

## **A GENERIC SYMBOL FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

Allamurodova Matluba  
Teacher at the Termez Music School

### **Annotation**

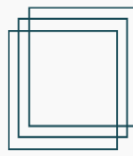
In this article you will be aware about sexual equality or equality of the sexes, is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender. Here you know gender balance in a given situation, can aid in achieving gender equality, UNICEF'S approach, global movement for gender equality.

**Keywords:** opportunities, access to resources, gender equity, gender parity, global movement, policy

Gender equality, also known as sexual equality or equality of the sexes, is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender.

Gender equality is the goal, while gender neutrality and gender equity are practices and ways of thinking that help in achieving the goal. Gender parity, which is used to measure gender balance in a given situation, can aid in achieving gender equality but is not the goal in and of itself. Gender equality is more than equal representation, it is strongly tied to women's rights, and often requires policy changes. As of 2017, the global movement for gender equality has not incorporated the proposition of genders besides women and men, or gender identities outside of the gender binary. UNICEF says gender equality "means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike." On a global scale, achieving gender equality also requires eliminating harmful practices against women and girls, including sex trafficking, femicide, wartime sexual violence, gender wage gap, and other oppression tactics. UNFPA stated that, "despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor and illiterate. They have less access to property ownership, credit, training and employment. This partly stems from the archaic stereotypes of women being labelled as child-bearers and home makers, rather than the bread winners of the family.<sup>[3]</sup> They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence." As of 2017, gender equality is the fifth of seventeen sustainable development goals of the United Nations. Gender inequality is measured annually by the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Reports.

Social constructs of gender often have a negative effect on health. The World Health Organization cites the example of women not being allowed to travel alone outside the

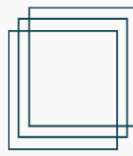


home, and women being prevented by cultural norms to ask their husbands to use a condom, in cultures which simultaneously encourage male promiscuity, as social norms that harm women's health. Teenage boys suffering accidents due to social expectations of impressing their peers through risk taking, and men dying at much higher rate from lung cancer due to smoking, in cultures which link smoking to masculinity, are cited by the WHO as examples of gender norms negatively affecting men's health. Cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation, negatively affect women's health. Female genital mutilation is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia. It is rooted in inequality between the sexes, and constitutes a form of discrimination against women. The practice is found in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and among immigrant communities from countries in which female genital mutilation is common. UNICEF estimated in 2016 that 200 million women have undergone the procedure.

According to the World Health Organization, gender equality can improve men's health. The study shows that traditional notions of masculinity have a big impact on men's health. Among European men, non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory illnesses, and diabetes, account for the vast majority of deaths of men aged 30–59 in Europe which are often linked to unhealthy diets, stress, substance abuse, and other habits, which the report connects to behaviors often stereotypically seen as masculine behaviors like heavy drinking and smoking. Traditional gender stereotypes that keep men in the role of breadwinner and systematic discrimination preventing women from equally contributing to their households and participating in the workforce can put additional stress on men, increasing their risk of health issues and men bolstered by cultural norms, tend to take more risks and engage in interpersonal violence more often than women, which could result in fatal injuries.

Since the 1950s, social scientists as well as feminists have increasingly criticized gendered arrangements of work and care and the male breadwinner role. Policies are increasingly targeting men as fathers as a tool of changing gender relations. Shared earning/shared parenting marriage, that is, a relationship where the partners collaborate at sharing their responsibilities inside and outside of the home, is often encouraged in Western countries. Western countries with a strong emphasis on women fulfilling the role of homemakers, rather than a professional role, include parts of German speaking Europe as well as the Netherlands and Ireland. In the computer technology world of Silicon Valley in the United States, New York Times reporter Nellie Bowles has covered harassment and bias against women as well as a backlash against female equality.

A key issue towards insuring gender equality in the workplace is the respecting of maternity rights and reproductive rights of women. Different countries have different rules regarding maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave. Women



often face severe violations of their reproductive rights at the hands of their employers; and the International Labour Organization classifies forced abortion coerced by the employer as labour exploitation. Other abuses include routine virginity tests of unmarried employed women.

### **Freedom of Movement**

Women in Afghanistan wearing burqas. Some clothes that women are required to wear, by law or custom, can restrict their movements. The degree to which women can participate (in law and in practice) in public life varies by culture and socioeconomic characteristics. Seclusion of women within the home was a common practice among the upper classes of many societies, and this still remains the case today in some societies. Before the 20th century it was also common in parts of Southern Europe, such as much of Spain. Women's freedom of movement continues to be legally restricted in some parts of the world. This restriction is often due to marriage laws. In some countries, women must legally be accompanied by their male guardians when they leave home.

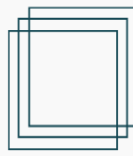
In addition to laws, women's freedom of movement is also restricted by social and religious norms. Restrictions on freedom of movement also exist due to traditional practices such as baad, swara, or vani.

### **Gender Stereotypes**

Gender stereotypes arise from the socially approved roles of women and men in the private or public sphere, at home or in the workplace. In the household, women are typically seen as mother figures, which usually places them into a typical classification of being "supportive" or "nurturing". Women are expected to want to take on the role of a mother and take on primary responsibility for household needs. Their male counterparts are seen as being "assertive" or "ambitious" as men are usually seen in the workplace or as the primary breadwinner for his family. Due to these views and expectations, women often face discrimination in the public sphere, such as the workplace. Women are stereotyped to be less productive at work because they are believed to focus more on family when they get married or have children. A gender role is a set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviors which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their sex. Gender roles are usually centered on conceptions of femininity and masculinity, although there are exceptions and variations.

### **Gender Mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming is described as the public policy of assessing the different implications for women and men of any planned policy action, including legislation and programmes, in all areas and levels, with the aim of



achieving gender equality. The concept of gender mainstreaming was first proposed at the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya. The idea has been developed in the United Nations development community. Gender mainstreaming "involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities".

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