

WOMEN'S RIGHTS: SPEAKING UP FOR GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY

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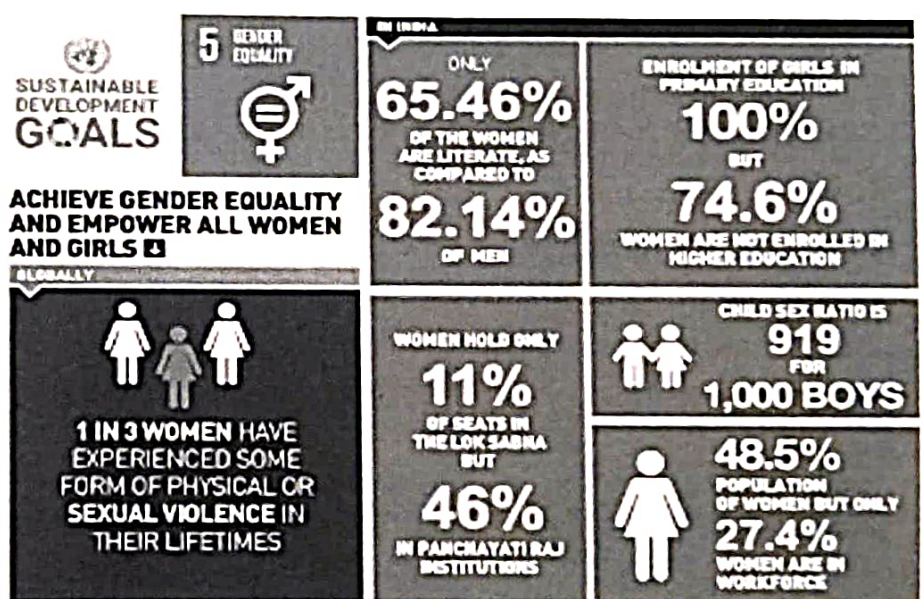
Abstract

Taking strong measures in terms of eradicating gender inequality and fostering and promoting equality among all. UNICEF says gender equality “means that women and men and girls and boys enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protection. It does not require that girls and boys, or men and women, be the same or they be treated exactly alike”. Creating an inclusive culture and giving everyone the opportunity to learn, grow, shine up to one's best underline potential is the need of the hour. Gender equality besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development. Moreover, research statistics have shown that empowering women spurs productivity and economic growth. Achieving gender equality and empowering women is the unfinished business of the time, one of the millennium sustainable development goals of UN focuses on promoting gender equality and empowering women. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) work and expertise are central to achieving the SDGs. The World Economic Forums 2020 fresh Gender Ranking, helps take insight into the current standards to facilities provided to women across the world, also the certain sure shot roadblocks that are somewhere inhibiting the growth of women in every sphere of life, and in various professional fields where they certainly feel they could have done better and thus the unique position has prompted UNDP to adopt the “GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY” 2018-2020, which commits the organization to intensify its effort to mainstream gender equality across all of its areas of work. In more than 60 countries in all the regions of the world. From new laws to legal aid and justice services, laws at global level are being introduced to give legal aid justice services, United Nations is supporting survivors and changing attitudes and practices to end and prevent violence against women and girls.

Keywords: *Inequality, Empowerment, sustainable development, opportunity*

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial we have been talking about gender equality and giving equal opportunity to women as their men counterpart enjoy but even in this 21st century the world is lagging behind in securing women's rights and dignities and many situations. The word gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities opportunities to men and women whereas gender inequality acknowledges that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's living experience. It can be based upon biological, psychological and cultural norms set up by society that basically act as a hindrance to an individual women to learn and grow on the basis of her underline potential. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. United Nations Development program launched measurement of gender inequality index where it takes into consideration reproductive health of women, empowerment of women and labour market participation of women in any country. This index basically measures the loss the country faces when gender inequality is being prevalent in hat society. The millennium sustainable development goals (SDG) initiated by united nations general assembly in the year 2015 to act as blueprint in order to achieve gender equality by the year 2023. There has been several progressive measures achieved under sustainable development goal 5 but then at the same time insufficient progress also. The world is improving in terms of female genital mutilation and child marriage. According to the data given by United Nations for sustainable development goal 2019 there are many countries in the world that had banned female genital mutilation and these include 6 states of Australia , 34 states of united states of America , and states of sudan. But the situation is still grave as such many developing, developed and under developed countries has not yet banned female genital mutilation. Also the report of worls bank shows that there has been a steep decline in the percentage of female genital mutilation from 44% in 2000 to 36.1% in the year 2020 and



United Nations SDG goal 5, various aspects related to it.

on a positive note we can say that the condition will be indeed better in future, also the child marriage cases has declined to certain extent and thus the number seem to reduce in future. There had been insufficient progress in certain aspect which are actually undermining to fulfill sustainable development goal 2030. Few of these include legal discrimination against women, unfair social norms and attitude of people against women, undermining the freedom of women to take decision on reproductive health.

LITERARY REVIEW

While going through the newspaper, the historic judgment given by supreme court of India the gender is not the basis of deciding whether a woman should get permanent commission or not. Also the recent judgment given by Supreme Court where the abortion scheme which grants just 21 weeks to women for abortion now has increased it to 24 weeks, thus envisaging me to definitely present a paper on Global Action for Gender Equality which was a seminar. Day to day happening cited the need to discuss about gender equality.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Gender equality has been a hotly debated issue since century, it was prevalent in past, present and still we are fighting and making laws in order to curb this gender inequality. Women and girls represent half of the world's population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development. Moreover, it has been shown that empowering women spurs productivity and economic growth. Unfortunately, there is still a long way to go to achieve full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women, warns UN Women. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to end the multiple forms of gender violence and secure equal access to quality education and health, economic resources and participation in political life for both women and girls and men and boys. It is also essential to achieve equal opportunities in access to employment and to positions of leadership and decision-making at all levels. The UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres has stated that achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge.

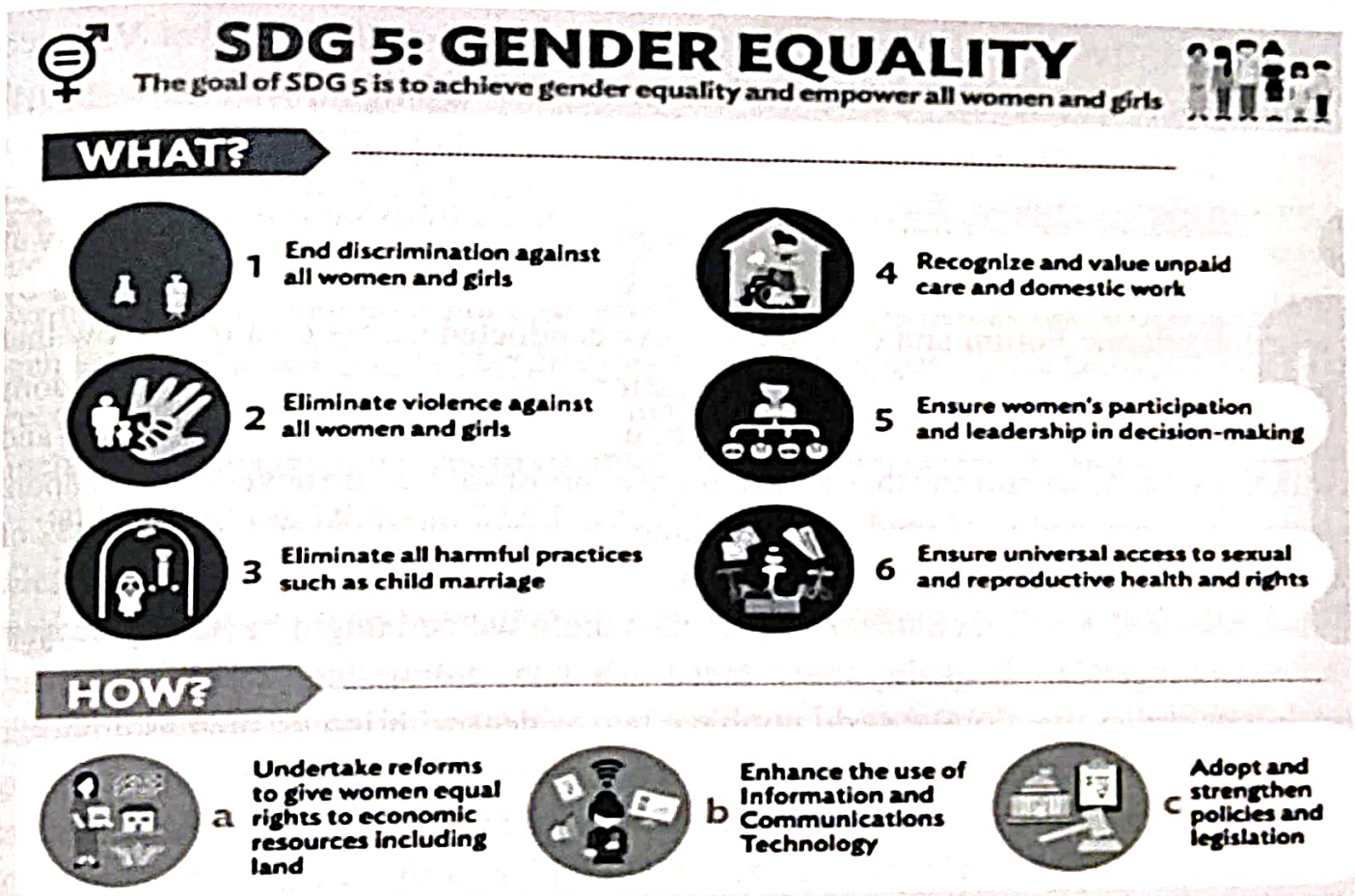
PRESENT CONTEXT

The United Nations and women

UN support for the rights of women began with the Organization's founding Charter. Among the purposes of the UN declared in Article 1 of its Charter is "To achieve

international co-operation ... in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. Within the UN's first year, the Economic and Social Council established its Commission on the Status of Women, as the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Among its earliest accomplishments was ensuring gender neutral language in the draft Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Women and human rights, the landmark Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, reaffirms that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, ... birth or other status." As the international feminist movement began to gain momentum during the 1970s, the General Assembly declared 1975 as the International Women's Year and organized the first World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City. At the urging of the Conference, it subsequently declared the years 1976-1985 as the IUN Decade for Women, and established a Voluntary Fund for Decade.



Depicting the measures to be taken to achieve gender parity and equality.

Gender equality

The United Nations is now focusing its global development work on the recently-developed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Women have a critical role to play in all of the SDGs, with many targets specifically recognizing women's equality and empowerment as both the objective, and as part of the solution.

Goal 5, to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" is known as the stand-alone gender goal, because it is dedicated to achieving these ends. Deep legal and legislative changes are needed to ensure women's rights around the world. While a record 143 countries guaranteed equality between men and women in their Constitutions by 2014, another 52 had not taken this step. Stark gender disparities remain in economic and political realms. While there has been some progress over the decades, on average women in the labour market still earn 20 per cent less than men globally. As of 2018, only 24 per cent of all national parliamentarians were female, a slow rise from 11.3 per cent in 1995.

Eliminating Violence against Women

The UN system continues to give particular attention to the issue of violence against women. The 1993 General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women contained "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". It represented "a commitment by States in respect of their responsibilities, and a commitment by the international community at large to the elimination of violence against women". Various reports published by World Economic Forum and even the surveys conducted across countries show that women are not seen as much equal as to their men counterpart. The United Nations 2019 reports says that on an average a women does thrice time more work than men and which is actually unpaid and then also the endeavors of women are never counted upon. A survey conducted in United states of America when interviewed women, 33% of them said that gender has held them back in their carrier and so we can imagine, how much potential, how much talent, capabilities those women might be having but just because of gender inequality they faced setbacks. Surprisingly there are many countries across the globe that do not have law to deal with issues such as domestic violence, can we imagine the gravity of situation, how those women might be surviving and in what circumstances. Also there are countries that exempt rape perpetrators of they marry the victim subsequently but it is the biggest disgrace ever caused to any human, where the basic self-respect and rights are put aside in order to serve men's.

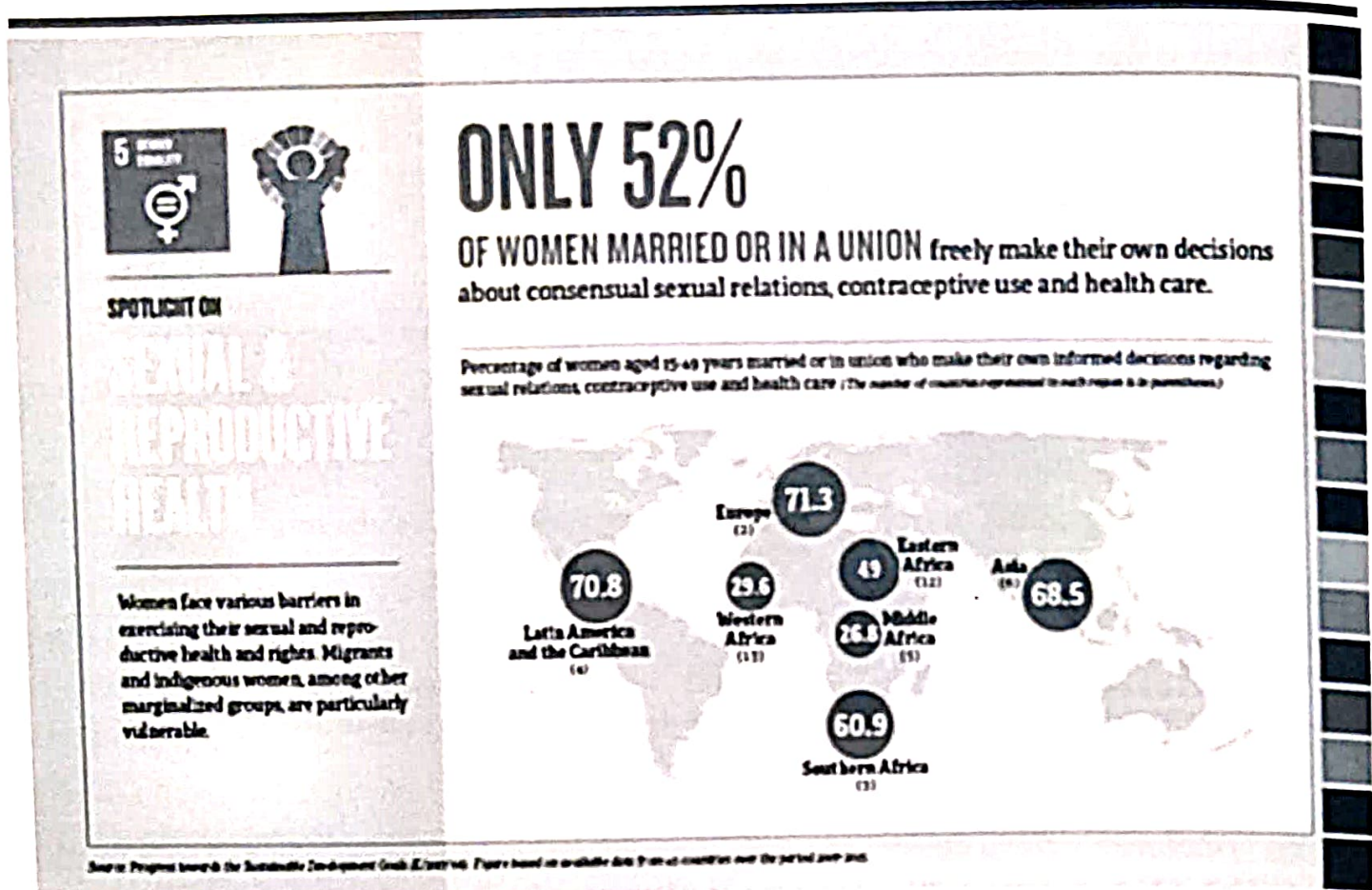


United Nations Report 2019, citing various domestic violence cases across the globe.

Gender-inclusive language

Given the key role that language plays in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias. Being inclusive from a gender language perspective means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. These Guidelines include recommendations and materials, created to help United Nations staff use gender-inclusive language in any type of communication — oral or written, formal or informal — and are a useful starting point for anyone.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Unfortunately, at the current time, 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15-49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period and 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. Progress is occurring regarding harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), which has declined by 30% in the past decade, but there is still much work to be done to completely eliminate such practices.



Progressive Report OF SDG 5, Female health and reproductive choices.

Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. Implementing new legal frameworks regarding female equality in the workplace and the eradication of harmful practices targeted at women is crucial to ending the gender-based discrimination prevalent in many countries around the world.

HeForShe (often referred to as He for She) is a solidarity campaign for the advancement of gender equality, initiated by the UN. Its goal is to achieve equality by encouraging all genders to partake as agents of change and take action against negative stereotypes and behaviors. Grounded in the idea that gender inequality is an issue that affects all people—socially, economically and politically—it seeks to actively involve men and boys in a movement that was originally conceived as "a struggle for women by men".

IMPACT 10x10x10 initiative

UN Women launched the HeForShe IMPACT 10x10x10 initiative to gain further momentum in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment at the 2015

World Economic Forum in Davos on January 23, 2015. The initiative was launched as a one-year pilot effort to engage governments, corporations and universities as instruments of change. IMPACT 10x10x10 targets some of the communities that most need to address women's empowerment and gender equality concerns—and those that have the greatest capacity to make and influence those changes.

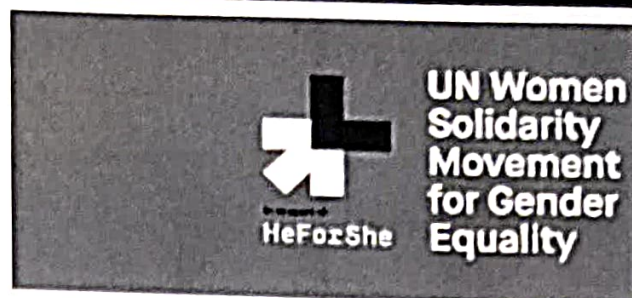


Figure 5.0 - United Nations campaign to promote gender equality.

None of us will see gender parity in our lifetimes, and nor likely will many of our children. That's the sobering finding of the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, which reveals that gender parity will not be attained for 99.5 years.

Figure 1: Differences in time spent daily on paid and unpaid work by women and men (global average)

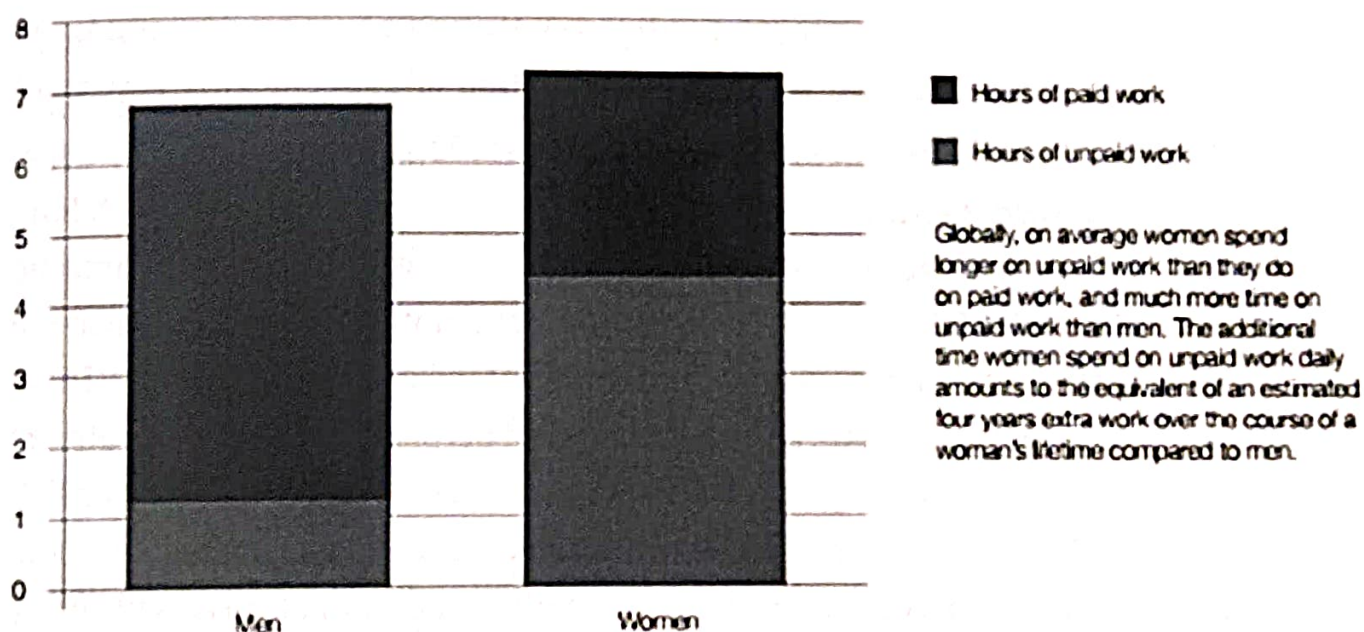


Figure 6.0: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM Report depicting participation of men and women in paid and unpaid work.

A young woman entering the job market today anywhere around the globe can expect to work on average four years more than her male counterpart over a lifetime, according to a new report by the U.K.-based anti-poverty organization Action Aid. The report, presented at the United Nations General Assembly last week, points out that women's extra labor is not necessarily driven by logging more hours of paid employment. The bulk of the extra labor—an average of one month per year globally—is unpaid work such as caring for children and elderly or performing domestic duties.

This unpaid work is essential to any nation's economy's ability to function. Throughout history, nonemployed women tended to be responsible for domestic duties and round-the-clock care of family members, rendering their value invisible in an economic system where work is predominantly measured in wages. Today, even as more women have entered the paid workforce, the report highlights how the higher burden of domestic duties limits women's opportunity to earn money, participate in political activities, and take days off.

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, a multi-country initiative to help protect the rights of millions of girls, was launched in 2016 with the involvement of families, educators, health providers, governments, as well as religious and community leaders, with the ambitious aim of ending the practice by 2030.

And it will be renewed for an additional three years, according to UNICEF and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which works to advance sexual and productive health. Since then, it has helped more than eight million adolescent girls and more than five million community members, with information, skills and services. By 2023, the programme aims to have reached more than 14 million adolescent girls across 12 countries in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Lifelong consequences

When a girl is forced to marry as a child, she faces immediate and lifelong consequences. Her odds of finishing school decrease as those of experiencing domestic violence rise. Moreover, her chances of becoming pregnant during adolescence are higher and she is more likely to die of complications in pregnancy and childbirth. There are also huge societal consequences, and a higher risk of perpetuating intergenerational cycles of poverty. To end the practice by 2030 – the target set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – progress must be significantly accelerated. Without further acceleration, in ten years more than 120 million additional girls will marry before their 18th birthday.

“The Global Programme is committed to empowering girls to exercise their rights, fulfill their potential, and drive change in their communities

Now in its 14th year, the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 benchmarks 153 countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment. In addition, this year's report examines gender gap prospects in the professions of the future.

The report presents a decidedly mixed picture. Overall, the quest towards gender parity has improved, ducking back under a century and registering a marked improvement on the 108 years in the 2018 index. Greater political representation for women has contributed to this, but overall the political arena remains the worst-performing dimension.

At the other end of the scale, it is forecast to take just 12 years to attain gender parity in education, and in fact, overall, gender parity has been fully achieved in 40 of the 153 countries ranked.

Globally, gender parity stands at 68.6% and the bottom 10 countries have closed just 40% of the gender gap. Political empowerment scores are poor. In terms of parliamentary representation, globally women have secured just 25% of available positions, a figure that slips to 21% at a ministerial level. At this level, there are nine where they have no representation. In the past 50 years, 85 states have had no female head of state. In terms of economic participation, the gender gap will take 257 years to close (compared to 202 years in the 2019 report). Globally, only 55% of women (aged 15-64) are engaged in the labour market as opposed to 78% of men. There are 72 countries where women are barred from opening bank accounts or obtaining credit. There is no country where men spend the same amount of time on unpaid work as women. In countries where the ratio is lowest, it is still 2:1.

Looking to the future, the report reveals that the greatest challenge preventing the economic gender gap from closing is women's under-representation in emerging roles. In cloud computing, just 12% of professionals are women. Similarly, in engineering and Data and AI, the numbers are 15% and 26% respectively. To address these deficiencies, workforce strategies must ensure that women are better equipped (in terms of improved skills or reskilling) to deal with the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Diverse hiring is another area for improvement (reflecting the current situation that sees gender parity in an in-demand



Figure 7.0 - World Economic Forum Report 2020, Fresh Gender Equality Rankings

skillset but not equal representation), along with creating inclusive work cultures. The top country for gender parity remained Iceland (for the 11th year running). The most-improved countries were Albania, Ethiopia, Mali, Mexico and Spain. Of the 149 countries ranked, 101 improved their scores on the 2019 index (this excludes the five new countries that have joined the ranking this year). A further 48 saw their performance unchanged, while the top 10th percentile saw their scores improve more than 3.3% year-on-year. A total of 35 countries have achieved gender parity in education. In healthcare, 48 countries have achieved near-parity and 71 have closed at least 97% of the gap.

India has slipped to the 112th spot from its 108th position in 2018 in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2020, which covered 153 economies. The report, released said it will take nearly 100 years to close the gender gap across politics, economic, health and education. "The country (India) has closed two-thirds of its overall gender gap (score of 66.8%). However, the condition of women in large fringes of India's society is precarious. It has lost four positions since the previous edition, despite a small score improvement, as some countries ranked lower than India have improved more," the report said. "The economic gender gap runs particularly deep in India. Only one-third of the gap has been bridged (score of 35.4%, 149th, down 7 places). Since 2006, the gap has gotten significantly wider. Among the 153 countries studied, India is the only country where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gender gap," it added.

India ranked 18th in political empowerment and 4th in the number of years a female or a male ruled a state. It ranks 149th in economic participation and opportunity and 117th in wage equality for similar work. The country ranked 112th in educational attainment and 150th in health and survival. "The wide Gender Gap in India is due to Religious and Historical Societal linkages. The process is much slower as compared to other countries because of attitudes prevailing in Indian societal culture. "Of the past 50 years, the country was headed by a woman for 20 years (4th) which largely explains this strong performance. But today, female political representation is low: women make up only 14.4% of the parliament (122nd) and 23% of the cabinet (69th)," the report said.

According to the report, Nordic countries continue to lead the way to gender parity. Iceland (87.7%) remains the world's most gender-equal country, followed by Norway (2nd, 84.2%), Finland (3rd, 83.2%) and Sweden (4th, 82.0%). Other economies in the top 10 include Nicaragua (5th, 80.4%), New Zealand (6th, 79.9%), Ireland (7th, 79.8%), Spain (8th, 79.5%), Rwanda (9th, 79.1%) and Germany (10th, 78.7%).

“To get to parity in the next decade instead of the next two centuries, we will need to mobilize resources, focus leadership attention and commit to targets across the public and private sectors. Business-as-usual will not close the gender gap – we must take action to achieve the virtuous cycle that parity creates in economies and societies,

The World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap report, which gives a snapshot of progress or regression in the worldwide fight for gender parity in key areas including politics, work, and education, always makes sobering reading. For one thing, historically it hasn't even measured a consistent trend toward equality—last year the overall gap between men and women widened significantly, and this year the economics gap is wider than the massive gap recorded last year. The sheer projected timescales, meanwhile, are staggering. The WEF suggests that at current trends, the overall gap between men and women globally, on average across the 107 countries covered since the report first came out in 2006, won't close for another 99.5 years.

The picture on economic participation and opportunity is even worse. On current trends across all 153 countries the report now covers, it will take 257 years to close the gap, a big widening from the 202-year estimate produced last year. On some measures, like educational attainment and survival, women are close to catching up with men globally. The problems are concentrated in two particular fields: politics, and work.

In 2019, global politics in fact saw some improvement when it came to gender parity: More women participated in the highest levels of government in more places, a trend that can be seen in the UK's most recent elections, which returned the highest number of female members of parliament on record, and in Finland, where Sanna Marin this month became the country's youngest serving prime minister, at 34, in a parliament where the five major parties are all led by women. But economic participation went backward. WEF worked with career platform LinkedIn to study why. It found that jobs in which women are overrepresented—like white-collar clerical roles—are being replaced by automation quickly. Meanwhile jobs with the most growth have fewer women. In cloud computing, for example, the report finds that only 12% of jobs are held by women; in engineering, it's only 15%. There are just two out of nine growth industries in which women have over half the job share: “people and culture,” and “content production.”

Meanwhile, structural problems like lack of flexibility, worse pay, and unequal promotion means they do less well in the jobs they have. It adds up to what the WEF describes as a “triple whammy” for women's economic equality. The WEF suggests that any fixes need to happen in tandem: More women need encouragement to train in

“disruptive technical skills,” but at the same time industries need to change so that women making the choice to learn new skills can see career paths that are truly open to them.

CONCLUSION

India is also progressing in field of gender equality and so the proof is the Freedom on reproductive health of women and the permanent commission granted to women in combat forces in Indian Army thus women have come a long way, fighting from voting rights to asking for equal opportunities in fields of sports and science and technology women have particularly excelled wherever they have been entrusted upon and given the opportunity, they have always come up with flying colour's and so what defines a women in real terms. The applaud able campaigns and provisions provided by United Nations Organization is working in a direction to achieve gender parity and gender equality, popular movements like HeForShe helps people understand the fact that women are as much equal as their men counterparts. The freedom given recently by Government Of India to increase and the no of weeks of abortion subsequently cites the fact that though even at a much slower pace but somewhere we are taking cognizance of the fact that women needed to be in mainstreaming and that's what primarily the Agenda of this 21st century, the reproductive choices and freedom in general to decide on the basis of their choice help women gain higher self-esteem and self-confidence to think way step forward and dream to achieve for themselves and witness progress in their lives. The business hitherto to be finished and so the Concerted efforts of each counts.

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