

The ambitious journey towards Gender Equality

Outline

1- Introduction

Thesis statement: The fight for gender equality has undeniably seen progress in recent years. It has gone through a large number of challenges such as unequal representation, gender based violence and pay gaps and unequal access to various fields. At the same time it has undergone transformation bearing impacts like improved health and education, reduced mortality and poverty and many more. It has not completed yet, still remains an ongoing journey.

2- Understanding gender equality

3- Ongoing journey towards gender equality

4- Challenges in achieving the gender equality.

4.1- Under-representation in the leadership

a) Only 26% of Parliamentary seats

are held by women (Feb-2024)

b) Only 8.6% CEO's are women

(McKinsey & Company Report - 2023)

4.2- Breaking the socio-cultural stereotypes
Gender based violence

a) Surge in domestic violence during covid-19
lockdowns (UN Report)

4.3- Gender pay gaps

a) Women earn an average of 16% less
than men for same work

(World Economic Forum - 2023 Report)

4.4 - Lack of affordable childcare

4.5- Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

a) 42% of women in UN still face
harassment at workplace

4.6- Unequal access to education and health
sectors

5- Impacts of gender equality

5.1- Improved health and education (GEC initiative-2012)

5.2- Reduced Maternal Mortality and

empowered families

5.3- Reduced Poverty and economic growth

5.4- Peace and stability

5.5- Environmental sustainability

6- Ways to get rid of unfair roadblocks in the gender equality achievement

6.1- Change of policies and legislation

6.2- Encourage women's participation in leadership

6.3- Equal education rights and closing the STEM gap

6.4- Promote shared responsibility

6.5- Public awareness campaigns

7- Conclusion

The Essay

"Gender equality is the goal that will abolish poverty that will create more equal economies, fairer societies and happier men, women and children."

(Graca Machel)

Gender equality is not just a buzzword, it is a fundamental human right and cornerstone of a fair and just society. It is the notion that every individual regardless of their gender, should have equal rights, opportunities and access to resources. The fight has a long history. Even before colonialism, women's roles vary regionally and by social class, offering glimpses of both limitations and agency. Pursuit of equality has seen progress with time. During this it has faced several challenges like unequal representation for leadership, gender based violence and pay gaps, unequal access to education and health sectors, lack of affordable childcare and many

more. At the same time, it has undergone transformation bearing positive impacts like reduced mortality, empowered families, reduced poverty and increase in economic growth. Gender equality achievement is not completed yet. It is an ongoing journey to get rid of unfair roadblocks in the gender equality development.

To begin with the challenges faced by gender equality, essay would describe challenges. Firstly, the unequal representation of women in business, politics and social sphere is a major hindrance in achieving gender equality. This lack of diversity not only undermines the principles of equal opportunities but also hinders the development of policies and solutions that are needed by entire population. According to Inter-Parliamentary Union only 26% of parliament seats are held by women. Similarly, according to McKinsey and company

only 8.6% CEOs are female.

Likewise, deeply rooted stereotypes does not allow participation of women in corporate world, media, sports and in different fields where males are dominant. Women are expected to prioritize domestic and caregiving responsibilities, while men are expected to be the breadwinners and providers. These stereotypes, shaped by traditional gender roles and expectations, limit individuals potential. For example, women are seen as incompetent in tech. Therefore, these stereotypes hinder gender equality achievement.

Similarly, Gender based violence is a significant hurdle on the path to gender equality. It includes emotional, sexual, physical abuse. This violence is often rooted to control women and non-binary individuals. At the same time it not only

causes physical harm but erodes mental health and self-esteem. According to UN, there was a surge in domestic violence during Covid-19 lockdowns and its still going on.

Moreover, there is a gap in payments for work in men and women. Women are paid less as compared to men. Sometimes, they bear the burden of unpaid carework, which can hinder their economic empowerment and limits their opportunities for personal growth. Unconscious bias plays a role, with employers sometimes undervaluing women skills and contributions.

According to, World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Gender Gap Report, the global gender pay gap stands at 16%, meaning women earn an average of 16% less than men for the same work.

In addition, the lack of childcare options not only affects individual

families but also limits overall workforce participation of women. Many talented women are forced to choose between childcare and careers.

consequently, hindering their ability to contribute fully in the economy.

similarly, harassment at workplace and discrimination among employees on the basis of gender is

prevalent in society. According to 2023 report by Human Rights Watch, there is widespread sexual harassment and discrimination against female in the garment factories across Asia.

Furthermore, in many parts of world, access to quality education remains a privilege not a right. Children from resource constrained areas may lack access to qualified teachers, or even basic necessities to attend school. This lack of education creates a cycle of disadvantages.

According to UNESCO, an estimated 132M girls are out of school globally in 2024. Similarly, disparities exist in health

sector, too. Shortage of qualified healthcare professionals and facilities also lead towards inequality.

Secondly, investing in gender equality creates a ripple effect with positive consequences across various sectors.

One such consequence is improved health and education. When women have access to education and control over

their finances, they are more likely to make informed choices about

their health and health of their

families. This increases utilization of preventative healthcare services, better

nutrition for children and confident

way of life. Similarly educated girls are

the sole models for their generations.

They are more likely to participate

in the progress of country. All

these factors enhance gender equality.

Next, gender equality has profound

impact on families and maternal

health. When women have access

they gain knowledge about reproductive health, pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, they can have access to better healthcare services including skilled medical professionals and life-saving interventions during childbirth. This equality has led to lowering of maternal mortality rate. Since 2010, Ethiopia has focused on expanding access to healthcare for women in rural areas. This led to significant decrease in maternal mortality rates by 40% between 2010 and 2023. Furthermore, empowered families, where women have a voice and agency, also benefit from gender equality.

Similarly, participation of female in work arena has caused significant expansion in the labor force, leading to higher productivity and economic output. Also, diversity of thought flourishes. Women bring different perspective of problem solving and market broadening which results in economic growth. Thus, contribution of both male and

female in development leads to the reduction of poverty. Moreover, these are microfinance programs that provide women with access to loans to have proven successful in alleviating poverty. Women invest these loans in their businesses, which results in economic growth and reduction in poverty.

Moreover, correlation between increased female participation in peace negotiations and more sustainable peace agreements are outcomes of gender equality. A 2023 report by organization highlighted that peace agreements with more women signatories are less likely to collapse within five years. Colombia's Peace agreement in 2016 included a strong focus on women's rights and participation in the peace process. This is seen as a key factor in the ongoing stability of country.

Likewise, women in many indigenous communities play a vital role in protecting natural resources and traditional knowledge. Women can implement stronger policies for sustainable resource management so, diverse perspectives and expertise can contribute significantly to finding solutions to environmental challenges like climate changes.

Lastly, there are some ways to get rid of unfair roadblocks in pursuit of gender equality. At first, legislation and policy changes are powerful tools. These tools can dismantle discriminatory practices, create level playing field for both genders and encourages cultural shift towards a more equitable society. In March 2019, Australia passed the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (closing gender pay gap) Bill. These kind of bills and

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policies empowers men and women equally.

Likewise, encouraging participation of women in leadership such as business, politics, science or the arts, they become visible role models for younger generations. Whenever, women becomes successful in leadership position, they inspires girls to pursue their own ambitions and challenges traditional gender stereotypes. Actively encouraging women participation fosters a sense of confidence and agency.

In addition, equal educational opportunities for girls particularly in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math are crucial steps in achieving gender equality. Rwanda's post-genocidal focal on girls' STEM (science, Tech, Math and Engineering) education lead to surge in female leadership, both in parliament and the tech sector. This exemplifies the power of education in achieving gender equality.

Furthermore, sharing domestic responsibilities and childcare equally, frees up women's time and energy to pursue goals. This can lead to increased female workforce participation, higher earning potential and career advancement. Similarly, fathers who actively participate in childcare develop stronger bond with children and challenge traditional gender roles. Iceland's policies promote shared parental leave, childcare and flexible work, which lead to fairer division of housework, showcasing the benefits of shared responsibility in achieving gender equality.

At last, Public awareness campaigns plays a vital role in challenging societal norms and stereotypes that hinder gender equality. These campaign can raise awareness about unconscious bias and highlights the equality of men and women in different sectors. This is not a quick tool but paves the way for gender equality pursuit.

In a nutshell, Gender equality is an ongoing journey. It bears positive outcomes along with challenges. This journey requires collective efforts from government in the form of legislation and policies making, organizations, individuals, communities and public awareness campaigns. By challenging stereotypes, giving equal leadership representation, providing access to health and education sectors and closing gender pay gap, a world can be created where every person can reach their full potential, regardless of their gender.
