

"STEPS TOWARDS ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY"

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Article history:	Abstract:
Published: 10 th March 2022	We need to stop buying into the myth about gender equality. It is not a reality. Today, women make up half of the U.S. workforce, but the average working woman earns only 77 percent of what the average working man makes. But till women and men both say this is acceptable, things will not change. Men have to demand that their wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters earn more—commensurate with their qualifications and not their gender. Equality will be achieved when men and women are granted equal opportunity, equal pay and equal respect. Humanity requires both men and women, and we are equally important. So why are we viewed as less than equal? We have to teach our childrens the rules of equality and respect, so that as they grow up, gender equality becomes a natural way of life. Women are more than 50 percent of the population and more than 50 percent of voters. We must demand that we all receive 100 percent of the opportunities. Gender equality can be from a career point of view, but nature has given the opportunity as a separate entity i.e. human. Sustainable development goals can achieve a better and more sustainable future for all people by 2030.
Keywords: Gender equality, human, nature, schemes, individual.	

1. INTRODUCTION

The world has made great decisive steps towards greater gender equality. Today, more girls are able to access and continue their primary education, incidence of child marriage is declining, and concrete legal reforms and actions are making national systems such as health, education, water and sanitation more responsive to the needs and vulnerabilities of millions of underserved women and girls.

It is often difficult to establish evidence based on the causal links between impacts of gender inequality on a country's development, because of the lack of available sex-disaggregated data and because of limited data, we also cannot capture the complexity of gender inequality in different contexts.

One way to measure gender inequality is to look at the differences for women and men in areas such as education, health, decision making and access to economic opportunities.

Analysis based on quantitative data reveals that considerable progress has been made in terms of women's access to education and healthcare in the region, also in terms of the high achieved by the women.

However, this level of analysis doesn't show how gender inequality influences policies. This is why we decided to dig deeper in this paper.

For instance, increasingly schemes, many governments in this region decided to invest in education, in part to encourage participation in the labor market - which would then boost economic development of the country.

However, most investments supported by education policies are gender blind (and not gender neutral): data from all countries in the region reveal that investments in education produce distinct outcomes for women and men:

- Women outnumber men in different universities
- Women have higher university degrees than men.

But investments in education are not directly leading to women participating in the labor market. On average, in the region, women represent 44 percent of the workforce. So, why is it that the gains in qualification in women don't increase the number of women in the workforce? And how can we change it?

The reason why investments and education policies are producing different outcomes for women and men is because they happen in societies where gender inequality is deeply entrenched.

Gender inequality is often driven by existing gender stereotypes that determine how we perceive the roles of women and men in society.

1. Pride and Prejudice, Pride - if a man is boss, it's ok, he can do it. Prejudice - if a woman is boss, doubt can

she do it?

2. Egregious (remarkable) inequalities in gender biased careers, always he can do it, will she do it?
3. Performance based evaluation is more important than gender based.
4. One should get fair opportunities without biasing based on gender

2. GOALS

Following are the goals set by all of us:-

1. End all forms of discrimination of women and girls everywhere.
2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and men in the public and private, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female, male genital mutilation
4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nation.
5. Ensure men and women equal, full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.
6. Ensure that the universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
7. Undertake reforms to give women and men equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
8. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of all.
9. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all at all levels.

3. Government Schemes in India are as follows:-

Economic Participation & Opportunity and Health & Survival: Various programmes/Schemes that are intended towards women development and empowerment are [02] :

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) ensures the protection, survival and education of the girl child.
 - Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) aims to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development and employment.
 - Working Women Hostel (WWH) ensures the safety and security for working women.
 - Scheme for Adolescent Girls aims to empower girls in the age group 11-18 and to improve their social status through nutrition, life skills, home skills and vocational training
 - Mahila Police Volunteers (MPV) envisages engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers in States/UTs who act as a link between police and community and facilitates women in distress
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) is an apex microfinance organization that provides micro-credit at concessional terms to poor women for various livelihood and income generating activities.
- The National Crèche Scheme ensures that women take up gainful employment through providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment to the children.
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandna Yojna aims to provide maternity benefits to pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana aims to provide housing under the name of the woman also.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) aims to enable a large number of Indian youth including women to take up industry-relevant skill training in securing a better livelihood.
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) focuses on creating opportunities for women in skill development, leading to market-based employment.
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana empowers women and protects their health by providing LPG cylinders free of cost.
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna (SSY) - Under this scheme girls have been economically empowered by opening their bank accounts.
- Skill Upgradation & Mahila Coir Yojana is an exclusive training programme of MSME aimed at skill development of women artisans engaged in coir Industry.
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) - a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector
- Female Entrepreneurship: To promote female entrepreneurship, the Government has initiated Programmes like Stand-Up India and Mahila e-Haat (online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/ SHGs/NGOs),

Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESSDP). Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) provides access to institutional finance to micro/small businesses.

The Equality of the male and women can be for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are for the transformation of the world. The Sustainable Development Goals are calls for action by all the countries, which are poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while surely protecting the planet. They have recognized that to end poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, political and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. More important than ever, the goals provide a critical framework for recovery from this COVID 19 pandemic situation.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are: (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reduced Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals.

These sustainable developments can achieve a better and more sustainable future for all [03]

2.1 STUDYCASE:

A husband and wife relationship is a unique and difficult one as it brings two individuals together in the name of marriage and expects to be together for the rest of their lives. Before committing to any relationship it is very important to understand and acknowledge that every individual has a unique personality and is different in its own way. If a couple learns to accept each other unconditionally by respecting and enjoying each other's differences then marital life will be successful. The given real life case study describes how lack of trust and poor communication could fracture a relationship. How an external influence could sever the couple bond leaving the partners feeling deserted. It also shows how marital Counseling could help the couple to communicate the messages that were not expressed earlier and to facilitate better relationship skills.[1].

We have put forward case study 1 and case study 2 below:

Case study1:

Scenario: In India, presently average family size is 4, husband, wife and two kids, husband and wife both are equally educated and are working, a husband is getting a good salary, and wife is getting less wage despite working on the same portfolio. One day the husband tells the wife to leave a job and accept housewives, look after kids and home as you're getting significantly less salary and high workload and as kids are getting ignored due to your workload i.e. except as housewife.

So one day she decided to leave and start looking after kids and family. After a few days, the husband starts ignoring the wife and taunts her that you're not working, so you don't know anything; even kids also start intimidating their father and start ignoring their mother and teasing her. Day by day, the situation became worse, and she started feeling depressed, lonely and losing her confidence.

How to handle this situation: Working at home is a 24/7 job, and a woman handles it very well. But she is not getting any salary for the same. She must convince the family, mainly her husband, that she is doing the most important job. It is not an easy job, and you must feel proud that you're a housewife. You must get the same respect as your husband is getting as a sole bread earner. A housewife's job is as important as the job of the person earning for the family. All the family members should be convinced for the same.

Case study2:

Scenario: In an Indian family of 4, husband, wife and two kids, due to some reason, the husband ended up leaving his job. To support the family's financial needs, the wife starts working for the family and accepts a job. She tried to get a better job, but ended up with less salary and got exhausted every day by workload. She used to receive taunts from other fellow workers about working in the office. She has to look after the house as well as the financial requirements of the family.

After a few days, the husband starts feeling inadequate, and due to his dominating nature, he dominates her, and the problem starts in the family. Also, the kids neglect the father and start ignoring him and taunting her. Day by day, the situation got worse, and she started feeling depressed and lonely and losing her confidence. This situation also worsens for the complete family due to the male-dominated society.

How to handle these situations: as you work for your family and kids, you need to be very strong. Speak with your husband and solve your misunderstanding. You need to support your husband, understand his situation, and try to convince your family and friends that one of us needs to get a job. We both are equal.

Steps towards achieving gender equality:-

1. Discrimination is seen in all genders everywhere; to eliminate discrimination, one must start practicing from their own house. Do not treat a person based on their gender, income, religion, race, color, etc. We all are equal

and are human.

2. Eliminating all types of violations against women and men is challenging. We need to make ourselves strong enough physically and mentally to defend ourselves from all kinds of offenses. We need to take self-defense training in schools, offices, etc. Learn a few tactics in judo karate or even wrestling from certified trainers.
3. Early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM) can be eliminated by spreading awareness of early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM) in society in schools, Government and private offices, hospitals, banks, religious places etc.
4. Convince your partner and family about the value of being a housewife and your sacrifice towards your family.
5. To get equal opportunities for leadership at all decision-making levels in political, economic and public, private life. You need to make yourself strong morally, ethically, socially and technologically. Because there are still many industries that are gender unbiased, they seek real talent.
6. Vasectomy is the easy way to stop reproduction. Discuss with your partner regarding health issues of tubectomy and convince your partner to undergo vasectomy, which is the easy and safer way to stop reproduction. Sterilization is a permanent method of birth control. Sterilization procedures for women are called tubal ligation. The procedure for men is called vasectomy.
7. Girls have equal rights in property inheritance. Women must become financially strong, open a bank account and save money for their future. Make yourself financially stronger.
8. Above all, it's your right. If you start begging, nobody is going to give you. You need to make yourself strong enough technically, ethically, morally, and physically to get you right.
9. Above all, we all are individual male or female, we have the right to live, so it is our right to understand each other and thus respect each other in all respects. Gender should not be the barrier in individual development.

2.2 CONCLUSION:

In this paper, the authors recommend that gender equality is a myth. Do we want gender equality, and do you hope you will get gender equality? We will not. We will have to make ourselves strong morally, ethically, socially, and technologically so that we will not request gender equality one day. Rather all others will give us our right without asking for it as all are individuals, and we have been created by God with different gender and respective potentials also both have the equal right by birth and cannot be compared.

As individuals, we need to make ourselves so strong that we will fight for our self-motivation, self-confidence, self-realization, and our rights in all respects. We have tried to put family case studies 1 and 2 and highlight that harmony and peace are more important in life. Housewife is also a full-time job for women as family culture comes to a point and helps the complete family by earning, when the men are not getting good job opportunities. It all depends on the understanding of the family members. We need to teach our boys about moral values and respect women. Gender equality must start from our home. Then it gradually will inculcate/spread in the society.

We need to rethink the ways we deal with different genders. Gender is an identity given to each person to honor its individuality. We can achieve gender equality by taking small steps towards providing equal law, equal remuneration, and equal opportunities to each gender.

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