



Increasing awareness for gender equality among younger generations

Commission on the Status of Women



Empowering Future Generations: Cultivating Global
Literacy and Enlightenment



Forum: CSW

Issue: Increasing awareness for gender equality among younger generations

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Introduction

During the past century, the increase in gender (in)equality awareness fuelled many initiatives striving towards gender equality. While many important steps have been taken, incidents such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the totalitarian regime of the Taliban in Saudi-Arabia and the ban on abortion in several states of the US, have shown that the world must remain seized on the matter. However, despite the ongoing necessity of awareness, studies show that younger generations are less in favour of gender equality than previous generations. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes are tolerated and implemented more often, and the belief that men should earn more than women is more generally accepted. Considering the many benefits of gender-equality, and especially considering the disadvantages of gender-inequality, the issue of gender awareness among younger generations is of immense importance. This research report will briefly outline the importance of gender awareness, mentioning a few possible methods to solving the issue.

Definition of Key Terms

Gender Awareness Raising

Gender awareness raising aims at increasing general sensitivity, understanding and knowledge about gender (in)equality.

Gender equality

A gender-equal situation is when rights and opportunities are unaffected by gender.

Gender equity

To strive for gender-equity is to help women to achieve the same rights and opportunities as men, to ensure that not only are those rights and opportunities available to all but that they are also accessible to all.

Misogyny

Misogyny is the ingrained prejudice against women. It can also be applied to mean the dislike of women.



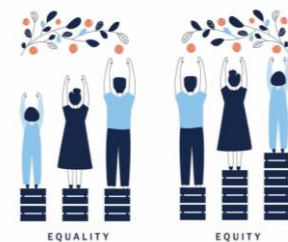
General Overview

The importance of awareness

Gender inequality is caused by a myriad of factors, and it has many different effects on the world. Some of these are easily visible to the eye, with examples being the restrictions on women's rights in Afghanistan, and the gender disparity in school going children in many countries. A lot of the causes and effects of gender inequality, however, are less easy to find. For example, while it may seem as though the boy-girl ratio in school going children has evened out in many countries, there are many aspects that continue to impact girls' education. Social norms, societal expectations, gender biased schoolbooks and many other factors continue to diminish the quality of education that girls receive. By only looking at the numerical figures, governments, companies, and individuals will continue to fail to tackle the issues of importance. Another instance wherein causes of gender inequality may go unnoticed, is in the gendering of toys. Many studies have shown that gendered toys have an impact on how children view their place in the world, yet companies continue to market toys to a specific gender, thus potentially perpetuating harmful stereotypes. To properly combat this issue, awareness is of utmost importance.

The difference between gender equality and gender equity

As stated before, merely looking at numerical figures may lead to misleading results. While situations may seem equal, opportunities may not be. When striving towards a fair society, wherein all genders can participate at an equal level, it is necessary to comprehend that merely ensuring the same infrastructure for reaching a common goal is not enough when women continue to start off from a different position. To allow all people's access to the same rights and opportunities, it is sometimes necessary to offer a different form of aid. An example of this can be seen in education. Simply placing a school in an area and allowing all children to attend, will not ensure that girls attend in the same amount as boys do. For girls to be able to attend, it is necessary to also install adequate hygiene facilities, and to make sure that the parents deem it worthwhile to send the girls to school. In order to achieve a truly just world, the distinction between gender equality and gender equity must be understood, and considered, when raising awareness on the issue.



The obstacles in raising awareness

The main issue when combating gender inequality and raising awareness, is that there is a lack of comprehension for the benefits of an integrated gender society. With the merits being unclear and misunderstood, courses and programs tend to be taken less seriously. Especially when programs and campaigns do not correspond with the lives and problems of the audience, the message often fails to come across. This makes it more difficult for people to understand the full implications of gender inequality. For this reason, it is important to look to



more adaptable strategies for raising awareness that reach local communities at their own level.

Awareness among the youth

Many studies have shown that younger generations tend to maintain more differing opinions on the topic of gender equality, when compared to previous generations. While many youths are actively involved in politics and gender issues, there is also a significant percentage that does not see the same necessity to combat gender inequality, with some even denying the existence thereof. There are many reasons for this phenomenon, the most important of which seems to be the polarising effect of social media. In recent years, there has been a rise in popular media personalities advocating against women's rights. Figures like Andrew Tate use media platforms to spread potentially harmful ideas about women, not only radicalising young boys but also reducing girls' knowledge of their rights. Due to algorithms, people are often continuously surrounded by the same type of information. This further radicalises views and makes the spreading of awareness more difficult. In the UK, these issues have brought about an increase in cases of violence against women, and many other countries have seen a similar rise in misogyny.

Major Parties Involved

Media outlets

The media plays a crucial role in spreading information on gender equality. Media campaigns are ideal for reaching different parts of the community. Stricter controls on media platforms could also play a vital role in preventing the spread of harmful stereotypes.

National governments

Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran have restrictions on female rights, thus making it more difficult to raise awareness in these countries. By working with national governments, it may be possible to find other solutions to the issue.

Educational facilities

A direct way of contacting the youth and educating them on the issue of gender equality is through educational facilities. They play a crucial role in children's development and have an enormous impact on younger generations.

UNWomen

UNWomen is the UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. UNWomen implements programs at regional, national, and international levels, working to develop and uphold an environment wherein girls and women can achieve their full potential and exercise their human rights.



Timeline of Events

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| 1995 | Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a global agenda for advancing equality focusing on education and awareness is adopted. |
| 2000 | Establishment of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), and Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women |
| 2001 | Launch of the Global Campaign for Education, advocating for equal access to education |
| 2004 | Creation of the Malala Fund, focusing on education and gender equality |
| 2009 | Introduction of the “Because I Am a Girl” campaign by Plan International, emphasising girls’ rights and education |
| 2010 | Establishment of UN Women, tasked with promoting gender equality on a global level |
| 2014 | UN Women launches the “HeForShe” campaign, with the aim of engaging men and boys in the issues surrounding gender in-equality |
| 2015 | Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with goal five specifically addressing gender equality |
| 2017 | Global movements like #MeToo gain traction, sparking more interest in gender equality and gender based violence |
| 2018 | Organisations such as UNESCO and UNICEF introduce gender equality modules in schools |
| 2020 | The COVID-19 pandemics highlights disparities in access to educating for girls |
| 2021 | The focus on intersectional feminism increases, addressing the connection between gender equality and race, class, and other identities. |
| 2023 | Launch of global campaigns like the UNICEF "Digital Equality Initiative", addressing gender gaps in technology and promoting STEM education for girls. |



Previous attempts to solve the issue

Malala Fund

Malala and Ziauddin Yousafzai founded Malala Fund in 2013, with the goal of ensuring every girl's right to 12 years of free, safe, quality education.

HeForShe campaign

HeForShe is an invitation for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a bold, visible, and united force for gender equality. The campaign was introduced by UNWomen in 2014.

Because I am a Girl campaign

The Because I am a Girl campaign ran from 2012 to 2018, with the goal of transforming girls' lives through education. The campaign raised millions of euros and changed laws in multiple countries, thus supporting girls in getting an education.

Possible solutions

Collaboration with media outlets

The media plays a crucial role in spreading information. By working together with media outlets, it would be possible to ensure the safe spreading of correct information on the topic of gender equality. By imposing stricter regulatory rules and laws, it may also be possible to limit the spread of harmful information on gender equality.

Include younger generations in the development of media campaigns

Cooperating with younger generations could ensure that campaigns are more suitable to youths, thus increasing the chance of being taken seriously. Involving younger generations in the development of programs is also a way to increase interest, as it is a direct way of showing how they can be a part of the solution.

Collaboration with religious institutions

Collaborating with religious institutions is a method to educate younger generations on a local level. This enables a connection with people on their own terms, and through institutions they already trust, thus facilitating the smooth transfer of information, and an easier route to raising awareness.

Useful documents

Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security:

- Adopted by the UN Security Council, it highlights the importance of women's participation in peace processes and the need to protect their rights, including access to education, during and after conflicts.



Resolution 70/1 (2015) on Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- This resolution includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with Goals 4 and 5 providing a roadmap for integrating gender equality into education, youth empowerment, and global policies.

Resolution A/RES/66/170 (2011): International Day of the Girl Child

- This resolution declares October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child to raise awareness on the topic of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide and encourages youth-focused awareness campaigns and programs.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979):

- Article 10 specifically obligates state parties to eliminate discrimination against women in education and ensure equal access at all levels.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989):

- Articles 28 and 29 outline every child's right to education and promote gender equality in access to educational opportunities.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1966):

- Article 13 recognizes the right to education and urges states to ensure access for marginalised groups, including girls.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995):

- A landmark framework from the Fourth World Conference on Women, which set strategic objectives for eliminating gender disparities in education.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015)

- As part of the 2030 Agenda, this plan supports gender equality programs targeting younger generations.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001)

- A comprehensive document on combating racism, racial discrimination, and related intolerance, this document recognises the intersection of gender and race in educational and social opportunities.



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