



THE IDEA BANK



PIONEERS YOUTH



HANDBOOK ON GENDER DISCRIMINATION

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1. Introduction to the concept of Gender

“Gender refers to the relationship between women and men based on socially or culturally constructed and defined identities, status, roles and responsibilities that are assigned to one sex or another, while sex is a biological determination. Gender is not static or innate but acquires socially and culturally constructed meaning over time.”

-UNHRC-

Introduction to gender

Gender is one of many constructs made by humanity since the beginning of methodical human civilization. Throughout history all the way up till now, it was mostly men hunting for food, looking for jobs and fighting wars, while women took care of the kids and the household while ensuring that food is ready on the table.

That wasn't to remain the same. Women's rights movements rose and grew ever since the late 19th century. New Zealand gave way to women's suffrage in 1893, kick-starting the eventual rise of legalizing a woman's right to vote. In the 1940s, women in the United States and United Kingdom worked tirelessly in military factories making planes, tanks, infantry equipment, meanwhile in the Soviet Union, the 588th Night Bomber Regiment also known as Night Witches primarily consisting of women fought bravely against the assaults of Nazi Germany. Thus, proving to the men's population at the time, what men can do, women can do too.

The word gender itself exists within a spectrum, one end being peace and cooperation and the other being conflict and disagreement. While it is understood that humans think differently, without the same level of interpretation and knowledge, the word gender may not be a friendly word to use, be it now or in the future.

Gender can also be seen as a label that is given to a person from birth depending on the masculine or feminine sexual organs they are born with. It is sometimes seen as something that is solely based on biology.

Furthermore, it can be seen as a social construct that relates to the preconceived no-

tions of behavior and attributes that are linked to men and women.

Therefore, modern debate is centered around the idea that gender is a social construction relating to behaviors and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity; gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were ascribed at birth.

Traditional roles

The concept of traditional roles first originated from the beginning of man. Women took care of the kids and cooked the food that men brought after going hunting. Once human civilization developed socially, so did the concept of traditional roles. It is nowadays, one of many major talks among the populous on what a man or a woman can do. Some men do tend to cook and take care of the kids, while some women tend to do their job until they retire. Times are indeed changing, but how that change happens remains a question.

Labels given by society.

As humans are social animals, they are likely to stick with groups of other like-minded humans, thus one may hear the occasional term “society might judge you”. Society is, just like freedom of speech, a double-edged sword. Sometimes it may support a right cause, but sometimes it can also support a wrong cause.

And that's where labelling comes in, a societal tool that's either used for good (For e.g.: Doctor) or bad (For e.g.: You're worthless to society).

Thus, entered in Gender labels, the ever so (supposed to be) casual labels such as “men should be manly” or “women should just work in the kitchen” widely used in South East Asia. But that does not mean it has to be continued. Women should not be restricted to the kitchen and men should not be restricted from letting their emotions out. We are only humans after all.

Objectification of women and toxic masculinity

Objectification of women, within the history of the pre-medieval and medieval age, was

something that was considered to be normal. Almost a day-to-day activity and something that thankfully is not as extensive today as it used to be back then. But it does still happen.

For some men, a woman's body is nothing but an object of pleasure. However, it must be noted that not all men think this way.

One thing that everyone should understand when it comes to these kinds of topics is that if everyone understands the position that a woman is placed in and what it entails, then objectification of women would drastically reduce.

On the other hand, toxic masculinity can be considered as an underrated topic that needs to not only be discussed, but also have an appropriate action. Men have to live alongside the society's judgements, and they get scrutinized if they go against it. We are all human after all and no one should be confined to a certain unnecessary standard.

Conclusion

We explored what gender is from the past to the present and its existence as a social construct, the rise of the women's rights movements, the effects of traditional roles, the labels born out of society and the objectification of women and toxic masculinity.

2. Introduction to the concept of Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is known as the unfair or prejudiced treatment of people based on their gender. It is a situation in which people are treated differently simply because of their gender rather than on the basis of their individual skills and capabilities.

It is unfortunately an issue that is prevalent within all parts of society. Be it at home, in a workspace or even at school, gender discrimination is not limited to one space. People are discriminated against due to their gender when considering them for employment, when considering them for a promotion within their employment and in many other ways in a workspace. In schools, within the school syllabi it can be seen how gender discrimination is perpetuated. Boys' schools have subjects such as technology and mechanics while Girls' schools give prominence to aesthetics from a young age and it is usually social pressures that drive them to engage in the science stream. There is also a tendency within girls to drop out of school or universities once they have married to assume traditional roles of caretaking and housework.

Furthermore, families preferring to have male children over female children are also rooted in gender discrimination along with stereotypes of gender. This is because we are taught from a young age that certain genders have certain roles to play in society. Thus, from a young age it is natural for us to experience and perpetuate gender discrimination. But once we are aware of gender discrimination, it is not hard to move past it. Gender discrimination can be overcome in many ways that will be further discussed within this handbook. However, it is important to be aware of the issue first.

Gender discrimination has ensured that women did not have the right to vote for decades. It has ensured that men cannot express themselves fully. It has perpetuated toxic mindsets that have made it difficult for people to advance beyond what they know in life and achieve more. Gender discrimination not only affects the mindset of people, but it also affects them on a physical level due to violence and the lack of rights to address difficult situations. Even the constitution of a country; its laws and traditions are steeped in gender discrimination that has existed for centuries.

There are some those who consider that men do not face discrimination due to their

gender. But that is far from the truth. As cited above, there are several cases when men face discrimination, be it in the household or in the workplace.

As hard as it is for women to penetrate into male dominated industries, it is just as hard for men to do the same in reverse.

Teaching, nursing and other forms of care work is considered to be the duty of women and though men might be inclined to pursue careers in those paths, they might find it hard to do so due to pre-existing notions of masculinity, strength and assertiveness. Situations in which men are discriminated due to their gender are generally known as cases of 'Reverse Discrimination'.

It must be noted that there can be several reasons for gender discrimination to exist within a society. One of them is the unequal access to education. There are people in the world who do not receive education simply on the basis of their perceived gender. This ensures that they carry on a stagnant life within the framework of society given to them. There is also the lack of legal protection, not only against violent situations but also when people are exploited and harmed in other ways because their rights are neither recognized nor established.

Though there are some who say that gender discrimination does not exist, the gender wage gap which is the average difference between the salary for men and women who are working that exists in many countries and industries is one instance that gives evidence to the fact that gender discrimination takes place daily around the world. Mentioned below are some statistics to give evidence to this argument.

Sri Lanka - According to statistics women in the private sector earn somewhere less than 30 - 36 percent less than men do in the same position. In the public sector this disparity is even larger.

India - According to the Monster Salary Index released in 2019, women earn 19% less than men. It was revealed that while the gross hourly salary for men was INR 242.49 while for women it was INR 196.3.

Bangladesh - According to UN reports, the gender wage gap is at an average of 2%.

Going through these countries, one can see how the gender wage gap decreases. This

does not imply that those countries have worked their ways to equality. It simply means that women have not penetrated into male dominant industries such as the industrial and technological sectors.

Therefore, gender discrimination is very much an issue that is prevalent, and which needs to be dealt with in order for not only society to function at its best capacity but also for people to live the most fulfilling life that they can achieve.

Therefore, this handbook will discuss gender discrimination with a focus on the situations men and women face in everyday society.

3. History of Gender Discrimination

Introduction

Although we have come a long way in terms of gender equality, gender discrimination is still prevalent in some parts of today's society. To be able to recognize and understand the various manifestations of gender inequality, it is important for us to be educated about the history of gender discrimination and how the role of men and women in society has evolved over the ages. Knowledge of movements for gender equality in the past will inspire women and girls of the present to fight their individual battles, and it will also improve awareness of this issue in contemporary audiences. This chapter discusses various notions on the origins of sexism, various practices experienced in different cultures regarding gender discrimination and how religions have influenced gender discrimination throughout history.

The origins of sexism

Studying the social structures of humans' evolutionary ancestors can give us an insight to how today's societies are shaped. According to Darwin, humans evolved from chimpanzees, and studying their behavior may be a good starting point with which to understand the intricacies of today's societies.

Chimpanzee groups are highly patriarchal. Male chimpanzees are extremely violent towards females, they snatch their food, and especially during mating season, they aggressively and forcibly copulate with sexually receptive female chimpanzees. They even kill females that leave the group.

As civilized as we are today, we still see the dominance of males in many parts of the world. It is possible that these age-old social structures and attitudes have been passed down to us humans, through the stages of evolution. Therefore, it can be surmised that the concept of patriarchy is one that was passed down to humans through evolutionary behavior.

Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt was an era in history which gender discrimination was less prominent. This was, however, not due to a lack of discriminatory attitudes: it was simply that discrimination in Ancient Egypt was based less on gender and more on class. In general, compared to other ancient civilizations, women in Egypt were quite privileged. They enjoyed equal status to men in everything except jobs. Even though man was considered the head of household, women enjoyed considerable power and independence as well. There were also female pharaohs in Egypt, Hatshepsut and Cleopatra being the most famous of them. Even so, women could not have important positions in administration by their own merit. Royal women gained their positions through marriage to male kings. According to Egyptologist Barbara Watterson, the entitlements that women received were based on their social class and not their sex. Land was inherited through the female line (from mother to daughter), and women were land as well as to be partners in legal contracts and to adopt children under their own name. In Ancient Egypt, women were legally “capax” or capable.

Anglo-Saxon England

In Christine Fell’s book “Women in Anglo-Saxon England”, she describes women as “near equal companions to the males in their lives, such as husbands and brothers, much more than in any other era before modern time”. In spite of this, women during that era were subjected to prostitution, rape and concubinage. There was a system named “wergild” in Anglo-Saxon England. This was the price a rapist or a killer had to pay to the victim’s family. The price depended on the victim’s class. If the victim was a slave-woman, the price was low and if she was a woman of high birth, the price would be high. “If a man raped a virgin who was the king’s property, he had to pay fifty shillings to the king, while if she was a grinding-slave it would be twenty-five shillings. And at last if the girl was a third class (no one knows what that meant) it would be only twelve shillings” (Fell) This system only increased violence towards women as rich men could easily pay this fine.

On the other hand, marriage laws stated that a prospective husband had to give his wife a “morgengifu”, which is a valuable gift of money that the woman was then free to spend as she needed. This provided a certain amount of financial security to women. Even though women were never forced into marriages and were given the chance to make their own choices, once married, they were under the complete authority of men.

15th to 18th Century - Witch Hunts

In the past, women who were experienced in the art of healing, midwives and “wise women” were considered as assets to the society. But with the rise of male-centric Christianity in Europe during the Middle Ages and the growth of early capitalism, wise and powerful women were demonized. The symbol of “witch” suggests a powerful, independent women, and this was given a negative connotation as something to be feared rather than encouraged and revered. The publication of the German churchman Heinrich Kramer’s *Malleus Maleficarum* (“The Hammer for Witches”), acted as a catalyst for the fear and suspicion surrounding powerful women. Sham trials were conducted and innocent women were put to death via burning, stoning, or hanging. Men started to associate women with devils and black magic. This fear turned into a mania which resulted in witch hunts. In Europe, between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, governments murdered up to 80,000 women who were thought to be witches.

Ancient South Asia and the Practice of Sati

In ancient Hinduism, Sati symbolized closure to a marriage. It was, at first, a voluntary practice. Widows would follow their husbands to the afterlife by letting themselves burn on his funeral pyre. However, with time, it became a forced practice. Women were forced into doing it, as widows were considered a burden to society. Widows who had no sons or brothers to support them were forced into the acts of Sati.

During the 15th and 18th centuries, over 1000 widows were burned alive every year, mostly in India and Nepal.

However, this was also popular in countries like Russia, Fiji and Vietnam. Prevention of the Sati Act was initiated in India in 1987, making it illegal to force or encourage a woman to commit sati. Yet, some widows still choose to commit Sati. About 4 such cases were recorded between 2000 and 2015.

Women’s Suffrage

Today, women enjoy nearly universal access to franchise, and this is a result of the women’s suffrage movement. This movement was an important milestone in the road to gender equality. The women’s suffrage movement was a decades’ long struggle to ob-

tain voting rights for women in countries such as Britain and the United States. It turned into a widespread movement that ran throughout centuries. During the 1820s and 30s, most states in the US allowed all white men to vote, regardless of their financial and social status. But still, the idea that a true woman is one who is pious and submissive existed in most societies. Women were deemed to be too emotional, sensitive and impressionable to be able to actively participate in the decision-making processes of the country. During this era, there was even a consensus that thinking too much would negatively affect women's reproductive abilities. Thus, women were not allowed to vote.

Suffragettes were members of activist movements that fought for voting rights for women. They were relentless in their struggles. They heckled politicians, stormed parliaments, damaged properties, went on hunger strikes, set fire to churches, and faced anger and ridicule in the media. When imprisoned, they refused to eat, and were then force fed. Procuring voting rights for women was a long, gradual and arduous process, during which many women were notoriously mistreated and physically tortured through acts such as sexual assault.

New Zealand became the first self-governing country to grant national voting rights to women in 1893. The work of New Zealand's most famous suffragist Kate Sheppard was instrumental in bringing about this change.

Along with her fellow suffragists, she presented a "monster" petition to Parliament demanding women's suffrage with nearly 32,000 signatures, and this eventually led to women in New Zealand gaining their voting rights.

In the United States, this movement led to the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment was passed by Congress on the 4th of June 1919, and ratified on the 18th of August 1920, and it finally granted women the right to vote.

4. Youth and Gender Discrimination.

Unfortunately, like many other social evils, gender discrimination has also made its way to the current generation. As much as one would want, to call the current world gender-equal seems like a distant dream. Even today people of certain genders are faced with discriminatory norms and laws that put them on the back foot when it comes to taking a position in society. There are still several cases of a boy's education being prioritised over a girl's in households because of age-old discriminatory traditional gender roles, which call for the male to be the 'head' or the 'bread-winner' of the family. Therefore by default giving them a position of power within the family. Such events of gender discrimination are also seen in other social settings like those of work and school. It is to end these normalized traditional discriminatory gender roles that lead to the problem of gender discrimination even today, the United Nations came about with 'gender equality' as its 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) among its 17 SDGs which it aims to achieve by 2030. This particular global goal calls for countries to achieve gender equality and to empower their women and girls.

It must be mentioned that these 17 Global goals are largely for the youth, as mentioned in 'The World Youth Report- Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). According to the UN, almost 1.8 billion people from the whole population on earth are youth belonging to the ages from 15 to 24 resulting in almost 16% of the world population. Hence, it is of no surprise that the pressing issue of gender discrimination not only affects the youth now but if left unhandled will still occur among the coming generations. Therefore, the participation of youth in the process of eradicating this social evil and paving the way for true gender equality is extremely pivotal to make the whole process more sustainable. The sluggish rate of achieving equal pay for equal work and a truly gender-equal society only indicates the urgency of the issue and the immediate need for a plan of action. Recognizing this need for action, international organizations along with the youth themselves have been working relentlessly to amplify the voices of young women and men to create a more gender-equal environment. The need for more representation of different genders in civic engagements, processes of decision-making, inclusive work and career opportunities, the abolishment of gender-discriminatory social norms, and the pink tax are said to be just a few necessities in paving the road towards a gender-equal world among many.

It must be noted that even today, due to the predominance of the intensive patriarchal structure in society, not only women but young women especially those who come from the most remote locations are often discriminated against when it comes to opportunities to have a better livelihood. They are severely discriminated against in their own households for being the so-called 'weaker' sex and are often married off early, even before they receive a proper education. It is here, in these rural communities, the role of young women and men is especially crucial to bring about change and transformation by educating them about the need for a gender-equal society.

Gender discrimination over the years has also been a major factor behind the deteriorating mental health of several generations. Boys in most communities are still told not to be a 'girl' if seen crying normalizing the suppression of expressions in order to be a 'man'. This toxic masculinity which still preaches that one is only a man if they are macho enough stands to reinstate these perilous gender discriminatory social norms. The fact that even emotions are divided according to a said gender or the fact that crying or expressing emotions is considered a weak tenet and hence is associated with women or girls only re-establishes the need for a vast transformation and education of the masses on gender discrimination.

Advocacy and youth

When it comes to advocating for a positive change, the youth uses one of the strongest tools at their disposal in the current world, social media. The easy availability of the medium encourages the youth to use it as an instrument to address these social injustices and voice their opinions to a far and wide audience. A recent report called the global digital report-2019 by We Are Social, and Hootsuite states that almost 33% of Twitter users were between the ages of 13-24, which is almost a third of all Twitter users. Thus, it can clearly be seen how much the youth engage in social media and how potent of a tool it is to create social change.

Educate, Discuss and, Change

The digital generation is most definitely doing their part, by opening up conversations about the various kinds of gender discrimination and by recognizing the urgency of the situation. Several youth organizations all over the world have started working relentlessly, advocating the need for a gender-equal world through online social media campaigns to accelerate the process of achieving the 5th SDG by the year 2030. These

campaigns in the due course are also helping the process of destigmatizing the conversation about mental health. Through their social media platforms, youth organizations document the need for more gender-inclusive conversations, breaking the long normalized harmful gender roles, redressing the injustices faced by the victims of gender discrimination, and encouraging their audience to engage in the same. These sustained online efforts play a vital role in the gender equality conversation. Therefore, it is safe to say the youth are now at the forefront of bringing forward change. Several youth communities all across the globe have continued to fight for a gender-equal world and will persistently do so till it is achieved. Young voices and young minds are now a vital part of policymaking, and hence their roles as the main advocates of bringing about more gender-inclusive policies are emphasized now more than ever. One can say it is the youth who act as a catalyst in the process of bringing about this much necessary change and as the main stakeholders help in making it a sustainable one.

5. Policies that encourage discrimination

Law and order of any given state stands above the power of any individual or body of individuals, which is also called the supremacy of law. Everyone is equal before the law and they are supposed to be aware of the existing laws in the country. The issue of gender discrimination is also therefore impacted by laws and regulations.

The policies and laws that are in force in order to eliminate gender discrimination in Sri Lanka and instances where the applicability of those policies is challenging and how some legal provisions itself create gender discrimination will be discussed in this chapter. Further, the policies and laws that are in place in India and Nepal will also be discussed as these are the targeted audience of this handbook.

The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka states that in accordance with Article 12(1), no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, faith, language, caste, sex, political opinion.

Nevertheless, on 18 January 2018, Excise Notification No 4/2018 of the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2054-42 was issued by the government. This reintroduced the prohibition on women above the age of 18 to manufacture, collect, bottle, sell or transport liquor, the prohibition on women above the age of 18 from being employed for manufacturing, collecting, bottling, sale or transport of liquor, the prohibition on “giving” liquor to “a woman within the premises of a tavern”.

A woman’s fundamental right to make the option for herself should be upheld to the same degree as that of a male, regardless of whether a woman actually participates in these activities.

Furthermore, this Excise notification constitutes a violation of several fundamental rights guaranteed under the constitution, which have affected women over the age 18 years who constitute a significant segment of the people in Sri Lanka.

According to the Constitution, notwithstanding any inconsistency with the preceding provisions as set out in Article 16(1), all existing written and unwritten laws shall be valid and operative. The fundamental rights chapter itself has certain inherent limitations.

It has no retrospective effect, and there is no provision for judicial review of past legislations. Therefore, gender discriminatory laws, which were in existence at the time the constitution was adopted, cannot be challenged. In the domain of Sri Lankan jurisprudence, customary laws such as Kandyan law, Tesawalamai law and Muslim law are therefore enforceable.

One of the most contested issues in the debate around reform of the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA) has been with regard to increasing the minimum age of marriage for Muslims. While the 1995 legal amendments raised the minimum marriage age for all citizens except Muslims to 18 years of age, the MMDA does not provide for the age of marriage. Unlike general belief, the minimum age at which a Muslim girl or boy may marry under the MMDA is not 12 years; a girl below 12 can be given in marriage with the authorization of a Quazi judge. Hence, the minimum age of marriage for Sri Lankan Muslims is technically zero.

On the other hand, according to the Penal Code of Sri Lanka (1995) Section 363 (A), sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 16 is a criminal offence, however this provision exempts married Muslim girls between 12 and 16 years of age.

This section was amended raising the age of sexual consent from 12 years (previously) to 16 years in 1995 Penal Code Amendment given that this was the age at which individuals had the freedom to make decisions on education. Further, Sri Lanka is a party to, among other international human rights instruments, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and is thus required to adhere to global standards on the rights of children and women. The CRC recognizes anyone under the age of 18 as children and explicitly states in Article 2 that no child can be treated unfairly on any basis including religion, ethnicity or gender which creates a contradiction of laws and policies against gender discrimination in Sri Lanka.

However, the proposed Minimum Age of Marriage Act of 2020 as a private member bill makes it illegal to contract a marriage unless both parties to the marriage have completed 18 years of age, as well as to amend the Marriage Registration Ordinance and the Civil Procedure Code (Section 627).

The law relating to property in the country creates gender discrimination in certain instances. Tesawalamai law, a customary law which is enforceable in Northern province of Sri Lanka requires the written consent of the husband to sell immovable property of the wife as in Section 06 of the Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance (Jaffna)

which does not give equal right for women to sell her own property. On the other hand, a man's property held in possession of his wife, is still in that person's possession within the meaning of Section 25 of the Penal Code. It does not clearly mention whether a woman's property in the possession of her husband's possession belongs in that woman's possession. This creates a discrimination between genders as men are granted with the possession of his wife's property. Therefore, the property rights of all genders should be amended with equal opportunities.

Fundamental rights provisions in the Constitution secures the equity between genders but Article 16 reduces the supremacy of the Constitution and allows customary laws to govern citizens which contain some laws which discriminate against women and children. International conventions ratified by Sri Lanka also play a significant role in demoting gender discrimination. As a whole, existing laws and policies in Sri Lanka do not have a strong stand in diminishing gender discrimination.

The Constitution of India safeguards the rights of the people of India and has several sections of law which looks after the welfare of its people. On the other hand the Government of India has worked upon and has passed several bills both on the centre level and state level to reduce the gender discrimination which unfortunately is still prevailing.

Article 14 of the Constitution of India provides for equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India. It states: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India." Its provisions have come up for discussion in the Supreme Court in a number of cases and the case of Ram Krishna Dalmia vs Justice SR Tendolkar, reiterated its meaning and scope as follows.

Article 14 permits classification, so long as it is 'reasonable', but forbids Class legislation. A classification of groups of people is considered reasonable when.

1. The classification is based upon intelligible differentia that distinguishes persons or things that are grouped from others that are left out of the group, and,
2. The differential has a rational relation with the objective of the act.

Thus Article 15(1) and (3) specifically prohibits any kind of discrimination against women on the basis of sex, caste etc. and makes special provision for the women favouring laws in order to protect the women and uplift them from such discrimination.

Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 is the duty of employers under the Act to pay equal remuneration to men and women workers for same work or work of a similar nature.
- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to stop female foeticides and arrest the declining sex ratio in India. The act banned prenatal sex determination.
- Women's Reservation Bill or the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, is a pending bill in India which proposes to amend the Constitution of India to reserve 33 percent of all seats in the Lower house of Parliament of India, and in all state legislative assemblies for women.
- The Sabala Scheme helps in empowerment of adolescent girl child at the age group of 11-18 years, a flagship program like Sarva Siksha Abhigyan (SSA) and Rastra Madhyamik Siksha Abhigyan (RMSA) has been implemented to universalize the primary and secondary education and definite amount is given the students who complete their Madhyamik Examination to encourage them for their further studies. It's applicable for both the state boards and central Boards.
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA, 2004) helps in economic social empowerment of women.

The Ministry of Women and Child development has implemented the following schemes to reduce gender gap and promote gender sensitization –

- 1) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao has been launched to address the issue of declining child sex ratio.
- 2) Women helpline Number (181) has been established across the country to provide integrated support and assistance against violence.
- 3) Engagement of Mahila (Women) Police officers has been integrated to create a connection between the Public and Police.

The Constitution of Nepal

2015 has been a huge improvement from the days of yore: Article 43 of the Constitution deals with the rights of women that include rights to lineage, right to safe maternity and reproduction, right against all forms of exploitation, and equal rights in family matters and property.

The Government of Nepal is also working hard to incorporate gender equality in all development policies and programs implemented now, also including developing a gender responsive budget system for the country.

Women in Nepal still face challenges in conferring citizenship rights to their offspring without the consent and support of the father, leaving single mothers at a huge disadvantage. And in a heartening move that has been taken, Chhaupadi, an inhuman practice that imposes upon women to stay outside their homes in unhygienic cow sheds during menstruation and childbirth, is set to be criminalized in the new legal code.

6. Examples of Gender Discrimination

There are four main types of gender discrimination that prevails in our society. Gender discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly or in a different way due to their gender. It exists within our society due to a plethora of reasons and by understanding the forms or variations of these discriminatory acts we could try our best to prevent ourselves from knowingly or unknowingly committing them and how we can reach out to a victim of these discriminatory acts.

1. Direct discrimination - When you treat someone unfavorably because of their sex.

2. Indirect discrimination - When you have a rule, policy or practice that applies to all in the same way but disadvantages some because of their sex.

3. Victimization - When you treat someone unfairly because they've made a complaint about sex discrimination, or they're supporting someone who has.

4. Harassment - When you engage in unwanted behavior towards a colleague, related to their sex. Because of this unwanted behavior, you make them feel upset, humiliated or degraded.

Here are a few examples taken from the survey conducted by Pioneers Youth on Gender Discrimination for the above mentioned categories. These are some real life situations in which people have experienced gender discrimination.

Direct discrimination

"I once applied for a job as a content writer at a well known media organization... I was fully qualified for the job and I had the required experience but even after facing a successful interview they turned me down since they were looking for a female writer to create content regarding health and safety for females"

One cannot simply disregard someone just because of the fact that they belong to one particular gender. The person here is fully qualified and met all the criteria required for the job but was dismissed based on the fact that they are not of a particular gender.

Both genders face health and safety issues and both genders have knowledge about they face and it's a form of direct discrimination to believe that they would not either understand or be able to comprehend certain issues due to their gender.

Indirect discrimination

My mother used to work at a customer care call center. Her employer told her team that they are changing their shifts to finish at 6pm instead of 2pm. This caused a lot of problems for my mom as she will no longer be able to collect her children from school.

We could complain about indirect gender discrimination in this situation. This is because the new policy, where all staff must work until 6pm, means that she can't pick up her kids. It disadvantages anyone who is their child's primary caregiver.

Sexual harassment

"My boss, a female coworker, started to make sexual comments and jokes towards me. She even got me to perform certain sexual favors for her and I did at first but then later on it became a nuisance so I complained to the upper management but a week after the complaint was logged my boss fired me for unfair reasons... I'm glad in a way that I got out of the place. "

Here we can observe that harassment happens to anyone and it can happen at any time or place. What one must do when they encounter an experience such as this is to speak out and seek help from a trustworthy source. Harassment will continue as long as we give the harasser the opportunity to do so.

Victimization

I'm supporting my friend with her gender discrimination claim by making a statement at her employment tribunal. After my manager found out, he started to treat me differently and made me feel uncomfortable at work.

An employment tribunal is where decisions are made regarding all forms of employment disputes. The victim here has made a decision to take her discrimination act to a tribunal and her friend a coworker is helping her out with the process. The complaint was

filed against their manager and the manager is treating the victim's friend in a different way in hopes that she would withdraw the complaint against him. This happens in most of these cases and the important thing is to persevere and settle the dispute in the proper way.

Conclusion

Discrimination can happen to anyone at any time or place without them knowing and one can be both the discriminator and a victim both knowingly or unknowingly therefore it is essential for us to be able to identify acts and variations of discrimination thereby we gain the ability to aid in the prevention and mitigation of gender discrimination within our society.

7. Male Discrimination

Gender discrimination affects not just girls and women, but also boys and men. While female discrimination is the more recognized form of sexism, males are also often subjected to certain forms of discrimination. Male discrimination is prejudice or differential treatment directed towards a person on the grounds that they are male. The idea of male discrimination is largely neglected, but it is a very harmful aspect of the contemporary society. In fact, women themselves who face discrimination sometimes are the ones to perpetuate male discrimination by expecting men to conform to certain stereotypes and norms. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to certain aspects that are discriminatory against men, such as male stereotyping and toxic masculinity alone as it is a topic that is not given enough consideration.

The male stereotype

Male stereotypes can be seen in many parts of today's society. These stereotypes are harmful not only to women, but also to men themselves. Many men are caught in these stereotypes and are afraid of not conforming to them for fear of rejection from society. Male stereotypes can affect men's relationships in life and even lead to self-destructive behavior and violence.

Following are some of the common male stereotypes and their effects on men in general:

1. “Real men don't cry”

Boys are taught at a young age that crying is a “girly” trait. Men and boys are taught to suppress their emotions and to be insensitive and unfeeling. Men who show emotion are labelled as “weak” and are not considered as “real” men. As a result, men may feel that they cannot have or show emotions. This can lead to them being emotionally suppressed and unable to empathize with people, and to having emotionally empty and even abusive relationships.

When men and boys are not allowed to express their feelings in a healthy way, they may resort to anger and aggression as a way of releasing their pent-up frustrations.

2. “The man is the breadwinner of the family.”

Society has stereotyped men as the economic head of the household. Men who conform to this stereotype are put under enormous pressure to provide for their entire family. They may insist that their spouses do not seek work in order to uphold traditional roles. They might even see the economic role as the valuable one and see domestic work as unimportant and use their role as a breadwinner to dominate their household, making it more likely for them to be abusive and overbearing. Being under pressure to provide for an entire family can be detrimental towards men’s mental health as well as their physical well-being.

3. Men cannot engage in female-dominated professions

Most caregiving jobs such as nursing and childcare and jobs like kindergarten teachers and secretaries are female dominated. Men who engage in gender-atypical jobs such as these might face discrimination against them. When a man is in a female-dominated profession, society immediately assumes that there is something wrong with him and regards him with contempt and suspicion. Working in such jobs might be difficult for men, as they would be judged not by the quality of their work but by their gender. Such stereotypes can discourage men from engaging in professions that they might otherwise enjoy or be good at and affect the success of their professional and personal life in the long run.

Toxic Masculinity

Toxic masculinity is the cultural pressure towards men to behave in a certain way. This notion consists of misogyny, homophobia, racism, violence and at times, even extremism. This is harmful to society and to men themselves, because conforming to these notions can make a person violent and a danger to the society and to themselves.

Toxic masculinity is said to have three components:

1. Toughness: This is the idea that men should be physically strong and powerful, aggressive and even violent.

2. Anti-femininity: This states that men should avoid anything that is considered “feminine” such as expressing emotions, having a slim physique, and being sensitive.

3. Power: Men are expected to be both socially and economically powerful.

These aspects are ones that put a huge amount of pressure on men so be stronger, tougher, and more powerful. They can be emotionally and physically detrimental for men because they are constantly expected to be more masculine in order to preserve their status and dignity in society.

Toxic masculinity also promotes unhealthy habits, as men are expected to push their bodies beyond their limit. They are expected to keep working even if they are injured and discourages them from seeing doctors. Whenever men are in any sort of discomfort or pain, they are told to “suck it up”.

For example, toxic masculinity might cause some men to consider having an annual physical check-up as something that is contrary to their masculinity and pride. The pressures in society also encourage men to engage in unhealthy habits such as smoking and drinking in order to cope. They might use such substances as a crutch to bear up the criticism they face. Such habits are physically damaging in the long run and might cause lower life expectancy and chronic ailments as well as affecting their personal and professional lives negatively.

Toxic masculinity also discourages men from getting mental health treatment. Having problems such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse may be considered as undignified and weak. Therefore, men are reluctant to admit this “weakness” to anyone. This might lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness that will only intensify their mental health problems.

These detrimental cultural and social norms are extremely discriminatory against men because they cause them to inadvertently ruin their physical and mental health. It might also affect their personal relationships with family, friends and spouses. Thus, toxic masculinity is an aspect of society that has the power to prevent men from accepting their true self-identity and reaching their potential in life.

In conclusion, it must be remembered that male discrimination is just as present in today's society as female discrimination is. By expecting men to conform to “masculinity”, society puts enormous pressure on men, which might lead to many detrimental effects to both themselves and the society as a whole. Men should be as free as women to pursue the careers that they want, to express their true emotion and be their true self.

8. The Need for Education and Awareness

Introduction

Awareness is necessary to create a better world. The definition of the term awareness is “knowledge or perception of a situation or fact.” In this section we will be talking about several awareness initiatives that we can take in order to mitigate gender discrimination. This section will also discuss about some other crucial factors such as why there is a need for awareness and who needs to be aware.

Why there is a need for awareness.

“The first step towards change is awareness. The second step is acceptance”
-Nathaniel Brande

The need for awareness aims to promote public understanding of gender discrimination. To put a full stop to gender discrimination, raising awareness is crucial as it increases the public support and enthusiasm regarding the topic. It will also help to clear up the common misconceptions of people regarding the norms about all the genders in society and will teach the public to not turn a blind eye on such matters.

It is the key factor which supports us to build up a good mutual understanding with the general public regarding this topic. Society often tends to become slaves to ancient cultural norms and customs.

For example, son preference, early marriages, dowry system (Female Genital Mutilation) and etc.

These types of actions which include the harmful cultural norms as well as the traditional convictions of the society regarding women not only bolster stereotypes but also support the structure that produces discrimination.

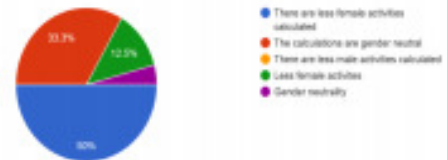
But with the help of a foolproof awareness program, we will be able to change attitudes, beliefs and notions of people that evoke discrimination between two genders.

The research below is regarding awareness of gender discrimination through aspects of GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

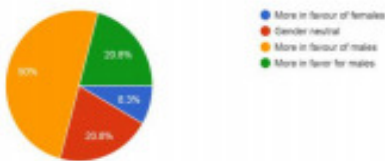
Are you aware of GDP (Gross Domestic Product)?
23 responses



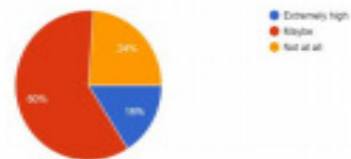
Do you think GDP calculations are done in a way that is gender neutral? (Gender neutral - not making any difference between the different genders)
24 responses



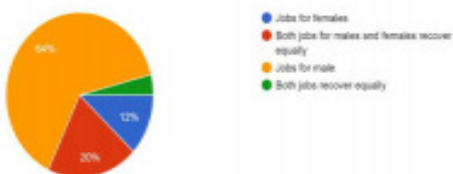
Who are public policies in favour of?
24 responses



Is there gender inequality in your closest social environment (friends or family)?
25 responses



After an economic crisis, as the one in 2008: what type of job opportunities recover faster?
25 responses



Do you think education about gender discrimination is important?
25 responses



Who needs to be aware?

To have a successful awareness-raising program, it is important to find the correct target group. Identifying their characteristics, opinions, attitudes and perspectives regarding the topic will prove to be much more beneficial when planning certain awareness methods and initiatives.

Here, in the Pioneers Youth Organization we intend to raise the awareness of the general public, especially the youth and by doing so we hope to give the public a better understanding about this topic.

How can we achieve awareness?

How to achieve awareness is the main challenge that we face when it comes to creating awareness among people. The awareness methods should be feasible and should help us in creating a good mutual understanding with the public.

So, in order to achieve awareness, we can follow the following awareness initiatives.

- Address gender discrimination in the media and advertising.

1. Public events can convey the message to a target group, such as young people.

2. Social media and social networks. *(this could be taken as the best solution during this pandemic situation)*

3. Using printed material.

(For example -posters, handbooks, brochures, leaflets etc.)

- Encouraging the society to vote for women.
- Make women aware about the laws that are there to protect their rights.
- Raise awareness about the importance of equal education to all.
- Educating.

Children

Children quickly absorb and reproduce behaviors they see and experience in their daily lives. Therefore, it is important to raise the awareness of children about gender discrimination right from the beginning.

- They should be encouraged to express their emotions regardless of their gender.
- They should learn how to appreciate the diversity that resides in all the genders.
- Children should be educated about the negative side of gender discrimination such as mental health issues and the positive side of gender equality such as the wellbeing of all.

Parents

Putting an end to gender discrimination starts at home. Parents play a huge role when it comes to cultivating the mindset of the future generation. They can be considered to be the front line of change most of the time.

- Parents should make children aware of the negative side of gender discrimination. • They should set an example by equally dividing the household work. • They should spread the awareness into the other families around them and involve children in that process.
- Parents should teach their daughters about the value of being a woman and the importance of empowering themselves.

Post awareness methods

This topic refers to some actions that we can take in order to keep our awareness program consistent. Creating awareness is important but keeping it consistent without letting people forget about it is more crucial. Therefore, after taking the relevant steps to create awareness, you can follow the post awareness methods mentioned below. This is essential because creating awareness alone won't help in eradicating gender discrimination. So, these methods along with the other measures that are created to mitigate gender discrimination will help us in finding more feasible solutions to this problem.

- Promoting safe public transportation modes like bus, train, taxi, three wheels etc, • Promoting gender equality. (5th goal of the SDGs)
- Promoting gender justice at work
- Promoting positive body images for girls.
- Talking to women and girls about their problems and encourage them to speak up • Promote the policies and organizations that protect women and their rights • Make technological education accessible to all.
- Make education gender sensitive.

(The education system must be more gender sensitive without being biased towards one gender. If there are gender stereotypes in the textbooks at school, we cannot expect to have a gender-sensitive education system.)

- Empower mothers

Enhancing the importance of mothers will encourage women to raise their voice against domestic violence and abuse.

Laws alone cannot bring down gender discrimination in society, proper awareness among the public is also necessary.

For example, bringing in laws to avoid female feticide, might result in an increase in the cases of female infanticide. However, this can be avoided if people are educated about gender equality. The best thing is to educate girls. Awareness is essential to mitigate gender discrimination from the world. Implementing the awareness-raising actions that are mentioned in here will help to reduce and hopefully one day eliminate gender discrimination from the world.

9. Changes in dynamics and attitudes regarding gender discrimination.

Existing social attitudes that might lead to gender discrimination.

*"She is girlish **but** strong."*

*"**Though** he is a man, he can cook well. "*

What is the purpose behind "but" and "Though"? Are they products of existing social norms and gendered expectations? In this chapter, we focus on social norms regarding gender, how they manifest in different institutions and how we can start fixing them through a system change or an attitudinal change.

Social attitudes or social norms can be simply defined as what is expected from an individual by the society and gender norms are a sect of those social attitudes. People have been given identities depending on the binary classification as masculine and feminine. Man is always portrayed as an aggressive, independent creature who has no feelings. On the other hand, a woman is often seen as a doormat who is submissive, emotional, less confident and it is believed that they need to be protected by a man. Especially, women who are unmarried by ages 25-30 are regarded with contempt because those who are unmarried by the age of 30 find it difficult to choose a partner and they are often considered as a burden to their families and the society. In addition, in many contexts, men are expected to earn money and women are expected to manage homes, and people going beyond these predefined roles are regarded with wariness.

Apart from that, gender discrimination can be prompted by the Mythical beliefs in various contexts. In those contexts, a woman is seen as a sign of bad luck and her chastity or purity is always questioned. For instance, in Sri Lankan culture, menstruation is considered as an impure thing and they have given the label "*killa*" for it.

Girls and women are isolated during religious performances in *kovil* and *devale*. These beliefs have an influence on Buddhist ceremonies as well.

Men play the major role in these religious activities such as *pirith chanting*, *bana* and *dana* (alms giving). People thoroughly believe that a child's birth, a maid attaining, or the monthly turn of women can cause the pollution.

Gender disparity in the workplace and the gender wage gap also play a major role when it comes to gender discrimination. The promotion and executive gap between men and women is often very visible. Men are promoted based on their potential or strength while women are given promotions based on their accomplishments. Men are paid around Rs. 1500/= and women are paid only Rs. 800/= for their daily wage in many areas of Sri Lanka. The situation is worse when it comes to tea pluckers in the hill country.

Moreover, women are expected to be perfect in their appearance and their complexion and figure is also highly regarded. Not only the appearance of women, but also the appearance of men is always judged by society. We can see how it is important for a man to have a beard and muscles. However, these gender stereotypes have kept changing with the time. In ancient times, wearing ornaments was an ordinary thing for men, but it has become a female practice now.

These attitudes are always nurtured by the social, political and cultural influences. It is true that people are more aware about gender discrimination in the present, but they hesitate to resist it due to various reasons including family background, parental influence and also because they don't want to be ignored by the majority of society. It is important to note that these gender stereotypes are not necessarily true because they are just perceptions of certain people who blindly believe those typical gender roles.

A gender discrimination free society should be a place where people do not even wonder about the term "gender" and attitudinal change is the pathway to create such a human friendly society.

How to change these attitudes

The best way to eliminate age-old, detrimental conventions is to change the attitudes of the society and future generations. Gender discrimination stems mostly from wrong attitudes that people harbor about the role of men and women in society. Therefore, it is important to change those attitudes.

It is important to start small, at individual levels. We can start by eradicating gender discrimination in our day-to-day lives by calling out sexism and gender discrimination

and not being passive bystanders when sexism takes place around us. Even during ordinary day to day conversation, use of sexist terms, slang, inappropriate sexual jokes, and disrespectful terms should be avoided and discouraged. Such tiny steps can make it easy for witnesses of harassment to speak up and will create an environment which is conducive for victims of sexism to stand up for themselves and get justice.

Changing attitudes within schools: As schools play a major role in shaping the attitudes of young children and molding their perspectives, it is necessary for schools to teach children mutual respect and acceptance at a young age. In addition, schools should have an environment conducive for equality towards both genders. Bullying, sexist language, and teasing peers on the basis of gender should all be strongly discouraged. Both parents and teachers have an important role to play here, because whatever children learn at school will remain ingrained in their memories. A school that encourages even subtle forms of gender discrimination will result in a generation that has sexist attitudes.

The availability of free education for all is the most admirable factor about the Sri Lankan education system. But the quality of education that is provided to students should also be taken into consideration.

In that regard, it is a sad trend in the South Asian region that girls are encouraged to follow the Arts and Humanities streams, sometimes against their will. It is important to allow girls to make their own choice of field, regardless of societal or peer pressure. Girls should never be discouraged from following STEM subjects with the justification that they are “unsuitable subjects” for girls. It is also important to have vocational training facilities for children who are not selected for universities- especially girls.

The mixed school concept should also be encouraged as this will allow children to learn inclusivity and gender equality during their childhood, which will then foster good attitudes for them to take into their lives when they become adults.

The role of media in changing attitudes: Media can assist in combatting gender discrimination in society. When used mindfully and for good purposes, media is an excellent platform to communicate correct attitudes to the general public. Since the youth is fond of media (especially social media), it is important for the media to portray an accurate role of gender roles in the society and to raise awareness about gender discrimination. Media should also avoid unintentional promotion of gender discrimination. As an example, sexist TV advertisements should be avoided and TV series, dramas, even news channels should not portray gender discrimination through their programs.

Dishwashing, cooking, soap advertisements all feature women as the domestic element of the family, but this is a portrayal that further increases oppression of women in the society. Thus, such portrayals must be avoided.

Why do we need a change?

"We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided".

-J. K. Rowling.

Gender norms that are prevalent in today's society are strong enough to hurt both men and women physically and mentally. These gender stereotypes have been identified as the reasons for school dropouts, child marriage, teen pregnancy, violence and STDs. Since men have been depicted as dominant, accomplished, aggressive and strong, they have had to face the worst situation.

It is not hard to recognize the shorter life expectancy of men. It has been proven that women live longer than men and women outnumber men in many countries including Sri Lanka. On the other hand, men have to face the following consequences as a result of the existing rigid gender stereotypes.

- They face mental health issues that are not discussed and therefore commit suicide more often than women.
- They tend to take the riskiest occupations such as military service.
- They avoid doctors and skip health protocols as a result of misinterpretation of masculinity. This is because they tend to believe that seeking medical care may affect their personality and show them as being weak.

A change in attitudes regarding gender roles is also necessary because it would benefit the economy of a country. In Sri Lanka, the labor force participation of women is very less when it is compared with the population and life expectancy of women.

Out of the 8.6 million economically active population, 64% are males and only 35% are females. The labor force participation of women as of 2017 is 36.6% of the total population. Developing countries like Sri Lanka and India need female contribution for their economies to flourish.

Eliminating the detrimental attitude that women should not have careers and should only be housewives would encourage more women to join the workforce and would contribute to the betterment of the economy.

Positive effects of these changes in attitude

In today's world, people are no longer blind to the gender-based discrimination around us. It is acknowledged, and we see people working against it. In some cases, movements against gender discrimination have gone global.

The #MeToo (Me Too) movement: This is a global phenomenon that stood up for women's rights across the globe. The #MeToo campaign was initiated by Tarana Burke in the USA (in 2006) in order to support the victims and the survivors of sexual harassment and assault. This campaign inspired thousands of ordinary women to speak up and to share their own story of sexual harassment.

More female participation in policy-making processes: Due to the positive changes in attitudes towards gender equality in Sri Lanka, there is a compulsory 25% quota for female candidates in Local Government entities. This legislation was introduced in Local Authorities Act No. 16 of 2017. Although most of the time this quota is not filled, it can be considered a positive factor that the Sri Lankan legislation encourages female participation in the government. This legislation might not always be effective, but it does give validity to the participation of women in the policy-making process of the country and is thus an important steppingstone in the journey towards gender equality.

Improvement of girls' education: As a result of education for all, trends in Sri Lankan education have shown that girls have higher enrollment and retention rates in secondary education. They also display higher performance levels at public examinations.

In addition, the percentages of female students in universities and nonvocational tertiary education are higher than that of male students. Thus, it can be seen that female empowerment has emerged as a positive effect of all-inclusive education.

Benefits for mothers: In comparison to other countries in the world, the Sri Lankan government has shown more concern for facilities for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, as well as daycare facilities. According to Maternity Benefits Ordinance, maternity leave is allowed for 12 weeks, inclusive of all non-working days. Therefore, Sri Lanka has satisfactory maternity leave benefits for all mothers. In addition to this, the

Ministry of Women and Child Affairs has put forth a National Policy for Daycare Centers in order to make childcare easier. It provides assistance for establishment of creches and daycare centers. Such policies are yet another positive outcome of changes in attitude.

Conclusion

Even though men and women are divided according to gender roles, both of these parties are a part of this structure. Though a mother is in charge of the domestic sphere and father is more attached with the public sphere, both of them should contribute in order to maintain the family. In the same way, the world needs the participation of both men and women in social, political and economic arenas. Since the world is not static, humans should deviate from the traditional frame of gender roles and the primitive division of genders in order to survive. They should fight against the oppressive structure together instead of having a conflict between themselves. Rejection of detrimental aspects such as chauvinism and gender stereotyping and encouraging inclusivity and equality between genders can help humankind progress in many ways and create a better future for generations to come.

10. How to Deal with Gender Discrimination

The survey conducted by Pioneers Youth provided us with the opportunity to connect with the members of society from different backgrounds and dynamics and to ascertain the broad effect of gender discrimination in Sri Lankan Society as well as in some parts of the South Asian region. Via the survey we were able to ascertain these important points,

- Gender Discrimination can take place against both Men and Women.
- Gender Discrimination has no age barrier and can affect people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Many Individuals choose not to report these issues for the fear of social stigma and the general belief that no one will support the victim's opinion.
- Advocating for better education and awareness with regards to Gender Discrimination for the general public is necessary.
- Bystanders have a responsibility to call upon bystanders to respond to a situation where gender discrimination is clearly visible.
- Victim shaming must be stopped.

Suggestions:

As previously stated, Gender Discrimination is not an issue secluded to the remote corners of society, rather it is visible before our very eyes and many agree that the time has come to put an end to it. We as Pioneers Youth strongly support the end of Gender Discrimination and would like to contribute in our own way to the cause. Therefore, we have researched and also used the survey that we conducted to come up with several suggestions to deal with Gender Discrimination.

Education - Pathway to change

It has been observed time and time again that education plays a key role in tackling critical issues in modern society.

As such we believe that educating the general public, especially school children by the means of regular seminars, lessons in school curriculum in subjects such as Health Science and Civics would enable students to understand the situation and significantly reduce gender discrimination in the future.

Most schools follow strict rules when it comes to the social interaction between genders and what is surprising is that most schools promote the whole one gender as superior whilst the other is weak and many other heinous acts that can promote a discriminatory mindset within our society's hopes for tomorrow. It is not only those who learn that should be educated about discrimination and equality but also those who are responsible for teaching the students.

Break away from Domestic Gender Roles

Household chores and children's care are every adult's responsibility. Ask yourself if there's an equal division of labor in your home. The work of caring for infants remains done mainly by women mostly in our society. A report released by the UN in 2015 points out that ladies from developing countries do over three hours more of daily unpaid work (household chores and childcare) than men, while in developed countries, they do, on the average, two hours more. A family is responsible for making their home a place that they could live and thrive in. Discrimination happens in our households without us ever taking notice. Not only women but also men should be competent with basic life skills such as household chores and cooking meals for themselves.

The smallest unit in our society is considered to be the family and how can we make an immense impact within our society unless we make changes within our own home?

Encourage women to engage in politics.

They say that all ministers of Parliament are there to represent each and every one who is a part of our society. But the sad truth is that most of these representatives are shack-

led with patriarchal dogma and dated political views and values. According to 2017 data from the United Nations, only 17 countries have female heads of state or government. The overall average of women in legislative bodies is only 23.4 percent. This should definitely change as there should be equality when it comes to everything and everyone should be given an equal opportunity when it comes to the address of issues and developing policies to solve them within our society.

Break Down Social stigmas related to work and professions.

Growing up all of us were taught that certain fields of work and certain professions were more suitable for one particular gender and that if we wanted to be successful in life, we should choose a career that is more suitable for our gender. This must stop. If a child wants and is passionate about something, they must be given the encouragement and guidance to follow their dreams.

In the corporate world, every employer should be unbiased when it comes to hiring employees and should create work environments that promote equality and justice for any gender.

In conclusion, If we can implement these suggestions into our daily lives and into our social system we can take steps towards the prevention and mitigation of Gender Discrimination.

We must also always listen and reflect not only to what others say but to our subconscious thoughts as well. If you feel like you are channeling a discriminatory thought, reflect upon it and do the right thing.

If someone opens up to you about something you said that made them feel discriminated against, listen to them and reflect upon your actions.

11. Bystander Intervention

Who is a bystander?

Bystanders are individuals who observe violence or witness the conditions that perpetuate violence. They are not directly involved, but have the choice to intervene, speak up, or do something about it. They are individuals who are present, and thus potentially in a position to discourage, prevent, or interrupt a potential incident.

A bystander is present at 70% of assaults and 52% of robberies according to the reports of the US Department of Justice. Active bystander (or an upstander) is a person who takes a step or speaks up on someone's behalf. If a person does nothing even after witnessing the situation, he/she is a passive bystander.

What is bystander intervention?

The bystander effect or bystander intervention (also known as bystander apathy) is a psychological phenomenon in which someone is less likely to intervene in an emergency when others are present than when they are alone.

Types of intervention

1. The divider- The person who tends to divide or separate both parties.
2. The interrupter- The person who redirects the focus into somewhere else.
3. The recruiter- The person who recruits help from others and makes a plan.
4. The disrupter- The person who tries deflects the focus from one person away from the other.
5. The evaluator- The person who evaluates the people and the situation to understand your best option.

History of bystander intervention

After the murder case of Kitty Genovese in New York City (1964), the concept of bystander intervention is invented by the two social psychologists Bibb Latane and John Darley.

When a 28-year-old woman called Kitty was killed outside the apartment she lived in, it is complained that the neighbors were incapable of standing by. Serial Killer Winston Molley was reported for stabbing, robbing and raping her. The attack lasted approximately for 30 minutes and more than 38 people witnessed the scene, but none of them took an action.

According to Latane and Darley, the two main factors which effects bystander intervention can be mentioned as:

1. Diffusion of responsibility- the more onlookers in sight, the less personal responsibility those people will feel.
2. Social influence- the action which the individuals examine the act of people around them and go with the flow.

Is being a bystander wrong?

As an example, a “role” of a bystander who is witnessing someone getting bullied is always not the same. Some bystanders may take the side of the bully and laugh at their jokes. Some won’t be doing anything just because they are scared. However, a passive bystander does not have the same culpability as the person who committed the crime.

Options for a bystander

- Everyone can take necessary steps in being an active bystander. Check whether the ongoing situation needs assistance
- Decide if you have the required amount of responsibility.
- Think about the most suitable form of assistance.

- Be open and listen to the victim.
- Understand that even a simple distraction does a big change.
- If the victim is in an immediate threat, don't be late to call 911.

In conclusion, we solidly believe that bystanders do have a responsibility to intervene when there's inconvenience and they have a major impact in determining how circumstances will end. In the situation if no one helps, it ends badly, on the off chance that someone steps in to make things right, everyone returns home glad. There is a lot we can do to help build a more gender-equal world since for more than two decades, the goal of reducing gender inequality has held a prominent place in international organizations and in national strategy statements. If you see someone collapsed, be the person who checks to see if they are all right. Never assume that others have intervened or will intervene. Everyone is responsible for prevention. No matter who you are, you can take action to stop discrimination. When something does happen, it affects the community as a whole. Knowing that the bystander effect exists is the first step in defeating it. Keep it in mind, and you might be able to prevent the next Kitty Genovese tragedy.

12. Existing policies and legislation to counter Gender Discrimination

Discrimination based on gender has been eliminated by certain laws and policies in states. In Sri Lankan perspective, there are constitutional provisions, state policies and legislation which have been implemented already for this purpose. This chapter discusses the Sri Lankan and Indian perspectives of existing policies and laws and the requirements of amendments to certain problematic existing laws.

Subsection 12(1) of the Sri Lankan Constitution guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the law to all citizens. Subsection 12(2) further states that "no citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion [or] place of birth ...". In 1981, Sri Lanka ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In spite of these terms of the convention and constitutional guarantees, however, gender disparities exist in Sri Lanka.

The General Marriage Registration Ordinance of 1907 and the Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act of 1952 permitted marriages below 18 years of age. In 1995, both these laws were amended, and the legal age of marriage was raised to 18 years. In the Section 22 of the GMRO, it stated the individuals who are expected to give consent to marriage for minors under 18 years of age. This legal anomaly was clarified by subsequent case law. Since the prohibited age of marriages has been raised to 18 years of age, the absolute bar to marriage must necessarily override the parental authority to give consent to the marriage of a party. It was not relevant whether parents agreed or did not agree to the marriage of their children, only persons who had completed 18 years of age could enter into a valid marriage.

In addition to the violation of certain rights guaranteed under the Constitution, the prohibition is contrary to variety of obligations made by the Government of Sri Lanka including at a minimum the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

CEDAW fundamentally makes all forms of discrimination against women a breach of

international law. Two main recommendations made in the CEDAW Committee's 2017 report to Sri Lanka were to guarantee the de facto prohibition of discrimination against women which was to hold a position in fact but not necessarily by legal statute and reviewing all legislation for the compliance with CEDAW. It was also proposed that 'statutory recognition of the right to equality and non-discrimination by the state be granted and that all CEDAW provisions be enforceable.'

The National Human Rights Action Plan 2017-21 (NHRAP), which provides a detailed plan for human rights protection in Sri Lanka, includes gender equality as a key subject. The NHRAP affirms that "the government is currently working towards achieving gender equality through the enactment of gender sensitive laws, formulation of policy and through action plans."

Finally, Sri Lanka also adopted the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. (United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1) Specifically, Goal 5 seeks to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". This includes commitments to end all forms of discrimination and ensure that policies and enforceable legislation promote gender equality and empowerment (SDG 5). The Government of Sri Lanka has emphasized its sense of commitment in a number of domestic procedures, including the NHRAP and government policy, and will be subjected to international follow-up and analysis of the SDG commitments in coming years.

Examination of the current legal regime and social problems and implementation gaps to strengthen the protection of women in the National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights since 2011; ensuring collection of disaggregated data regarding crimes and appropriate measures to address issues; strengthening Women and Children's Police Desks with adequate resources and trained staff to enhance performance; implementing the Plan of Action supporting the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2005; implementing an Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy in government institutions; and formulating and implementing an effective Anti-Harassment Policy, including a grievance mechanism, in the private sector.

The legislation in force in order to minimize the gender discrimination in Sri Lankan context however has become complicated and inconsistent as mentioned in the chapter 5 of this handbook.

Policies that could be implemented

The National Committee on Women appointed under the Women's Charter in 1993 formulated a draft for a Bill of Women's Rights and developed a National Plan of Action for Women with state and nonstate participation. The draft bill and the proposal have seen ad hoc modifications over the past 2 decades but are yet to be approved and released as official documents. Nor has the National Committee, as foreseen, attained the status of an autonomous National Commission. The effectiveness of the ministry responsible for women's affairs has depended on the quality of its personnel in a transferable service. Advocacy, research, and action programs of women's organizations have contributed to the increasing visibility of gender issues in recent policy documents. This should be carried forward and develop a proper, well-organized national action plan for women and incorporate into the national legislation.

Recommendations are available for policies and initiatives to strengthen women and their family health in areas affected by conflict and to foster national harmony by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC). This involves creating an interagency task force to address the needs of women, girls, the elderly and other vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities in a comprehensive manner and Providing relief; reducing and ultimately removing disparities in the provision of education facilities in the country's different areas; Ensuring the right of every citizen of Sri Lanka, in conformity with its laws and regulations, to acquire land in any part of the country and to live in any place of his or her choosing without any restrictions or limitations.

Since the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act in 2005, no new legislation has been enacted on gender-based violence or more specifically, violence against women, although attempts have been made for changes to make it more effective.

With media coverage of incidents of rape, sexual assault, domestic violence and exploitation of children, the issue is becoming more apparent, but there is still widespread misunderstanding of the available means of redress, security mechanisms and the potential for legal action. Passive acceptance by women of violence and lack of awareness of provisions of the Penal Code should be amended in order to prevent offences against women. The underlying issues of unequal gender relations in the family and the acceptance of violence to safeguard family privacy and prestige are yet to be addressed.

Gender discriminatory Personal Laws of different communities should be altered and

the legislation which prevents discrimination and violence against women need to be implemented.

13. Why Pioneers Youth engaged in the topic of Gender Discrimination.

It is the intention of Pioneers Youth to address prevailing social issues which are strongly felt by the youth and this handbook on Gender Discrimination is one way of doing so. Gender discrimination, in our opinion is an issue that is prevalent throughout society, that may be either misconceived as an agenda of the extreme feminists or seen as an issue that does not exist. However, the Idea Bank Committee of Pioneers Youth engaged in this topic after a survey done on gender discrimination and the perceptions regarding it. The form responses have been included into the body of the handbook under the topic of "Examples of Gender Discrimination" and "The Need for Awareness and Education". Within the first few topics of the handbook itself, one can find the reasoning behind our initiative to create such a document.

Therefore, we hope that the reader agrees with us that gender discrimination is a cause for concern and must be addressed. If the reader is of the opinion that it is an irrelevant topic that is either non-existent or talked about too much, then we hope to make them aware of the topic and at least open their mind to the different views which are present. Finally, we would like to thank the readers who took their time to go through this handbook which was compiled over a period of three months with the effort of the volunteers of the Idea Bank who worked with dedication and enthusiasm.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all volunteers who engaged in the compilation of this Handbook.

Writers

1. Rithik Peduruarachchi
2. Sithmi Edirisinghe
3. Rashmika Guruge
4. Ranthini Bamunusinghe
5. Manuja Wijesuriya
6. Mehuli Sarkar
7. Nishadhi Thilakaratne
8. Rupsa Ganguli
9. Hiruni Herath
10. Lehan Kongalage
11. Chaveendra Dunuwille
12. Digeesha Gunawardana

Other contributors

13. Kasuni Senarathne
14. Savin Ranaraja
15. Laknara Jayalath

Editor

16. Vedant Mozumdar

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