

The Global Empowerment of Woman

Gender inequality is an issue that is becoming more and more recognized and voiced in the past three decades than ever before, especially the focus of giving both males and females equal opportunities in the social, economic and political aspects of life. Women are generally the victims of assault, rape, and violence because they are typically less able to physically defend themselves as well as, are prone to such acts of terror because of where they live and their status in society. Internationally, women mainly occupy “feminized” professions, such as nursing and teaching, office work, care of the elderly and disabled—termed “horizontal occupational segregation”—where they tend to remain in lower job categories than men, and make less money. Representation in politics, and power with major decision making for women has also been significantly less than men historically and even though that gap is slowly rising it is still the case world-wide. The global empowerment of woman is an ever-increasing movement in today’s society because the push for basic human rights is strong and equality of opportunity is being taken into much more consideration. Yet gender equality cannot be accomplished overnight- it is a long and meticulous process. The three main streams currently being focused on to empower women rights are strengthening women’s economic capacity, promoting women’s leadership and political participation and eliminating violence against women. The UN has addressed this issue as its third Millennium Goal – “promote gender equality and empower women”. International agreements have been established in recent times to set goals for countries to achieve this throughout countries around the world (<http://www.unfpa.org/gender/rights2.htm>). Yet despite these efforts many countries still ignore efforts to reach the goals of empowering women.

Facts:

A pregnant woman in Africa is 180 times more likely to die of pregnancy complications than in Western Europe. Women, mostly in rural areas, represent more than two-thirds of the world’s illiterate adults. In the United States, 90% of AIDS cases fewer than 20 years of age are girls. Studies in 10 countries, have found that between 17 per cent and 38 per cent of women have suffered physical assaults by a partner. Women perform 66 percent of the world’s work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property. Women’s nominal wages are 17 percent lower than men’s. In many developed countries, where basic gender equality appears to have been achieved, the battlefield has shifted to removing the more intangible discrimination against working women. Women still hold only 15.6% of elected parliamentary seats globally.

Why do these facts express, in terms of equality? How long before we can truly say we’ve closed the gap? Are there specific countries that still violate human and women rights? To what extent and how can they be dealt with? These are all questions that must be considered in regards to encouraging the development of empowering women internationally.

Resources to consider:

<http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1772e.htm>

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_FS_3_EN.pdf

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/beijingdeclaration.html>

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/166/womens-rights#Beijing5SpecialSession>

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/index.shtml>

<http://www.unfpa.org/gender/rights2.htm>

https://members.weforum.org/pdf/Global_Competitiveness_Reports/Reports/gender_gap.pdf

<http://www.weforum.org/reports>

<http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1772e.htm>