

Gender Equality is a Myth

OUTLINE

1- Introduction

Despite a common belief that gender equality is a myth, history has proved over the time that with limited resources and opportunities women proved their excellence in every walk of life.

The prevalent gender inequality is not innate but constructed by patriarchy. Hence, gender equality is not a myth but a reality which is achievable as well as desirable.

2- Deconstructing the statement, 'Gender equality is a myth'.

3- Gender equality is not a myth but an achievable reality.

a- Historical evidences of women's participation in society shows it is an achievable reality

- i- Ancient Civilizations
- ii- Modern Europe

b- International organizations and NGOs struggle prove that gender equality is not a myth.

c- Inclusion of equal fundamental rights, irrespective of gender, in almost all world's constitution and having legislations shows it is not a myth.

d- Achievement of several major women rights through different waves of feminism reveals it is not a myth but a reality to be achieved.

e- Despite being provided less opportunities than men, women have been trailblazers in many walks of life.

i- Women's role in scientific advancements

ii- Participation in politics

iii- ^{playing} Crucial role in strengthening economies

iv- Their pivotal role in field of education.

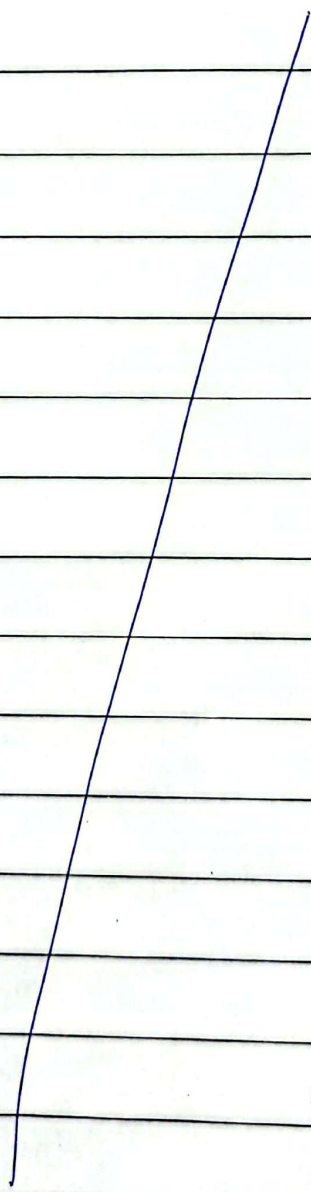
v- Women's participation in health sector.

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4- ~~4~~ Comparative study of Scandinavians
and Sub-Saharan African countries.

5- Conclusion



In the landscapes of Scandinavia, gender equality is not just a lofty ideal but it is a magnificent reality. The 'Gender Gap Index' shines a spotlight on Scandinavian countries like Iceland, Norway, and Sweden where policies and societal norms have closed gender disparities, paving a way for a future where opportunities know no gender boundaries. Despite a common belief that gender equality is a myth, history has proved over the time that with limited resources and opportunities women proved their excellence in every walk of life. The prevalent gender inequality is not innate but constructed by patriarchy. Hence, gender equality is not a myth but a reality which is achievable as well as desirable. There are many instances and evidences to prove gender equality as an achievable reality as history is

is replet with examples where, when given opportunity, women proved their capabilities and excellence. i.e. In Indus valley civilization, Roman and Persian civilizations and during age of enlightenment in Europe. Moreover, Islam is the greatest supporter of fundamental rights and equality and the life of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) is filled with instances where he (SAW) supported and treated women equal to men. In present time, though with limited resources women are present in every field of life including science, arts, literature, economy, politics, education, health, etc. It shows that if treated equal by the society and by giving equal opportunities women can be equal to men and gender equality can be achievable. The struggle of regional, national and international organizations across the world to achieve gender equality also shows that it is not

just a myth but an achievable reality.

Myth refers to something, that is an illusion or falsehood, something far away from reality. Generally, it is perceived idea which is only the result of imagination and whose existence in the real world is impossible.

The statement 'Gender equality is a myth' is debatable as it indicates that gender equality is never achievable.

However gender inequality, is not an innate trait. It is not biological which cannot be couped. Gender inequality, is systematically constructed by patriarchal social structure where male domination has portrayed and constructed women as socially, politically, economically, physically, and psychologically weak than their male counterparts.

Women have been forcibly excluded from availing equal opportunities in life. and where they are given

equal opportunities, they have always performed as good, if not better, as men in all walks of life. Thus, gender equality is not a myth, rather it is achievable by creating an inclusive and participatory society.

History is a great tool while analyzing the reliability of any idea and historically, it is proved that in different civilizations women have earned their name in the list of most consequential people, whenever they are included as the active members of the society. In ancient civilizations there are considerable examples of women being rulers, leaders, traders, military commanders and artisans. In ancient Greece Spartan women were warriors and were playing the responsibility of defence. While in Egyptian civilization Cleopatra was an astonishing figure who not only

ruled Egypt but also made it a developed Empire. So, in ancient times, when given equal chance women left a mark of their excellence and capabilities which shows that gender equality is not really a myth.

Moreover, history of Europe also points out certain great names which not only ruled Europe but helped it to become what it is now. Elizabeth I was a great name, a wise and strong, nerve lady, who resolved the protestant, catholic conflict and made it a global power. Catherine, the Empress of Russia was the one who united Russia and got its areas back from Poland and Turkey.

Eleanor Roosevelt was the 1st representative of USA in UN and played fundamental role in making UN charter so on and so forth.

There are many more example showing,

the decisive, committed, courageous, intellectual spirit of women historically, which gives an ample reason that with inclusivity of women in societies, the societies grow more rapidly, and prove that gender equality is not a myth but a reality, which is very much achievable.

Across the globe, many international ~~and~~ non-governmental organizations work for lessening the disparities in the society on the basis of gender which shows that gender equality is a reality, which ~~is~~ yet to be achieved but it is not a myth. UN Women, UNICEF, WHO, WB, Amnesty International all these organizations have a mandate of gender equality, ~~and~~ women empowerment, access to equal resources, equality to enhance economic opportunities, GBV, etc to ensure women rights to be upheld and protected globally. These

organizations publish reports, organize meetings and devise plans to attain the goal of gender equality. The joint efforts of the world prove it to be a reality which is achievable.

Moreover, almost every constitution of the world's countries have a chapter of fundamental rights of every citizen irrespective of their gender and these fundamental rights advocates the equality among all genders. More or less every country in the world have legislations for equality among its citizens which is necessary for the growth and development of a country. So, how it can be a myth when countries around the globe are struggling to achieve it. In addition to this women comprises almost half of the population of the world and progress cannot be achieved by pushing back half

of the population. So, gender equality is an achievable reality and not a misconception as many countries which placed their women as equal to men see a rigorous growth and development as compared to others.

Furthermore, the different waves of feminism have played a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and by giving women many rights from which they were discriminated before. For instance, first wave of feminism focused on securing women's suffrage and legal rights, second wave addressed broader issues such as reproductive rights, work place issues and GBV which led to legislative changes and passing of laws prohibiting discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, while the third wave focused on the rights of all marginalized and stereotyped genders.

Hence, it shows that over the years of struggle women have achieved some of their rights in terms of equality to men and it proves that gender equality can be achieved with sincere struggle.

Despite being provided less opportunities than men, women have been trailblazers in many walks of life. For instance, women have played a significant part in scientific advancement showing that if considered capable they prove to be equal to men. Marie Curie conducted a pioneering research on radioactivity and she was also the first lady in scientific field who achieved a Nobel prize. Moreover, maths and computer science is considered a men's job but Ada Lovelace was the first computer programmer who is recognized for writing the first

algorithm intended for implementation on Charles Babbage's early mechanical computer. Today, everyone recognizes Charles Babbage but Ada Lovelace is under the rug. It shows that women are not less than men in playing their role in scientific advancements and gender equality can be achieved and can be made real if ~~we~~ patriarchy accept it.

Furthermore, the political role of women serves as a compelling testament to the reality of gender equality rather than a myth. Throughout history and across diverse cultures, women have been pivotal in shaping political landscape and advocating for social change. Mohatma Fatima Jinnah a freedom fighter in the struggle of achieving a separate homeland is a great example from 3rd world countries. Moreover, from suffragists

like Susan B Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to modern day leaders like Angela Merkel and Jacinda Ardern who led nations as head of state, women have proven their capability and excellence in governance. Their leadership has broken barriers and proved that if provided a chance women can be equal to men.

Women played a crucial role in strengthening economies, providing concrete evidence that if considered capable they can lessen the gender gap and can make gender equality a reality. One prominent example is the case of Rwanda where women have been actively involved in rebuilding the economy and society following the devastating effects of 1994 genocide. Rwanda boasts one of the highest percentage of women in parliament globally, with women holding over 60% seats in

the lower house. Women participation in uplifting the political and economic condition of Rwanda after genocide is a prove that gender equality is an achievable reality.

Women played a pivotal role in the field of education which is helpful in banding the disparities among gender and gender equality proves as an achievable reality. Globally, countries which focused on education of girls and women have not only narrowed gender gap but also contributed to social progress and economic development.

For instance Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, Emma Willard, Savitribai Phule, Mary McLeod Bethune are among the pool of women who contributed their role in uplifting the societies through education. Hence, educating the girls equal to boys can leads to make gender equality, a reality.

Additionally, women's role in health underscore the reality of gender equality as achievable entity as they are contributing in healthcare sector in diverse ways i.e healthcare providers, doctors, nurses, midwives and community health workers. Their expertise also spans diverse fields, including maternal and child birth, reproductive health etc. Their contribution and leadership in healthcare addresses the issues of many female health care issues including breast cancer, ovarian cancer, child birth complications etc. It shows that even with limited opportunities women have proved themselves in every walk of life and if given equal opportunities and resources as men ~~gender~~ gender equality can be very much achievable.

A comparative case study of Scandinavian countries with Sub-Saharan

countries will be helpful in proving the stance that if given equal opportunities to women as compared to men, gender equality is a reality which can be achievable. Scandinavian nations have established comprehensive policies and frameworks supporting gender equality, evidenced by high rates of women's workforce participation, political representation and robust social welfare systems that facilitate a balance in the society. In contrast, many sub-saharan countries face persistent challenges such as cultural norms, limited access to education and healthcare and economic disparities that hinder women's advancement. However, Rwanda is an exception which showcase targeted and significant progress as it gives quotas for political participation of women and launches initiatives promoting women's education and

their economic participation. This comparative case study shows that gender equality is achievable with supportive policies, emphasizing the importance of education, economic empowerment, and political inclusion in closing gender gap. It demonstrates that gender equality is a concrete reality rather than an aspirational myth and it can be achieved.

In a nutshell, gender equality is not a myth but a reality, and the world have examples in the form of Scandinavian countries which shows that if women are treated as inclusive part of the society and given opportunities they ^{can} gender disparities can be closed. This also shows that their inclusion is also necessary for the development of the world as they comprises almost half of the population of the world. So, Despite a common

belief that gender equality is a myth, history has proved over the time that with limited resources and opportunities women proved their excellence in every walk of life.

The prevalent gender inequality is not innate but constructed by patriarchy. Hence, gender equality is not a myth but a reality which is achievable as well as desirable.

"Gender equality is not a myth, but an achievable goal".

(Michelle Bachelet - Former President of Chile, a women's rights advocate)