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JMUN

UN Women



Issue :

The Role Of Men
In Women's
Rights

Forum: UN Women

Issue: The Role Of Men In Women's Rights

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I. Introduction

Discrimination, which is the unjust treatment of minority groups is as old as the mankind itself and it is still present today. Minorities' differences are usually seen unacceptable or wrong which have been causing discrimination in many ways for centuries. Creating an equal environment and eradicating any kind of discrimination have been one of the primary goals of the United Nations since its establishment and it is listed offically both in the millennium and the sustainable development goals. There have been many attempts to eradicate the discrimination especially regarding color, sexual preference and sex in order to equalize the whole citizens regardless of their qualities listed above.



However, discrimination does not specifically need to be towards a minority. Women are also a target of the discriminatory groups which cause them to be treated in drastic ways and seen as only mothers or a group of people who were born to satisfy the needs of men. This ideology has been present for a really long time, and unfortunately it still continues in some parts of the world. With the globalizing and evolving world, women's rights have been developing and gaining importance with the immense growth of population with an open mind, which is a term used to describe people who are accepting minorities and who are against discrimination.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. It is a major step towards eradicating gender discrimination. As it can be implemented from its name, CEDAW aims to eradicate discrimination of women in any way, to make them equal citizens and also individuals in society alongside with men who were to be seen the superior gender.

The delegates of the UN Women committee will discuss upon ways of involving men into this agreement since they do not see themselves related to it directly because of their gender, which is the essence of this argument.

II. Definition of Key Words

Discrimination: The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people especially on the grounds of age, race or gender.

Stereotype: A widely fixed idea or point of view towards something or someone that is associated with and labeled on that particular thing, individual or group.

Legislation: The set of rules which is enforced by the government for all the country to obey, the legal constitution.

Global Gender Gap Report: The report which is prepared annually by officials of UN shows the percentage of equality in each state which later on indicates the bests and the worsts of the year in terms of gender equality.

Pay Gap: The differences of money or loans that women and men receive as a result of their labour or work.

Feminism: Feminism is the advocacy of women's rights and equality of genders. It is the idea of women being equal to men in anyway.



III. General Overview

a) Historical Background

Women's rights was established by the United Nations itself approximately 70 years ago. It contains many rights such as, but not limited to voting, having an equal wage, and living without misery and violence however it is up to the nations themselves whether they will follow those rights, in other words these are the rules that are accepted voluntarily. Discrimination of gender has been rapidly common throughout the whole history, this leads to consequences such as harassment and unequal wage in comparison to men

which are unjust treatments in many ways and are the things to be solved by the implementation of CEDAW. This aim has been the priority of UN Women since its establishment and it has not been fully accomplished yet. CEDAW is a huge improvement in this progress which makes it even more crucial to be achieved entirely.



Figure 1. women seeking equality through slogan

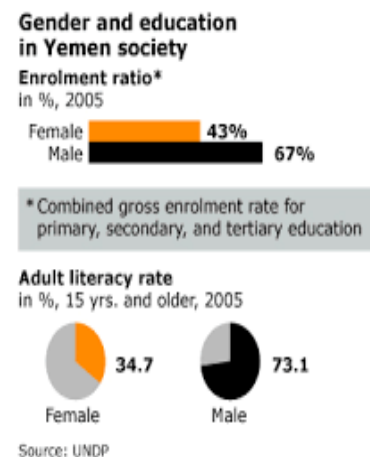
After long years of suppression, women decided to stand up and get the rights they deserved and were in need of. Between the years 1848-1998, the era named as “Women’s Rights Movement”, is the time period when women stood out and gained their respected rights in most parts of the world.

Many women became the symbol of this movement, supported it and contributed in any way which made this movement successful and recognized. However, women’s rights is still an issue that needs to be fully accomplished. The reason that prevents it from happening is that there is an apparent part of the world who sticks to superstitions, religion, dogmatic information and shows those listed above as an excuse to diminish or weaken the women’s rights. In addition, it has been recorded that the portion of world which is described as dogmatic is mostly men, which is not a surprise at all. In general, men have always been a little reckless towards the issue of women’s rights since it did not concern them in a direct way. Some opposed to the idea of women having equal rights as men, some supported it and

some did not care. However, there is the undeniable truth that the discrimination which is aimed to be solved by CEDAW is mostly caused by men themselves, due to this fact, men have a significant position in solving this issue. They cannot be ignored during this process and their contributions are vital for CEDAW to be successful.

b) Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Yemen: Yemen was ranked as the worst country in terms of women's rights according to the Global Gender Gap Report for 2018. Yemeni women lack rights and opportunities especially in terms of politics, economics and education which prevent them from becoming active and equal citizens of the society. This inequality leads to the discrimination of women in many fields due to the lack of rights given to them.



United States of America: The United States of America was one of the first countries to take action in terms of women's rights. However, as time goes by, the Republican Party's point of view towards the issue weakens and the misconception of the term "national sovereignty" becomes an obstacle for the USA to pay attention to women's rights and treaties. That is why, the USA signed but not ratified CEDAW, which raises questions about the commitment of the USA for the issue as a whole since there are only 7 countries left that did not sign the treaty. Moreover, the USA being one of them is definitely tragic as the USA is one of the biggest countries in terms of both land, power and human rights in general.

France: Compared to the other countries, France is one of the countries that has difficulties in adopting gender equality as a goal and designing policies to achieve it. France gave right to vote to women on 4th October 1944. In

May 2012, a Ministry for Women's Rights was created in France. On 23rd July 2014, France adopted the first law that addressed gender equality in the workplace, tackling stereotypes in the media.

Sweden: The Swedish Government's gender equality policy has two aims: to fight and transform systems that preserve the gender-based discrimination of power and resources in society. It ensures that women and men enjoy the same power and opportunities to shape their own lives.

Germany: Compared to other EU member states, Germany's performance in achieving gender equality is mediocre. The European Gender Equality Index ranks Germany lower than the EU average. Only in the areas of work, money and time, Germany has achieved better results than the EU on average. In recent years, the federal government has focused on family policies and fewer efforts have been made in promoting equality policies.

Iceland: According to the Global Gender Gap Report for 2018, Iceland is the country that has the most gender equality. The women have rights in terms of education and voting which contribute and involve them into the society. In accordance with the report, the rate of discrimination against women is lower than many countries, which makes Iceland stand out as an example for the nations that seek to achieve the gender equality. However, Iceland did not fully accomplish gender equality and discrimination although gender can be seen in many fields, but Iceland still has the closest level of equality that CEDAW seeks, which makes it a developed and well adjusted nation in terms of women rights and a supporter of the fight to eradicate the discrimination against women in any forms.

UN Women: UN Women is a United Nations organization which has dedicated itself to provide gender equality and allowed women to be active members of our society. It has been the primary advocate for women's rights and assisted many nations on the way of achieving gender equality. It is the

torch that shows the way to the nations during the implementation process of CEDAW, which resulted in a total success and signatures of many countries. HeForShe is the perfect example of a UN Women campaign that tries to include men into the actions to be taken to achieve gender equality once and for all.

c) How Can Be Involved?

There are many ways men can involve themselves in the issue of women's rights and preventing the discrimination against them. First of all, it is important that men learn how to listen to and respect women, give them credit, thank them and make them feel equal. Men should embrace the ideology of women and men being equal. Calling and referring themselves as feminists would even elevate the effect of their contributions

Accepting feminism would create a difference both within that individual and within the society of men.

Female feminists' voice is often mocked by men since they may sound selfish, crazy and emotional. That is why, it is so important that men take action and make their voice heard. If the person who promotes feminism and encourages women's rights to other men, the effect increases immensely as other men would take someone from their same gender more seriously in a



gender related issue. Sexist people would even refuse to listen to what women say, so a male's advocacy in this issue holds great importance. However, the chance to speak and express ideas has to be given to women first, in terms of their rights. Men have to support them in any way, but they have to be careful not to overshadow them as it would contradict with the purpose of feminism. Men should interact when they feel women are being

ignored and not taken seriously because that is when men can make a difference and make their voice heard.

These might be discouraging for men since they might be criticised and mocked about their support for women's rights in the society. However, they should take a stand even if it causes controversies as it is the main action that empowers the aim to improve women's rights and eradicate discrimination against women. That is why, men should advocate women rights, pay attention to the issue, point out what should be done and lead other men to a world of equality among genders. They should join the movements such as HeForShe, make their voice heard and help women gain their rights once and for all.

IV. Timeline of Important Events

1792	The Revolutionary War in 1774 and the French Revolution in 1789 advanced the concept of women's freedom. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft published one of the seminal works of modern feminism. The "Vindication of the Rights of Women" argued for the equal education of women, allowing them to become independent people. She reasoned that the current educational systems restricted women's potential to contribute to the betterment of society, as well as the family and home. Her book was one of the first to clearly and forcefully outline a need for change.
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1878	The first ever International Congress of Women's Rights was held in Paris which started the women's rights movements. It was based on the idea of an adult woman being equal to an adult man.
28 February 1909	The first ever National Woman's Day is observed in the United States.
10 December 1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly which happened to be the solid beginning of the fight for equality.
1979	CEDAW was adopted by the UN General Assembly.
31 October 2000	The Millennium Development Goals were launched and they included a goal to ensure gender equality in the next thousand years.
2 July 2010	The UN formed a new organization called UN Women to ensure that the full commitment and effort was put into the issue.
September 2015	Sustainable Development Goals were launched by the UNDP with a goal of gender equality.

V. Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

As CEDAW is designed to eradicate discrimination against women especially from men, the main reason can be seen as the inefficiency of men in the issue. However, the reason for this treaty not to achieve its full potential is the lack of commitment shown by the other states' governments, especially who do not value women's rights. To ensure the full benefit of this treaty, full commitment has to be shown, otherwise it will never be completed fully.

VI. Possible Solutions

Rashida Manjoo, a UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women once said "States must acknowledge that violence against women is not the actual problem, but that violence occurs because other forms of discrimination are allowed to flourish.". That means the discrimination of all kinds has to be taken into consideration while writing resolutions as one, solutions of a specific discrimination can be effective for solving another one too.

As it is well-known, discrimination is mainly caused by the lack of education or narrow minds regarding a specific quality of a minority group. That is why, education and raising awareness are the best ways to decrease the discrimination. The target of those education and raising awareness actions should not only be the general public, but also the religious leaders, political leaders, celebrities and important people in the society so that they understand the issue better, too. If they understand it better and be convinced, their attitude and actions towards the issue may change in a positive way, which can affect the decision of many citizens who see them as trustworthy, right and leaders of the society.

Furthermore, there are still countries who do not propose equal rights for the women in their own legislations. Legislative adjustments are necessary to

change the perspective of a country towards the issue which has a major impact upon the faith of this treaty. Also, this would contribute to the problem of lack of commitment shown by states as it was mentioned in the 'previous attempts to resolve the issue part. In addition to this, international conventions can be held and new treaties can be signed to legally bound countries with the issue directly and ensure their full participation. All the countries who are signatories to CEDAW have to adopt all the necessary measurements and legislations in order to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women.



Figure 2. Men supporting the women rights as activists

VII. Notes from the Chair

First of all, congratulations on making this far on the chair report. As you can understand this chair report focuses upon the specification of men's role in women's rights except for a few sections. It focuses on the violation of women's rights and how the women are treated because that is the main essence and reason of the discrimination against women. You should do additional research upon the topic and gather your ideas on your resolutions and clauses. Please be aware of the fact that you are going to represent

countries which have strategic importance on that issue. These two days are going to be very efficient and you are going to share your ideas with each other. We can't wait to see you in March!

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