



Study Guide UN Commission on the Status of Women

***“Gender-based Discrimination and Stereotypes:
Exploring Ways to Challenge and Change Harmful
Gender Norms, Stereotypes, and Discriminatory
Practices.”***

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Introduction

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women works to implement the concept of equal rights for men and women, which is stated in the United Nations Charter. The poor position that women enjoyed at the time in many nations throughout the world led to the United Nations' planning sessions recognising the necessity for such an international organisation. Only half of the world's countries allowed women to vote. Being seen as second-class citizens, girls were either refused access to school entirely or forced to take female-oriented curriculum at a lower grade level than males. Their lack of skills and knowledge restricted their economic options even in places where they were given access to work. They were denied equal partnership in marriage, parenthood, property ownership, and the administration of their personal affairs, which amounted to discrimination in the private sphere of their life. Women were unable to assist themselves, thus a worldwide body was required to coordinate efforts to achieve women's rights.

Nevertheless, women now have a voice for achieving first-class citizenship rights thanks to their membership in the United Nations. The Commission on the Status of Women has accomplished its goals by relying on other United Nations agencies to carry out its initiatives. The Commission has relied on the specialised agencies, non-governmental organisations, and various other United Nations organs with an interest in the status of women in order to fulfil its purposes, but is only permitted by its terms of reference to make recommendations to the Economic and Social Council. Women are no longer denied the right to vote, with very few exceptions. Future trends are beginning to recognise the idea of working women competing with males in all sectors of the economy. Women are rapidly winning the right to run their own businesses and assume an honourable position in the family. The situation of women has considerably improved in every way since the UN Commission on the situation of Women was

established. Due to the Commission's broad view of its authority, the emphasis has changed from repealing discriminatory laws to providing opportunities for the exercise of rights. The Commission has evolved and is going to keep moving in this direction.

History

The Inter-American Commission of Women has played a significant role in improving women's standing at the regional level. In order to investigate the situation of women in the American nations and advance the civil and political rights of women, this commission was established by the Sixth International Conference of American States in Havana in 1928. The Organisation of American States enacted a convention in 1933 regarding married women's nationality and a convention in 1948 giving female political and civil rights due to the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women. The Inter-American Commission for Women maintains its advocacy for women's rights and submits yearly reports on its operations to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The pinnacle of global efforts to advance women's rights is the United Nations Charter. The equal rights of men and women are affirmed in the Preamble to the Charter as a statement of intent.

Throughout its first 10 meetings in particular, the Commission on the Status of Women gave the position of women in the UN a great deal of consideration. Concerned primarily with the underrepresentation of women in positions of policymaking, the Commission requested yearly reports from the Secretary-General about the makeup and proportion of the posts held by women in the Secretariat. It was also noted by the Commission that women were given the sole responsibility for handling social issues. A resolution requesting the appointment of additional female delegates was adopted in 1950. The Commission on the Status of Women was mainly

responsible for the 1951 redesign of the Secretariat's Staff Rules, which eliminated any discriminatory language. The Secretary-General informed the Commission that while the number of women in high-level posts has been a source of frustration, the liberation of women was too recent to have resulted in the production of many highly competent women for public service. The Commission recommended that the Secretary-General take the lead in selecting women to significant positions in the Secretariat, rather than just mirroring the development of the country.

The United Nations' programs of technical assistance for the progress of women will serve as a demonstration of the focus on the rights of women in developing nations. The utilization of workshops, grants, and professional guidance to assist women in realizing and exercising their rights will characterize the United Nations advisory services program in the area of human rights. The United Nations technical assistance programme will be represented as a coordinated effort of multiple UN entities to support community development programs, including help for women. The coordinated long-term program for women's progress will be referred to as a catalyst for the improvement of women's position in emerging nations. We'll define the Commission's current interests. The objective of the Commission is to create a single text, the Declaration on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, that combines the ideas espoused in many international agreements pertaining to women's rights. The Commission on the Status of Women will seize the chance to promote the application of women's rights in national legislation and practice, as well as to publicize its guiding principles, during the International Year for Human Rights.

Causes

Gender inequality remains a pervasive and grave issue. Men have dominated society for many years, while women have always been the minority. Throughout their whole lives, women are reliant on males (Pervez et al. 2015). Fathers, partners, and sons are at the top of the spectrum. Women are traditionally exclusively valued for their ability to procreate and are encouraged to labor only in the house rather than outside. Men and women both labor for society, but only women worldwide carry out a variety of tasks in productive labor, which is not taken into account in their official metrics of economic activity.

Negative attitude

Women face discrimination to the point where it makes them less suitable for vocations like childcare, housework, and providing services. Men are thought to be more suitable for jobs requiring a high degree of decision-making authority. The widespread opinion is that large organizations cannot be ruled by women. The belief that women are incapable of holding most high positions is shared even by women themselves.

Religion & Culture

One of the main factors contributing to the perception that women are insignificant in Culture is tradition, which is the way of life of a particular ethnic group. In most communities, there are village elders who resist women in leadership roles.

There have been religious practices for countless years. Men were considered superior to women since the beginning of religion. Women were and still are not permitted to work or vacation (Pervez et al. 2018). Although women are free to dress whatever they like, in certain regions they are required to wear a burqa, which is a head-to-toe covering of all clothing.

Education Inequality

The majority of those who experience gender disparity are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and have less education. Respondents who came from educated backgrounds and those who had stable socioeconomic situations expressed a strong belief that women should have equal access to school and should be granted equal educational opportunities. Because they understand that teaching a woman essentially means educating a generation, educated households encourage female education.

The fact that females are not allowed to work outside of their houses is another reason why education for them is viewed as a poor investment. Girls are viewed as a burden and a drain on the family's resources in households with low literacy rates or poor educational backgrounds. The researchers particularly provided the instance in which 90% of the women were determined to be illiterate, making it the case with the worst illiteracy rate.

Sexism

One of the leading causes of women's unfair treatment in the workplace is sexism. Women are frequently exposed to stricter standards at work, such as age, height, and attractiveness, which are not essential for their jobs. Furthermore, there is a persistent stigma that holds women to be less competent than males. Moreover, when employing women, they typically avoid selecting married or infertile women, and they inquire about whether women can manage job and family obligations since they assume female belong in the home. In response to this discrimination, women commonly occupy lower-level occupations. Women are treated differently in the workplace as a result of this gender discrimination. The World Economic Forum indicated that in 2021, 83.3% of Chinese males and 16.8% of Chinese women respectively will hold the positions of lawmaker, senior official, and manager. Similarly, there is a bias in society against women who work in temporary jobs, believing that they are better suited for the service sector.

The Problem

The most significant injustice of our day and the greatest threat to human rights is gender inequity. However, gender equality provides answers to some of the most difficult issues facing our day. Women are always in worse situations than males, just by virtue of being female. Even worse conditions exist for women who belong to underrepresented groups, are older, have disabilities, are migrants, or are refugees.

Despite the fact that women's rights have come a long way in recent years—from the repeal of legislation that discriminated against them to the rise in the proportion of girls attending school—we are currently facing a strong reaction. In certain nations, laws against rape and domestic violence are being weakened, while in others, laws penalizing women—from forced pregnancy to austerity—are being implemented. Sexual and reproductive rights for women are being threatened from all directions.

This is all due to the fact that gender equality is really a power issue. Our political structures, businesses, and economies all have a massive gender power disparity as a result of centuries of discrimination and ingrained patriarchy. The proof is all around us.

Women continue to be underserved at the top, in business boards, governments, and esteemed award ceremonies. Online and offline, prominent personalities and female leaders are subjected to insults, threats, and harassment. The gender power gap is the underlying cause of the gender pay discrepancy.

Past UN Actions

The issue of violence against women continues to get special attention from the UN system.

"A clear and comprehensive definition of violence against women [and] a clear statement of

the rights to be applied to ensure the elimination of violence against women in all its forms" were included in the 1993 General Assembly Declaration on the Eradication of Violence Against Women. It represented for "the international community at large, and States in respect of their responsibilities, committing to the elimination of violence against women."

The UN recognizes other international days devoted to bringing attention to various facets of the fight for gender equality and women's empowerment in addition to International Women's Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The international dates of the following events are noted: October 11 is the International Day of the Girl Child; June 19 is the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict; June 23 is International Widows' Day; and October 15 is the International Day of Rural Women.

The UN General Assembly decided to establish a single UN organization with the mission of expediting the advancement of women's empowerment and gender equality on July 2, 2010, with a unanimous vote. The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women are the four agencies and offices that jointly make up the new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN Women.

All nations are affected by the epidemic of violence against women, including those that have achieved great strides in other domains. 35 percent of women worldwide have been victims of intimate relationship violence, which includes both physical and sexual abuse, as well as non-partner sexual abuse. The Spotlight program, a worldwide multi-year program aimed at ending all kinds of violence against women and girls, was initiated in September 2017 by the European Union and the United Nations.

Solutions

Gender equality has been fought for generations, but it still has to be achieved. Women and girls continue to face a disproportionate amount of discrimination and violence, despite notable advancements towards gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. Considering all three of these ways for combating gender inequality, these injustices do have an opportunity to be made right.

Make education accessible to girls.

Approximately 130 million females worldwide do not attend school. Despite a notable increase in the number of females enrolled in school, much work has to be done. It is more probable for girls than for boys to never go to school. Nearly 10 million boys and 15 million girls of primary school age worldwide are unlikely to ever enter in a classroom. There are several distinct types of prejudice that solely impact girls, even though there are many boys and girls who encounter obstacles when attempting to pursue an education around the world. These include early-life forced marriages, gender-based violence in educational environments, and specific cultural or religious traditions that prevent females from pursuing higher education. For females, education is a really significant resource. Better-educated women often have greater wages, engage in formal labor markets, marry later in life, and are generally healthier, according to the World Bank. Girls who receive an education can acquire essential skills and priceless information that will help them succeed in their jobs and simply make better decisions for their own lives.

Give women the opportunity to succeed economically and hold positions of authority.

Globally, women are underrepresented in politics compared to males. The United States is among the 62 percent of nations worldwide that have not had a female head of state or

government for at least a year over the previous 50 years. There is an unsettlingly large disparity between the number of women and males holding political office. There are four men for every woman in international legislatures. Only three nations have 50 percent or more female members of their single or lower-chamber parliaments, making gender equality in politics an exception. The interests and ideals of women will be better reflected in politics if there is an equal representation of women in leadership roles in politics. It is challenging for a lot of women to advance economically and socially. Women perform lengthy hours of unpaid household work all throughout the world. Due to workplace discrimination, women are sometimes denied the opportunity to own land, make a living, and advance in their jobs.

End sexual assaulting and abusing women.

There are laws against sexual assault and domestic abuse in an unusual number of nations. Nevertheless, the rights of women and girls to safety and justice are frequently violated by this disregard for the law. Worldwide, a family member or intimate partner kills 137 women per day. This startling figure illustrates the seriousness of violence against women. Sexual violence against women is more common than against men. At some time in their life, almost 15 million females between the ages of 15 and 19 globally have experienced sexual assault. In addition to being at risk for sexual harassment, women and girls make up 71% of victims of human trafficking, making them particularly susceptible to the practice. Women are commonly sold as sex slaves or trafficked as child brides. Sexual violence against women and young girls is a grave human rights violation due to its magnitude.

Gender equality is a critical component of the solution to the problems facing our planet. Solutions to human-caused issues are led by humans. Redefining and reforming power via gender equality would benefit everyone.

Conclusion

In accordance with the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women seeks to provide equal rights for men and women. In the past, discrimination against women has existed in a number of spheres of life, including work, education, and voting rights. Through the commission's collaboration with other UN agencies and organizations, these challenges have been addressed, giving women a voice.

As a result, women are dependent on males for their whole lives, gender inequality is still a major problem. Girls are frequently perceived as burdens and resource drains, and education is sometimes considered a poor investment. Another significant factor in women's unequal treatment at work is sexism, which impedes their advancement through stigmas and higher expectations. The commission wants to provide girls with access to education in order to solve these concerns, as 130 million women globally do not attend school. Early-life forced marriages, gender-based violence, and cultural or religious customs that prohibit women from obtaining higher education are examples of prejudices against females. Women with higher levels of education frequently earn more money, participate in formal labor markets, marry later in life, and are typically in better health.

The entire society, not just women, may be affected by gender inequality in the short and long terms. Women as well as other vulnerable individuals and organizations stand to gain from reducing gender inequality. The ability to identify issues and offer likely remedies was demonstrated by the responders. Understanding this issue and determining how widespread it is crucial for the government and for the whole of society.

Links to research

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