. (2021). Women in STEM: Encouraging gender-responsive education in Jordan. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

27. World Bank. (2021). The benefits of educating women and girls: Economic and societal impacts. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org

28. UN Women. (n.d.). Engaging religious communities to combat gender-based violence. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

29. UNESCO. (2021). Women in religious leadership: Overcoming barriers. Retrieved from https://www.unesco.org

30. UN Women. (2019). Working with Islamic scholars to end child marriage in Senegal. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org

31. World Bank. (2020). Gender equality in personal laws: Balancing tradition and rights. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org

32. UN Women. (n.d.). Promoting women's rights in Islamic contexts. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org