

GENDER MATRIX

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GENDER MATRIX

—An Anthology of Articles on
Gender Issues and Perspectives

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&

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WORDS FROM THE EDITOR



Gender Matrix is a conglomeration of fine profile of numerous articles and research based papers. It is distinct not only because of the care with which the selections have been made but also because it mirrors the range of concerns variety of styles and the vitality from the fields of Social Sciences, Humanities, Gender Studies, Women Studies Media and Cultural Studies.

The aim of **Gender Matrix** is to put light into the unknown and unheard ideas, norms, perspectives of the past and the present day. This book also seeks to examine the possibilities for reading, analysis and other critical engagements with the very idea of exploration made possible. The writers in this book unfold the unseen angles and perspectives on various socio-cultural norms that exists in the society. It throws light into how ancient norms or beliefs and laws is still very much in operation.

**ANURAG HAZARIKA
AND
SAMIKSHYA MADHUKULLYA**

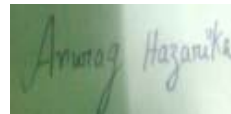
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I am grateful to all the esteemed writers who have given their generous permission and consent to include their penned works in this book. Without their cooperation the publication of this book would not have materialised.

I have had the benefits of discussions, sometimes brief and sometimes in details on the various perspectives related to this book on the subject of Gender, Women, Media and Culture with esteemed academicians and writers of this era. I am indebted to all of them for sharing their thoughts and ideas with me.

A special word of thanks is due to Samikshya Madhukullya who has helped in co-editing this piece of work.

Finally, my thanks are due to my parents Dr. Pranjit Hazarika (Associate Professor and Former HOD Political Science, Tezpur College, Assam, India and Mrs. Anju Saikia Hazarika (Librarian, Darrang College, Assam, India) and my sister Ms. Anwesha Hazarika (M.A. in Political Science, Delhi University and Ph.D Research Scholar, Cotton State University, Assam, India) for their patient persuasion and irrepressible confidence in me which made me undertake this work and complete it. I am always thankful to them.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anurag Hazarika". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

ANURAG HAZARIKA

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1

UNBOXING GENDERs —An Exploration of their Nurture

Ms. CATERINA MANOUSAKI*

Oh, Gender, My Gender. ¹

Let's start with the basics. Gender is a social construct. Gender is often confused with sex.² Gender is a significant part of our Identity.³ Gender is often perceived in most countries around the world within the duality of man/woman and often, people use mistakenly the terms male/female, which are describing the sex assigned at birth of someone, as linguistic words that can describe also the gender of an individual. There are many definitions out there and even more perspectives, experiences and life-stories.

I am focusing on the second ones and will be sharing mine with you. Within my work as an LGBTQIA+⁴ Spectrum educator, I have encountered with more than 500+ LGBTQIA+ people, in the last 6 years, mostly young generations between 16 to 30 years old, from international and intersectional backgrounds and countries, whose personality colors and individual beauty in all aspects is undeniable, a heartwarming inspiration and without any doubt, a learning source.

I am, myself, part of this colorful spectrum, a mostly non-binary and in-between gender fluid individual, who didn't have any references while growing up, as to how come I would feel

* Founder of Active Rainbow, Facilitator, Youth Worker, Trainer, Project Designer, and Manager. IHuman Rights and LGBT+ Spectrum activist and Educator.

so different from my other peers in regards to how I was experiencing my gender, its expression, my body, and my romantic and sexual attraction towards other people. There were no educational programs provided within the school curriculum, or even an open environment to feel safe to talk about my experience, without the fear of being judged, bullied, isolated, and disowned by my peers and family.

Imagine living your life with this constant fear and the uncomfortable of being who you are, thinking that something is fundamentally wrong with yourself, and the closest references to you, being those conforming norms, that keep insisting defining womanhood, and manhood girlhood and boyhood, as a puzzle game between the commercialized choice of pink and blue color – while the rest of the spectrum of colors is kept aside living on a deserted island, as if they have committed a crime for even existing in the world. And then imagine those colors everyday doing the work and building the so much necessary bridge to reach the other side, with the intention to reunite with pink and blue, after all, they are all part of the same species and family - but then on the other side, you have pink and blue, who while they share the same intention, though, are trapped, almost imprisoned, within some of their constructors' closeted ideology of what is normal, and what must be the norm that everyone has to follow in order to fit in and succeed in life.

Re-constructing the Norms

As human-beings, we are the ultimate creators of our life, shaping our cultures (personal, and collective ones), and our societies, the norms to which we are living, and co-living. Many of those norms, are not serving us anymore, and for a long time now. We are living in a world where we cannot anymore talk about gender, and gender equity, as something that it's a matter and life-issue only between men and women, because it's not. Somehow it seems to me, we are all aware of that, yet some of us, deliberately choose to ignore that, thus undervaluing many of our fellow beings' lives. We are excluding a spectrum of identities such as trans men, trans women, gender fluid, non-binary, gender neutral, agender, third gender people and many more.⁵

We cannot talk about gender (identity) and put our concepts on play, without listening, and acknowledging the stories and experiences of so many people. No one has the right to choose the label for us, and state how we are supposed to be, look and behave, yet we do that, within the cultural contexts that we grow in, that include religions, traditions etc. We continue regenerating the stereotypes of centuries and with everything unknown and different within our mirror view, we let the fear take the first stage - which translates to behaviors that encourage hate-speech, prejudices, discrimination, phobias (homophobia, biphobia, transphobia) of everything and everyone different, violence, hate-crimes and more harmful actions. Think about it. Fact-wise, I share with confidence, that each one of us know at least one person in our lives, who has suffered or currently as you read, experiencing such traumatic situations.

As the social creators and crafters of the concept of gender, it's time we re-construct it and start using the language that describes and includes all the spectrum and person's identities. The words man and woman, only express a part of the world and we need to shift our language and act on our inclusivity. It's not enough to talk about how we can be inclusive, if we do not take an action upon it, from the smallest to the biggest.

Even more, one's work starts from the within, from oneself - becoming self-aware, educating ourselves, leaning towards people who have a different background than us, and listening to their stories, with the intention to empathize and understand, opening our horizons to the unlimited human possibilities that exist. One's work continues with changing the roots of outdated narratives and growing new seeds, which then can support and impact the creation and/or update of policies and laws, that will finally ensure without question the fundamental human rights of those who are constantly being on the side of marginalization and oppression, experiencing an enormous vulnerability, which based on factual events, most of the times costs their lives.

When Good Enough, is Not Enough Anymore

At the end of the day, one can make the assumption, that we all want to be valued, respected and recognized for who we

are, lead and live enriching lives filled with happiness, freedom and love. And that is exactly why we need to stop talking about tolerance.

Based on the Oxford definition of the word “tolerate”, its first meaning is described as *“allow the existence, occurrence, or practice of (something that one dislikes or disagrees with) without interference”*. Let’s take a moment to digest and comprehend what we actually mean when we use this word. As you continue reading, I invite you to pause and think of moments, people and events in your life, that you have experienced tolerance, both as a giver and receiver.

Now, if you happen to feel uncomfortable recalling those past memories for whatever reason, know that your emotion is valid. This is part of the practice of looking within ourselves, becoming aware and acknowledging that tolerance, while it’s something that we all do in our lives in different contexts, consciously or unconsciously - yet it should not be a glorifying attitude of how we treat and co-live with our fellow beings. It has been our “good enough” getaway for decades, which looking at the world’s reality right now, it doesn’t serve us anymore – its role has expired. Simply, in our context of diversity and individuality, it is not enough anymore to just tolerate. We can do better than that. We need to be willing to choose to do better than that.

As Jane Elliot, Diversity Trainer and Human Rights activist and advocate, has stated in one of her interviews, *“I found out that tolerance means put up with or allow me to be. I don’t need your allowance. And I don’t need to be tolerated. I want to be valued, recognized and appreciated. We’ve got to change it from tolerance, because the powerful can tolerate, the powerless have to wait to be tolerated.”*⁶

I am concluding my narrative, with a reference to another source connected to tolerance, that was not only enlightening to my reflective journey on my personal attitudes towards diversity, but it was and still is an important asset for inclusively educating, learning and unlearning. It is a tool that I am using in my educational programs with the youth to discuss, reflect and re-evaluate the behaviors, which we act upon and receive from other people.

I am referring to the “Riddle scale”, (also known as Riddle scale of homophobia)⁷, in which there are eight terms/values that characterize negative and positive levels of attitudes of homophobia, yet, it is also used to describe attitudes towards difference and people of diversity. On the negative part of the scale the order from the lowest to the highest is: repulsion, pity, tolerance and acceptance. On the positive part, it continues similarly with support, admiration, appreciation and nurturance, as the highest. We are all familiar with those attitudes one way or another, and we even express them towards our own self, which is another story to cover.

Based on the Oxford definition of the word “nurture”, its first meaning is described as *“to care for and protect somebody/ something while they are growing and developing”*. And its second meaning states *“to help somebody/something to develop and be successful”*. Nurturance within the scale context, *“assumes that LGBTQIA+ people are indispensable in our society. People on this level view LGBTQIA+ people with genuine affection and delight, and are willing to be their allies and advocates.”*

I believe this assumption and its realization is our breakthrough moment for dismantling systems of discrimination and oppression that keep hurting our communities worldwide. A simple shift of our perspective from viewing another person as a threat to our existence, because of their gender identity, sexuality, skin color, national origin or more, to actually “seeing” and nurturing them – is what our society needs at large – moving to a culture of nurturance, where no one is left behind and everybody gets a sit on the table to play their part in growing and developing our humanity in more sustainable ways.

Glossary Index

Definitions of some of the main terms used in the article, taken by the ILGA-EUROPE Glossary and the LGBTQIA Resource Center.

Sex: “The classification of a person as male or female. Sex is assigned at birth and written on a birth certificate, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy and on a binary vision of sex which excludes intersex people. A person’s

sex, however, is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.”

Gender identity: “Refers to each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms. Some people’s gender identity falls outside the gender binary, and related norms”

Transgender: An adjective used most often as an umbrella term and frequently abbreviated to “trans.” Identifying as transgender, or trans, means that one’s internal knowledge of gender is different from conventional or cultural expectations based on the sex that person was assigned at birth. While transgender may refer to a woman who was assigned male at birth or a man who was assigned female at birth, transgender is an umbrella term that can also describe someone who identifies as a gender other than woman or man, such as non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, no gender or multiple genders, or some other gender identity.

Trans man: A person may choose to identify this way to capture their gender identity as well as their lived experience as a transgender person.

Trans woman: A person may choose to identify this way to capture their gender identity as well as their lived experience as a transgender person.

Genderfluid: A person whose gender identification and presentation shifts, whether within or outside of societal, gender-based expectations. Being fluid in motion between two or more genders.

Non-binary: A gender identity and experience that embraces a full universe of expressions and ways of being that resonate for an individual, moving beyond the male/female gender binary. It may be an active resistance to binary gender expectations and/or an intentional creation of new

unbounded ideas of self within the world. For some people who identify as non-binary there may be overlap with other concepts and identities like gender expansive and gender non-conforming.

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- LGBTQIA Resource Center, (2020) <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary>

FOOTNOTES

1. Rework of the famous poem "Oh Captain, My Captain"(1865) by the American poet Walt Whitman.
2. **Sex:** See definition of the term at the Glossary Index.
3. **Gender identity:** See definition of the term at the Glossary Index.
4. **LGBTQIA+ Spectrum:** The initials stand for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and + (all other forms of sexual and gender expression). The initialism LGBTQIA+ emphasizes the diversity of sexuality and gender identities. When referring to LGBTQIA+ Spectrum, we acknowledge the wide range of aspects that relate to the term, such as community, culture, human rights, gender and sexual diversity, social movements etc. [Active Rainbow, Power Action Booklet]
5. See definition of those terms at the Glossary Index.
6. This quote is taken from the online video interview that Jane Elliot gave at the Black Nouveau show in 2017 from Milwaukee PBS productions. I recently discovered in May 2020 this interview, while researching about anti-racism resources and the #Black lives matter movement. [Find the link in the References section]

7. **The Riddle Scale** is named after its creator, psychologist Dorothy Riddle. It was developed in 1973-1974 while she was overseeing research for the American Psychological Association Task Force on Gays and Lesbians. It was/is a psychometric scale that measured the degree to which a person is or is not homophobic. The Riddle's analysis was one of the first modern classifications of attitudes towards homosexuality. The scale since then has been adapted for educational purposes to describe continuum of attitudes of any form of diversity.

A RESEARCH ON GENDER

Ms. CYNTHIA CHIKODI ANINWEZI*

“One is not born, one is made a woman”. The French philosopher and novelist; Simone De Beauvoir wrote in her 1949 best-seller: *The Second Sex*. In an article by The World Health Organization, it defined gender as a socially constructed characteristic of women and men such as norms, roles and relationship of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed. Controversies as regards gender and gender roles have continued to increase over the years. We may define gender according to scholars but it is important to understand that gender is a flexible concept with room for many interpretations. The interesting thing about gender remains that it is not determined biologically as a result of various characteristics of men and women, but is constructed socially. Gender roles are the social definition of women and men.

Chimamanda Adiche once said “The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be instead of recognizing how we truly are.” The notion of gender being a “social performance” has been argued by many scholars while many argue that gender is the only true way to understand an individual which of course includes the definition and prescription of how a person should be. Others argued that gender being devoid of biology is only a way socially constructed by humans in order to maintain the society. Gender is simply

* Social Activist, Nigeria, Africa.

what we say it is, what we believe it to be, what we are willing and prepared to act. Just like any other concept, gender is not without misconceptions. The misconceptions of genders continue to increase as inequality continues to thrive in our world. It is no news that we live in a patriarchal world built within the walls of misogyny and sexism. One cannot deny how a large number of the population in various parts of the world have a misconception of gender and sadly, the most affected gender is the “female gender.”

The misconceptions of gender stem from a point of superiority which is mostly borne out of patriarchy. Prior to modern times, men were regarded as bread-winners and women; home-makers. As time passed, things continue to change, gender roles are not left out in the struggle for freedom. It is important that we understand the words of the great writer referenced above (Chimamanda Adiche). With the coming of technology and civilization, women and men are beginning to discover new passion, find better ways of doing things in order to sustain their environment, but sad is the fact that our society would rather define what women and men should do based on gender other than individual potential. Added to this misconception is the fact that people expect women to remain at home as homemakers who would cook and clean and men to go out in search of greener pastures. It is important that we do-away with misconceptions like these if we are to hope for a gender-balanced society.

Also, the concept of feminism has been misinterpreted by many individuals. It is important to know that why many people believe feminism to be a fight for superiority of the female gender against the male, borne out of patriarchy, is the fact that most people would have a man rule than a woman. In some parts of the world, women are cautioned for being too ambitious, for wanting to own their bodies or not living up to societal standard, which of course is influence by gender roles. A woman is taught to aspire to marry and bear children, which she has to give up here dreams for. Feminism simply advocates for the equality of both genders in the political, social and economy of our world. Feminism is giving each gender the opportunity to grow and thrive on individual potentials rather

than compelling them to societal standards. It is only sad that the movement seem to push for the liberation of most women than men which is clearly because of a known fact that most women from across the world are saddled with issues of gender inequality. Feminism remains the equality of both genders.

Furthermore, in some parts of our world, men and women are employed for the same job but men earn more sadly because of the false notion that men need more money as bread winners. Money has been, should be and will continue to be a reward for value. It is only wise that two individuals of different gender engaged in the same job should be paid equally. The misconception that men need more money than women should be a thing of the past in this day. However, more is yet to be done to correct the notion and spread awareness that men and women deserve equal pay of same job. Nelson Mandela once said "The only tool you can use to change the world is education." According to UNESCO, about 262 million children and youth are out of school of which there are more girls than boys out of school. The girl child is being forced into early marriage rather than sent to school. In this day and age education is vital to everyone regardless of gender.

Someone once said "Gender equality is the unfinished business of the 21st century. Gender equality is a human right but our world faces a persistent gap in access to opportunities for women and men. Globally, women have fewer opportunities than men, less access to basic and higher education, greater health and safety risks and less political representation. Guaranteeing the rights of women and giving them equal opportunities to reach their full potential is necessary not only for attaining gender equality but also for meting a wide range of economic empowerment. The fight for gender equality is not enough to provide equal opportunity for both genders. A lot must be done to see that both genders leverage on individual potential rather than socially constructed gender roles. We must educate boys and girls to aspire for what they want to be and not what the society expects. Globally, no country has fully attained gender equality. Scandinavian nations like Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark lead the world, in their progress towards closing the gender gap. The world still needs

to do more, nations of the world must join hands to fight for gender equality because in the end, it is you and I, not you versus I.

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3

GENDER —Inequalities and Violence

DONALD HOUANSI*

The term “gender” is used to identify socially defined sex roles, characters, attitudes and values that communities or societies consider appropriate for one sex or another. It is dynamic and varies according to cultures, religions and economic factors.

Gender roles are roles and activities attributed to individuals based on socially determined characteristics, stereotypes, ideologies, values, attitudes, beliefs and practices. They are established by the family, the community, at school, in religious institutions, by culture, tradition, through folklore, history, media, politics at all levels.

According to the World Bank, the female labor force participation rate ^{1(a)} fell from 51% to 49% between 2000 and 2018; women spend one to five hours more on unpaid housework, children and other family tasks than men, and one to six hours less on paid work. Data from the International Labour Organization show that women earn about 20% less than men². And these pay gaps concern all countries. According to a World Bank survey covering 141 economies, the life long income gap between men and women is cutting world wealth by \$ 160 trillion,³ or an average of \$ 23620 per capita

Women and girls make up half of the world's population and thus half of its potential. Gender equality, in addition to

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being a fundamental human right, is essential for building peaceful societies with full human potential and sustainable development. In addition, it has been shown that empowering women boosts productivity and economic growth.

Unfortunately, much remains to be done to achieve full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women, warns UN Women.

Indeed, in Benin, social practices and customary law are based on cultural determinations that grant status and roles differentiated by sex. The status and role of each individual, his relationships with others and the opportunities offered to him in his life are functions of sex.

This traditional gender segregation of social and economic roles today undermines the achievement of development goals and is one of the major gender and development issues in the country. Although these social norms or practices are gradually weakening, there are still many social inequalities in the relationship between men and women in the following areas: participation in pedagogical activities and decision-making; the wedding ; access to education, employment and income; access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health; access to land, credit and micro credit; access to positions of great responsibility.

So, what is gender-based violence? What are the causes, forms and consequences?

Defining the notion of violence is not easy because it is complex and can be approached in different ways. Various disciplinary approaches can be applied to it. Some explanatory models of violence refer to the biological, others to the psychic or to socio economic inequalities. Similarly, the causes of violence against women have been studied from different perspectives, including feminism, criminology, development, human rights, public health and sociology.

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) defines violence against women as: “all acts of violence directed against the female sex, causing or causing to women physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including the threat of such

acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public life or in private life “

The same statement points out that violence against women reflects “historically unequal power relations between men and women, which led to domination and discrimination by the former and curbed the promotion of the latter”

The forms and manifestations of violence against women are very diverse and include a wide range of assaults: sexual assault, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, moral harassment, incest, genital mutilation, virginity control, forced marriages, sexual exploitation, prostitution, pornographic exploitation, prohibition to go out, work outside, deprivation of money and identity papers.

We distinguish among other forms of violence such as physical violence that is most visible, blows, wounds, fractures, ... The psychological violence as for it, is in a verbal or non verbal form: denigration, humiliation, verbal attacks, scenes of jealousy, threats, control of activities; attempts to isolate relatives and friends who may go as far as sequestration, ... And sexual violence, complete or incomplete sexual relations, without consent and / or under duress. Then economic violence, deprivation of means or of essential goods, control or spoliation, sometimes even when the woman has a remunerated activity; and finally legal, cultural, spatial and other social violence.

However, different approaches and classifications exist. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action address the problem of violence against women according to the place where it occurs: the family; the community as a whole; and the State which is the author or who tolerates it. Some forms of violence involve multiple levels at a time. This is the case, for example, of “honour crimes” and harmful traditional practices, in which the family and the community participate and the state is tolerant.

Thus, the commonly reported forms of family violence against women include: the administration of beatings and other forms of domestic violence, including marital rape; sexual violence; dowry-related violence; female infanticide; sexual violence against female children in the household; female genital mutilation and other traditional practices prejudicial to

women; early marriages; forced marriages; violence perpetrated against domestic workers and other forms of exploitation.

As for forms of violence against women in the community, there is a distinction between femicide and sexual violence by non-partners; sexual harassment and violence in the work place, in educational institutions and in sport and then trafficking in women.

Finally, the forms of violence against women perpetrated by the state are such as violence against women prisoners, forced sterilization, violence against women during armed conflict and legal violence.

These different forms of violence do not remain without consequences.

Violence against women affects their health and well-being, leads to high human and economic costs, hampers development and can also cause displacement.

In addition to violating women's human rights and impeding the exercise of their freedoms, violence against women has been considered by the World Health Organization to be a real public health problem.

Violence against women has multiple impacts on physical health and can affect reproductive health. In addition to injuries such as fractures, injuries or chronic diseases, violence often has fatal consequences such as femicide, suicide and maternal mortality.

Consequences for reproductive health include gynaecological disorders, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, unwanted pregnancies and obstetric problems. Unintended pregnancy is another major consequence of sexual violence. Rape, especially during armed conflict, increases the risk. Fear of violence from their husbands or partners may deter women from using contraception or abortion and lead to unwanted pregnancies. The consequences can be multiple: unsafe abortions, suicides. In addition to direct physical trauma, women victims of violence are particularly exposed to a range of psychological and behavioural problems, including depression, alcoholism, anxiety and suicidal behaviour; just as

they have reproductive health problems, such as unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease or sexual dysfunction.

Violence against women, whether family, social or state, limits their development and opportunities to participate fully in the social or economic life of their communities.

Legal violence perpetrated by the state prevents them from accessing resources and full citizenship. Violence in public places compromises their safety and mobility, thus limiting the opportunities for their participation in life.

In addition, in order to combat gender-based violence and inequalities such as sexual violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, etc., young people can make a significant contribution.

They can contribute to educating their peers about the harms of gender-based violence; respect for gender equity within their group and youth advocacy on gender.

It is essential to put an end to the multiple forms of gender-based violence and to provide women and girls, men and boys with access to quality education and health, economic resources and participation in political life. It is also essential to ensure equal opportunities in access to employment and managerial and decision-making positions at all levels.

FOOTNOTES

1. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>
2. <https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-wage-report/lang—fr/index.htm>
3. <https://www.banquemonddiale.org/fr/news/press-release/2018/05/30/globally-countries-lose-160-trillion-in-wealth-due-to-earnings-gaps-between-women-and-men>.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN PERU

Ms. SHEYLA FELIX*

Nowadays, there are many are as to consider in the topic of gender inequality that we can observe these days and need to be improved, there are also others that have been evolving in a positive way or changing through generations. These improvements & evolutions are to be done worldwide, however; the position of this article is to briefly focus in Peru.

Peru is part of the group of developing countries in south America, as per mentioned in the data of the *World Bank*, by the end of 2018, there were 32 millions of people that conform the population, with a distribution of 51% women vs 49% of men for this period, and 49% women vs 51% men below 14 years old (for next generations by 2035 approximately).

1. Gender Equality

Gender equality as basic concept is when the access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.

2. Gender Inequality

When the access to rights and opportunities is highly affected by gender.

- Peru: In Peru, gender inequality is marked and showed in variety of contexts and environments with beliefs and traditions as for example, the family/house environment, the education, the workplace.

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- As in the family/house environment: There is one old belief that says that men provide to the family and women take care of the house and children, there are still many families that follow those “traditional gender roles”, in high majority, the less economic resources the family has, the stronger this tradition is. The “macho” attitude/role of some men (the idea that men are supposed to be seen as the head of the household and expected to live up to strong, masculine characteristics) makes society slowdown in growth.

This “macho” attitude of some believe that women should do all the household chores, bringing bad consequences that affect society, as for example physical autonomy from men to women, gender violence, femicide or feminicide, women’s deaths at the hands of their intimate partner (or former partner), adolescent mothers (women aged 15-19) because of violations, maternal mortality, lack of family planning, etc. Within the last years, since 2016, and because of these type of abuse, there are some new created movements to defend women which are victim of these type of acts, as one that is increasing a lot is named “Ni una menos” (“Not one [woman] less”), the objective is to accuse and defend women, victims of any type of violence (physical or psychological), having as result, the capacity for women to be able to know that they are not alone and that they have a group of people which support them.

In small towns in the mountain range, in the area of communities, which some, are far from the city, families tend to be big, since it was considered as labor or workforce to work the land, this is still being observed in small communities of regions of high altitude, it is important to mention that this has been slowing down within the last years thanks to interactions with communities.

Another crucial factor is the education, opportunity and racism: I’m talking about the rural-urban division in Peru: By 2018, in rural areas, still 34% of women are illiterate vs. 11% men, in urban areas 8% women vs. 3% men. This division has affected the opportunities in different aspects for women from rural and urban places. Within the last years women have been studying hard, and thanks to new initiatives of governments,

there have been created new scholarships which are to be allocated only for minorities of women, this in order for women be able to improve skills and be independent in resources to be able also to provide to the family and also, divide roles at home. Lately also new rewards have been for them, in order to motivate them and go for it, the important thing is to consider and focus these opportunities for both, urban and also rural areas.

This goes together with workplace and economic autonomy for women, within the last years, in Peru, it's possible to see women escalating fast in their positions and having more power within white-collar positions & government hierarchies, this is a good sign, society is advancing there, however, this is in a very low percentage still. Not negotiable salaries, longer hours, unpaid overtime hours and lower salaries than their men peers, woman still need a lot to fight for, since these type of differences should be gone by now. Traditional assumptions and misconceptions in regards of women's roles at home and in society, frequently block women to access to influential roles for private and public sectors.

Sometimes because of the old "traditions & beliefs", women work hard at their jobs, and once that they come back to the house, they begin to do all the household chores, and these stuff will make them feel out & exhausted indeed, sometimes also women have also this type of mentality/ways to proceed and don't ask to their partners to get involved with that also, making it as an habit, however it should be discussed with their partner and divide the chores, as the house is not only for them.

Step by step, slowly new generations of men have been getting involve and learning to divide chores at home, hopefully let's see an advancement on that.

Problems and Causes

- In-equal pay & fear to ask a higher salary.
- Sexual harassment.
- Domestic Violence.
- Racism.

- Men are promoted faster than women.
- Social status.
- Division of population (rich vs. poverty, rural vs. urban).
- Efficient allocation of resources.
- Mentality old vs. new generations.

Priorities

1. World:
 - Multiple forms of gender violence.
 - No secure equal access to:
 - Quality education.
 - Good health service.
 - Economic resources.
 - Participation in political life for both women and girls and men and boys.
 - Equal opportunities in employment.
 - Leadership positions and decision-making at all levels.
2. Peru:
 - Employment.
 - Political participation.
 - Education.
 - And just lately, gender violence (last 8 years).

Stakeholders

- Government.
- Private institutions.
- Associations & non profit NGO's.
- Peruvian citizens (Urban & rural environments).

Effects

- Poverty and slow growth on GDP.
- Bad management of resources between countries.
- Low quality of life for citizens.

Solutions

- Reduce violence against women. Divide household chores at home.
- Teach children since babies to respect women and treat others with respect.
- Promote women in the same way than men with properly salaries.
- Provide new opportunities in education for both areas, urban and rural environments.
- Public and private firms should guarantee the access and participation of women in decision-making topics for the country.
- The Government should punish any discriminatory socio-cultural patterns actions within the citizens.
- The Government should reward and take control of the respect of the exercise of women's economic and social rights.

Conclusion

As with different problems between countries, almost all starts since children and education, Peru and other countries should be able to advance and reduce the gender gap, within the last years Peru has evolved, and many different actions has been taken to find the right solution and the way of thinking has been changing also recently.

It has been proved that the more educated women of a country are, the higher the skills and higher the growth and GDP of the country is. The direct correlation here is because, women have demonstrated to have a very efficient way of work, they are hardworking and have passion for what they do, it's indeed the base of society.

Focusing on education to boost citizen's values (at home& outside of home): Governments should merge with private institutions to be able to deal specific issues of the country as gender inequality, to be able to help women and improve the quality of education, and therefore put a mandatory % of woman working in high level positions, this will motivate women since

child that everything is possible and this task can be handle by both women and men.

Women in the government should increase also in quantity, in order to advance with policy' strategic goals in regards of these topics, as for now it is considered only a minority of women working there.

Women also should support other women, sometimes women idealize men and don't provide opportunities to their counterparts. It's a key point because on that way society can advance, and income equality between women and men can increase.

Last but not least, the improvement of gender issues is a matter of all, therefore all the citizens in Peru, South America and worldwide should be willing to improve the world and make it a better place, this of course implies quality of life, which as far it's one of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) by 2030. Let's help with that, and let's remember that this include each one of us, little by little we can make it, little by little we will make it happen.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION —The Odds and the Hazards

Ms. CHIDIMMA FAITH*

The origin of FGM is fraught with controversy either as an initiation ceremony of young girls into womanhood or to ensure virginity and curb promiscuity, or to protect female modesty and chastity. The ritual has been so widespread that it could not have risen from a single origin.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines female genital mutilation (FGM) as all procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia and/or injury to the female genital organs, whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons. In Nigeria, subjection of girls and women to obscure traditional practices is legendary. FGM is an unhealthy traditional practice inflicted on girls and women worldwide. FGM is widely recognized as a violation of human rights, which is deeply rooted in cultural beliefs and perceptions over decades and generations with no easy task for change.

Though FGM is practiced in more than 28 countries in Africa and a few scattered communities worldwide, its burden is seen in Nigeria, Egypt, Mali, Eritrea, Sudan, Central African Republic, and northern part of Ghana where it has been an old traditional and cultural practice of various ethnic groups. The highest prevalence rates are found in Somalia and Djibouti where FGM is virtually universal.

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Experts over the years have asserted that Nigeria, due to its large population, has the highest absolute number of female genital mutilation (FGM) worldwide, accounting for about one-quarter of the estimated 115–130 million circumcised women in the world.

In Nigeria, FGM has the highest prevalence in the south-south (77%) (among adult women), followed by the south east (68%) and south west (65%), but practiced on a smaller scale in the north, paradoxically. Nigeria has a population of 170 million people with the women population forming 52%. The national prevalence rate of FGM is 41% among adult women. Prevalence rates progressively decline in the young age groups and 37% of circumcised women do not want FGM to continue. 61% of women who do not want FGM said it was a bad harmful tradition and 22% said it was against religion. Other reasons cited were medical complications (22%), painful personal experience (10%), and the view that FGM is against the dignity of women (10%). However, there is still considerable support for the practice in areas where it is deeply rooted in local tradition.

In Nigeria, FGM is classified into four:

- (a) Clitoridectomy or Type I (the least severe form of the practice): It involves the removal of the prepuce or the hood of the clitoris and all or part of the clitoris. In Nigeria, this usually involves excision of only a part of the clitoris.
- (b) “Sunna” or Type II, is a more severe practice that involves the removal of the clitoris along with partial or total excision of the labia minora.
- (c) Infibulation or Type III is the most severe form of FGM. It involves the removal of the clitoris, the labia minora and adjacent medial part of the labia majora and the stitching of the vaginal orifice, leaving an opening of the size of a pin head to allow for menstrual flow or urine.
- (d) Other Unclassified or Type IV includes introcision and gishiri cuts, pricking, piercing, or incision of the clitoris and/or labia, scraping and/or cutting of the vagina (angrya cuts), stretching the clitoris and/or labia,

cauterization, the introduction of corrosive substances and herbs in the vagina, and other forms.

In Nigeria, of the six largest ethnic groups, the Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Ibo, Ijaw, and Kanuri, only the Fulani do not practice any form. FGM varies from country to country, tribes, religion, and from one state and cultural setting to another and no continent in the world has been exempted. In most parts of Nigeria, it is carried out at a very young age (minors) and there is no possibility of the individual's consent. Type I and Type II are more widespread and less harmful compared to Type III and Type IV. In Nigeria, there is greater prevalence of Type I excision in the south, with extreme forms of FGM prevalent in the North.

FGM is recognized worldwide as a fundamental violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. It involves violation of rights of the children and violation of a person's right to health, security, and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death. Furthermore, girls usually undergo the practice without their informed consent, depriving them of the opportunity to make independent decision about their bodies.

There are mild justifications for FGM as a tribal traditional practice, as a superstitious belief practiced for preservation of chastity and purification, family honor, hygiene, esthetic reasons, protection of virginity and prevention of promiscuity, modification of sociosexual attitudes (countering failure of a woman to attain orgasm), increasing sexual pleasure of husband, enhancing fertility and increasing matrimonial opportunities. Other reasons are to prevent mother and child from dying during childbirth and for legal reasons (one cannot inherit property if not circumcised). In some parts of Nigeria, the cut edges of the external genitalia are smeared with secretions from a snail footpad with the belief that the snail being a slow animal would influence the circumcised girl to "go slow" with sexual activities in future. However, FGM is often

routinely performed as an integral part of social conformity and in line with community identity.

Today, an estimated 100–140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the consequences of FGM. In Africa, about 3 million girls are at risk for FGM annually. Despite the increased international and little national attention, the prevalence of FGM overall has declined very little. The procedure has no health benefits for girls and women. Adverse consequences of FGM are shock from pain and hemorrhage, infection, acute urinary retention following such trauma, damage to the urethra or anus in the struggle of the victim during the procedure making the extent of the operation dictated in many cases by chance, chronic pelvic infection, acquired gynatresia resulting in hematocolpos, vulval adhesions, dysmenorrhea, retention cysts, and sexual difficulties with anorgasmia. Other complications are implantation dermoid cysts and keloids, and sexual dysfunction.

Obstetric complications include perineal lacerations and inevitable need for episiotomy in infibulated paturients. Others are defibulation with bleeding, injury to urethra and bladder, injury to rectum, and purperial sepsis. Prolonged labor, delayed 2nd stage and obstructed labor leading to fistulae formation, and increased prenatal morbidity and mortality have been associated with FGM.

The mental and psychological agony attached with FGM is deemed the most serious complication because the problem does not manifest outwardly for help to be offered. The young girl is in constant fear of the procedure and after the ritual she dreads sex because of anticipated pain and dreads childbirth because of complications caused by FGM. Such girls may not complain but end up becoming frigid and withdrawn resulting in marital disharmony.

FGM is widespread in Nigeria. Some socio-cultural determinants have been identified as supporting this avoidable practice. FGM is still deeply entrenched in the Nigerian society where critical decision makers are grandmothers, mothers, women, opinion leaders, men and age groups. FGM is an extreme example of discrimination based on sex. Often used as a way to control women's sexuality, the practice is closely

associated with girls marriageability. Mothers choose to subject their daughters to the practice to protect them from being ostracized, beaten, shunned, or disgraced. FGM was traditionally the specialization of traditional leaders' traditional birth attendants or members of the community known for the trade. There is, however, the phenomenon of medicalization" which has introduced modern health practitioners and community health workers into the trade. The WHO is strongly against this medicalization and has advised that neither FGM must be institutionalized nor should any form of FGM be performed by any health professional in any setting, including hospitals or in the home setting.

It is true that tradition and culture are important aspects of any society in helping to mold the views and behavioral patterns of the society; some traditions and cultural beliefs and practices like FGM are harmful and must be abolished. A multidisciplinary approach is needed to tackle this deep-rooted legendary practice of FGM. There is a need for legislation in Nigeria with health education and female emancipation in the society. The process of social change in the community with a collective, coordinated agreement to abandon the practice "community-led action" is therefore essential. With improvement in education and social status of women and increased awareness of complications of FGM, most women who underwent FGM disapprove of the practice and only very few are prepared to subject their daughters to such harmful procedures. The more educated, more informed, and more active socially and economically a woman is, the more she is able to appreciate and understand the hazards of harmful practices like FGM and sees it as unnecessary procedure and refuses to accept such harmful practice and refuses to subject her daughter to such an operation.

In 1994, Nigeria joined other members of the 47th World Health Assembly to resolve to eliminate FGM. Steps taken so far to achieve this include establishment of a multisectorial technical working group on harmful traditional practices (HTPs), conduct of various studies and national surveys on HTPs, launching of a regional plan of action, and formulation of a national policy and plan of action, which was approved by the Federal Executive Council for the elimination of FGM in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, FGM is being tackled by WHO, United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Federation of International Obstetrics and Gynecology (FIGO), African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and many women organizations. Intensification of education of the general public at all levels has been done with emphasis on the dangers and undesirability of FGM. In 1995, Platform of Action adopted by the Beijing conference called for the eradication of FGM through the enactment and enforcement of legislation against its perpetrators. However, there is no federal law prohibiting the practice of FGM in Nigeria. This is the main reason for the slow progress on declining the prevalence of FGM. Despite the increased international and little national attention, the prevalence of FGM overall has declined very little.] The prevalence depends on the level of education and the geographic location. At the grassroots, efforts should be taken to join in the crusade to say “NO” to FGM anywhere it is practiced. It is crude, dangerous, wicked and unhealthy. FGM is not required by any religion and there is no scientific evidence that women who have been mutilated are more faithful or better wives than those who have not undergone the procedure. It is very clear that there is no single benefit derived from FGM. There is need for abolition of this unhealthy practice. A multidisciplinary approach involving legislation, health care professional organizations, empowerment of the women in the society, and education of the general public at all levels with emphasis on dangers and undesirability of FGM is paramount.

Note: The writer is indebted to different write ups while preparing this article and the views expressed here are her personal.

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IMPOSTOR SYNDROME AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN TECH INDUSTRY

LADY HUERTA*

The Impostor Syndrome (IS) is this notion that everything that we have achieved in life has been due to luck and not exactly because of our talent or qualifications. The syndrome was first identified in 1978, by two women psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes, and some of their theory was that women, where who, were mainly affected by the situation.

Even though research has shown that both men and women experience impostor feelings, in the tech industry, there's a situation where women might have been affected by this; especially when it is related to their development on the professional ladder which is the reason why not a lot of women are represented in leadership roles still. In other words, women might have been limited to take more leadership roles in the industry due to their inner thoughts of not being able to succeed in the task.

Technology, an industry that normally has been represented as very open for women, still deals with structural barriers and cultural restrictions in the workforce, some of them, including that they are not paid the same as their male coworkers, or the situation that their job is being questioned with every move they take, also the fact that several women are taking loads of

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work just to demonstrate that they are capable and up for every task to maintain their spot in the company.

All of these, are components that make up the sentiment of anxiety, where they might not be able to negotiate fair salaries because they feel they are not prepared enough or having failure fears due to how people expected themselves to be good at and how they performed. Marissa Mayer Google's first female engineer and 20th employee, who spent 13-years at the tech company and then was brutally criticized by the decisions she took over being the CEO in Yahoo, expresses this situation and the challenges of being a leader in the industry at an interview for MIT Technology Review:

Marissa: In 2008, I had gotten engaged. It was a great and fun time in my life. Unfortunately for Silicon Valley, Gawker had come to town and had created a blog about us. [...] unfortunately, I was one of them. And it was, you know, it was a caricature of me. It wasn't me. And, you know, they wrote really awful articles. [...] I was at Google at the time. I talked to the people at Google about how bothered I was. And someone just said, "You don't like it?" And, you know, I thought they were going to offer to call up Gawker and try and get them to calm down. I'm not even sure that was possible. And they said, "Just stop reading it." And I was like, look, that that's impossible. I'm a leader. My team is reading it sometimes. I need to respond to what they say."

This kind of situation makes women feel like they are not good enough, and their leadership should be questioned. This sentiment where women believe their position in their jobs and the goals they want to achieve is merely a stroke of luck and not exactly due to their skills and talent comes when facing a situation where women might not pursue everything they could achieve on their careers, or limit their decisions to the things they think people are expecting from them. Because, even though we are aware of the efforts to make progress on making women more equal partners in the economy and society, their participation in the workforce and leadership positions is still very judged.

The Impostor Syndrome or Impostor Experience, has affected women in several situations limiting the opportunity to thrive in several circumstances worldwide. Recent research from NatWest, which was done in the United Kingdom, stated that 28% of working women feel like impostorism has stopped them speaking in a meeting, 21% have been prevented from suggesting a new or alternative idea at work, and 26% have failed to change career or role.

Clare Josa, author of *Ditching Imposter Syndrome* and leadership consultant describes this experience as “the single biggest block to success” in business today; “It affects a company’s bottom line because IS means that people might play small, they don’t take risks and won’t put forward their ideas,” which at the end limits innovation and thrive.

We have had women who haven’t fall back on these experiences, like Sheryl Sandberg Chief Operator at Facebook, Marissa Mayer investor and venture capital, Rachel Mushahwar, a Vice President and General Manager at Intel, and even more. But even though, several women have overcome this situation, there are still plenty who would like to speak up, sit at the table and follow their dreams, but don’t count with appropriate support to do so.

One of the best ways to overcome these kinds of circumstances is through resilience, and having a support system is a game-changer. Therefore, we need to have more space for these conversations to follow. Rachel Mushahwar talks about this in an interview she did for Forbes magazine:

It’s not enough to bring women into the field, we need to ensure they stay. So in many cases, the tech sector still needs to change. Only 22% of the 7.4 million technology occupations in the U.S. are held by women and 17% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women. 50% of women leave STEM career within 12 years (vs. 20% of non-STEM.) And the stats are worse for women of color: between 2007 and 2015, the number of African-American women in tech dropped 13%, and the number of African-American women managers dropped 23%. These statistics are unacceptable. We

have to do better, and demand our male allies do better too.

Tendü Yođurtçu, who's a Chief Technology Officer of Syncsort a global software company specializing in Big Data stated the following while discussing the same subject:

we've built a research and development (R&D) team that's about 30% women, and over 40% of the leadership team is comprised of women. As the statistics above show, this makes us an industry outlier. But we didn't achieve this by setting quotas. It happened because we focused on creating a fair, inclusive environment where everyone feels empowered to share ideas.

She considers that to accomplish this, senior executives and C-level team players should be on board. She proposes that a way to do that is to engage supportive male allies to be the champions for their female colleagues, which was something that Marissa Mayer lived while making decisions as CEO of Yahoo, continuing with her response about the challenges of being a leader in the industry at an interview for MIT Technology Review:

Marissa: I'm a leader. My team is reading it sometimes. I need to respond to what they say." And then they kind of pushed it a little further and they said, "Do you?" And it made me really think like, do I need to read it? Does it actually make me a better leader?

According to Valerie Young, author of *The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women*, both men and women experience the impostor syndrome, but studies show that women are more often affected and more likely to suffer the consequences. Therefore, having a support system with a mentor that helps you work towards the narrative oneself produces on their own achievements and the plans they want to accomplish helps women in leadership positions to pursue their goals and plans.

Researchers such as Jeff Bednar professor at Brigham Young University, who did a study on impostorism believe that what created these sentiments is also related to a culture that is prone to perfectionism and lets little space for failure and innovation. "It's important to create cultures where people talk

about failure and mistakes. When we create those cultures, someone who is feeling strong feelings of impostorism will be more likely to get the help they need within the organization.”

Technology is a great industry to foster these kinds of cultures, mindsets, and opportunities. In a period where decisions are being taken every day, the stakes are high and constant change is happening, organizations that prioritize a diverse and inclusive culture will be better to solve the problems of the future. It is undeniable how diversity leads to innovation, for example, when an organization's executives are at least 30% female, it can lead to 15% gains in profitability, and it can be an advantage for recruiting, which would help them create more diverse communities in organizations and therefore opportunities.

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7

GENDER VIOLENCE —Women Degradation

Ms. INYIE PEPPLE*

In the light of gender studies, and the thorny issue of the rights of women, over the years their rights and privileges are interfered with or completely removed in vital decisions, be it political, social, cultural and even religious. This piece attempts to explore the gaps in women's right and society which tends to ignore or treat women as inferior to men, and also to advance our knowledge in seeing women as equal with the men in their rights and privileges as they contribute to the well-being of the nation.

Although some cultural practices are supportive, nurturing and serving purposes, others are harmful and discriminate against certain sections of the society, especially women. Many communities in Africa have used culture to justify discrimination against women without giving them their basic human rights. The record of oppression, subordination and silencing of women has been so wide spread and long standing. Some have resigned to fate and at times succumbed and accepted the scorn the male dominated society had for them. Thus, in the contemporary society, women are seen as mere playthings, sex objects, unpaid cooks and house keepers, child minders who could not engage in rational discussions.

It is interesting to know that sexism is a universal problem

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regardless of class, culture, race or religious differences. However, different forms of exploitation manifest themselves in various social sectors, religious and cultural settings. Generalization as the gender issue in such a situation is not easy, if not impossible. Nevertheless, there are certain common characteristic trends when it comes to women oppression and discrimination. It is an undeniable fact that women play certain irreplaceable roles in society but often these unique roles are not given adequate recognition and sometimes not acknowledged at all. When it comes to various opportunities in life, in most cases, women are often denied equal rights with their male counterparts. A great percentage of women in Nigeria and Africa as a whole are questioned by the society when they decide to take up a career path that the African society has mentally carved out for just men.

Conceptual Clarification

Gender: This emanates from how the biological imperatives of the human sexes are considered. It relates to the behaviour, social and cultural attributes associating with each of the human sexes. On the other hand, It is seen as a cultural construct that distinguishes the emotional characteristics, roles and behaviour between the males and females in consideration with the view of the society.

Violence : The action which causes destruction, pain or suffering, it also refers to widespread fighting.

Historical Approach to Gender Rights and Privileges

The issue regarding women's right is not a new one. Historically, there were distinctive between men and women, their roles in the society and models of behaviour. However, considerable changes have been seen since those times. Today, gender roles have been shifted, making strong impact on the society. Women in our African setting are now breaking out from just home keepers to strong career women, sharing the same rights with men.

Gender Rights in Early Period

The state law, rather than the federal, governed women's right in the early republic. The authority of the state law meant that much depended upon where a woman lived and the particular

social circumstances in her region of the country. The disparity in standards can perhaps be seen most dramatically in the experiences of African-American women. In the north, where states abolished slavery after the revolution, black women gained rights to marry, to have custody of the children and to own properties. In some cases, in every state, the legal status of free women depended upon marital status.

Gender Rights in Medieval Times

Did new ideas about women appear in this period? Theological and popular literature on marriage published in Reformation Europe leads to answering this question. A husband was obliged to provide for the material welfare of his wife and children, to protect his family while remaining steady and self-controlled. He was to rule his family firmly but justly; he was not to behave like a tyrant - a guideline that counsellors repeat frequently. A wife was to be matured, a good house manager, subservient and faithful to her spouse. The husband also owed fidelity.

Gender Issues in Modern Times

The progressive challenges to establish social assumption also stirred women to seek liberation from the confines of homes. Their struggle raised questions of identity like those faced by the blacks. What tactics should women use to achieve equality, and what should be their role in the society. The answers women found involved a subtle but important shift in women's politics. Before 1910, those engaged in the quest for women's right referred to themselves as women movement. This label was used to characterize middle-class women stirring to move beyond the home into social-welfare activities, higher education and paid labour like some African-American and Indian leaders, they argued that legal and voting rights were indispensable accomplishments to such moves. Society in this period was patriarchal. Women neither lost their identity nor lack meaningful work, but all pervasive assumption was that men ruled.

The status of women in a typical African situation has often been characterized as oppressive and discrimination along the gender line. A society in which the woman is viewed by the

male folks who dominate virtually every key and strategic sector of the society, as a second class citizen and an incomplete specie good only for sexual gratification, child bearing and tidying the home. The woman is seen as naturally incapacitated in tackling various problems, which is not true politically, she is underrepresented and nearly stampeded, culturally she is treated with inferiority and inequality, in relation to her male counterparts, socially she is being discriminated against, economically she is marginalized.

In the changing culture of Africa, women are not protected from the vicissitudes of life. In all these, the demands of traditions are applied more to the women than men, African women are expected to bear all this without protest. Any talk of women liberation is met with cynicism, hostility or ridicule. A woman who has vision concerning her life that contradicts the traditional role of the male dominated society pays a terrible price for daring to pursue that vision.

Nevertheless, woman all over Africa are quietly but surely struggling to be free. Both men and women need to be freed from this so called divinely willed subordinated state of women.

The machinery of social justice and fairness in society tends to work against women. Moreover, the necessary tools to foster self-realization are placed beyond their reach by custom, tradition and religion. These tools include education, social justice and political empowerment. The total attitude of the African society tends to portray a woman as inferior to man. Africa is replete with innumerable women of power who placed significant roles in different socio-cultural and socio-political contexts. Although in colonial depletions, African Queens and Queen mothers are portrayed as a disturbing presence to the colonial enterprise, cultural anthropologists and historians have added much substance to our understanding of their roles and positions both before and after the advents of the colonizers.

Women's Emancipation

Many women advocates recognized that globalisation affects different groups of women in different ways, create new standards for the treatment of women, and help women groups to mobilize. In situations such as this, women have been

historically repressed or discriminated under a patriarchal division of labour.

Women's limited participation in governance has led to a distortion of concepts a narrowing of processes. In the area of conflict prevention, women can be the source of innovative and more needed approaches to peace building. Women's role in giving and sustaining life has provided them with skills and insights essential to peaceful human relations and social development. Women subscribe less readily than men to the myth of the efficacy of violence.

Furthermore, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in response to United Nations Decade for women enumerated strategies for economic development in Africa from 1980-2000, emphasized the importance of giving special attention to the women in such vital areas as education, training and empowerment, organizational machinery, communications and mass media, health nutrition and family life, research, data collection and analysis and legislative and administrative matters.

However, Discrimination against women can be seen as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition of the female gender.

Out of the 1.3 billion people living in abject poverty today, 70 per cent are women, majority of the world's refugees are women, female illiteracy is invariably higher than male illiteracy. Women and girl children are treated as commodities in cross border prostitution on rackets and the pornography industry. Sadly, millions of girls in Africa specifically are still subjected to genital mutilation, while women in every country are regular victims of domestic violence.

PATRIARCHY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

MRS. ARPANA ANUP RAJBANGSHI*

A great majority of societies in this world have been a patriarch, where men are more likely to hold positions of social, economic and political power than women. The concept of patrilocal residence is common where a woman has to live with her husband's family in most parts of India.

Two million years ago humans were hunter gatherers and used to move from place to place in search of food and water. Patrilocal residence was not the common norm used at that time and in fact society, religion, culture were far distant concept to be borne yet. According to Sarah Hardy, a degree of egalitarianism was built into these systems. Women in those early societies would have had the choice of support from the group they grew up with, or the option to move away from oppression.

But things started to change 12,000 years ago according to a school of thought. With the advent of agriculture, people began to settle down. It required many resources like food, water and most importantly equipments and manpower to defend against other races and wild animals. They started living in groups, i.e., the fathers, sons, uncles, grand-fathers began living near to each other and thus power shifted to physically stronger males. Property was passed down the male lineage and female autonomy was eroded. As a result, the argument

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goes, patriarchy emerged and gender roles evolved with females allowed to do only stereotypical jobs like cooking, cleaning, managing children etc. This stereotyping of gender roles limited the development of girl child and restricted her growth in fields where only the boy child was allowed to develop.

And this theory is supported by a study published in 2004. Researchers at the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy studied mitochondrial DNA (inherited from mothers) and genetic markers on the Y chromosome (inherited from fathers) in 40 populations from sub-Saharan Africa. The study clearly suggested that, women in hunter gatherer population are more likely to stay with their mothers after marriage or conception of a child than women from food producing populations. This suggests that agriculture is indeed correlated with patrilocal societies. India is an agrarian country because majority of its population depends on the agriculture and its related activities for their livelihoods. Looking at the orthodox patriarchal society in most of the parts of the country, the theory has proved to be true.

So does a society or community have to be hunter gatherer to come out of patriarchy and bring about gender equality? Not necessarily. In India itself, we can see example of matriarchal society in the state of Meghalaya. In the Khasi and the Garo tribe of Meghalaya, the affairs of the Tribe as well as the domestic affairs are controlled by the women of the house and their living standards reflects the contemporary living standard of the country as a whole. Following the matrilineal law of inheritance, the youngest daughter of the house will stay with the parents and inherit the house that is named after her mother. If there is no female inheritor within the immediate family, the property passes to the daughter of the mother's sister. The husband is expected to leave his house and live with his wife in his mother-in-laws house. At the same time the male of the society has the freedom to choose their profession, go out of their community in pursuit of their dreams.

On the other hand, Indian society, in general, is a very strong patriarchal society where women are considered not more than a domestic help. Gender inequality and subjugation subsists in every sphere of life, be it health, education, politics or economics. The girl child has been discriminated since long by forcing her

to drop out of college; lackadaisical attitude towards health issues of the girl child; wage gap in the economic sector and minimal representation of women in policy making, etc.. Even now in many parts of India the long practised dowry system in India makes the parents consider a girl child as a burden.

However, post-independence, the Constitution of India and subsequent legislations have tried to make specific provisions for women empowerment and for bringing about equality. The Constitution of India treats both men and women as equal. Article 14 ensures to women the right to equality. Article 15(1) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Article 15(3) empowers the state to take affirmative action in favour of women. Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity relating to employment or appointment to any office. Article 39 (a) and (d) mandates equal rights to means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work. The government has taken many women welfare initiatives in the national level like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Abhiyan*, *Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)*, *Sukanya Samridhi Yojana*, *Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)-‘SABLA’*, *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh*, *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana*, *Ujjwala Yojana* and *SWADHAR*.

Despite the many affirmative measures taken by the government for the welfare of the women in India, they are facing problems like increasing violence against women, stereotyped portrayal of women in society, workplace harassment. Therefore, making legislations alone is not enough in bringing about empowerment of women, there is a need for shift in societal attitude towards women and inculcate behavioural changes in boys, right from childhood. Until the notion and tradition of orthodox patriarch disappears from Indian homes, even though one may try their hardest to uplift women, patriarchy will pull them down. Educating Indian children, right at their homes, from an early stage about importance of gender equality could be a meaningful start in achieving women empowerment.

SNIPPETS OF EXPERIENCE ON GENDER FROM MEXICO

Ms. WASA CONCHA*

Do you think is possible to make people laugh and learn about gender equality? I know it might sound as a weird mix, but my project partner Mena Rodríguez and I, Karla Wasabichi, found out that it's not only possible, but it's one of the best ways to raise awareness about this important subject.

Mena and I met on a business women event, we were both invited to talk about our experience as entrepreneurs, after I gave my talk, everybody was laughing and asked if I was a comedian, Mena approached me and we wonder why do we as women, always have to be so posh in our networks, talks and events in order to be accepted as a business woman, to have credibility, and how people laughing and enjoying a talk that was real could make more of an impact.

Other women started to listen to our talk and shared their thoughts, how they've experienced their way to the entrepreneur world as a woman. We realized (Mena and me), that there were more of us wondering the same subject and not talking about it, so we told them that we needed a place to do it and talk about this gap that does not only exists in the entrepreneur world, but in everything a woman has to challenge in her life.

So Mena and I decided to give these (and us) women a

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place to raise our voices and that's how ESTAS SON VIEJAS (These are some women) in 2015 was born.

The idea? An event where women could express themselves about topics that tend to be taboo or not "women talk" in a safe space but with a twist, a beer in our hands and using the standup format.

Why standup? You may ask, and here comes the interesting part, Standup was born with the intention to express ourselves in subjects that are annoying and relatable to people, to have a different view or perspective on a problem or a solution, that's when we saw the opportunity to use comedy as a tool for a social impact.

In México, specially Monterrey, N.L. has a "macho" comedy where women are depicted in a way that only humiliates and perpetuates stereotypes, so we decided to take a stand and use comedy in our favor.

Our first event was women only, we received good feedback, but decided to open it for all audiences to attend, but specifying that only women no matter their age or people who identify with the female gender could be on the stage.

The first events were a success, but we realized there was something missing, sometimes girls would only make jokes that humiliate themselves or disrespected other women. In one event, a girl was talking about how bad her boss used to treat her, everyone was laughing and connecting to the story, but suddenly she stopped, looked at the audience and said: "But not all men, my boyfriend is not a mean person, please give a big applause to him", Mena and I looked at each other and knew we needed to make something for that type of things to never happen again.

So we came with the idea to give a standup workshop with a gender perspective for all the women who were going to participate, we both and the project are feminist, so we needed to change the conversation, create intelligent and well thought out comedy that educates people through laughter.

We started to think on a logistic for each event, how could it be more structured, so we divided the whole process of creating the event in a month, and it goes like this:

Week one

First step, define the theme of the event, we are open to everything, we've talked from the clichés of motherhood, harassment, family, abortion, equal pay, toxic relationships, witches (because they burned us at the stake, now they do it on social networks), entrepreneurship, mental health, LGBTQ+, money, business, negotiation, man's plaining, politics and more, themes we know, we have lived and want to say our view on it.

Step two: Where are the comedians? We realized there wasn't too many standup women in Monterrey, so we decided to create our famous Nomina Atu Vieja (Nominate your woman), we published a post on our social media with the topic of the event and the copy that explained that we were looking for women who were experts in the topic, not by degree, but by life experience and wanted to live the amazing process of being part of Estas Son Viejas.

In every Nomina post, there has been more than hundreds of women who tagged their friend or even themselves because they want to live the experience, but the amazing part of this, is the recognition women give to themselves and others as they nominate other women they admire and want to see them shine in the stage, want for more people to realize the amazing woman their friend (or her) is, the sorority and bonding between us starts right there.

Week two

Of all the women nominated, we select from 4 to 6 that we see that can relate with the theme of the event, this part gets Mena and me excited, every new brave girl that wants to be part of the project means a lot to us, we tell them that they are making history, they represent a woman that has been on their position, and we assure them that their work here is powerful and will create an impact not only on the attendees, but in them, in their life, there's a before and after in every woman that participates in Estas Son Viejas, we've seen it.

Week three

We give them a standup workshop with a gender perspective. This is our strong point, which makes our project stand out from other comedy events, in Mexican comedy it is very common

to humiliate women, that's why we explain what feminism is, how to create a comedy routine that is not chauvinist, where they don't humiliate themselves for a cheap laugh and instead of people laughing AT us, they laugh WITH us, and for them to feel prepared to shine.

In the workshop we've had women from different ages, the youngest 16 years old, the older, well the wiser, haha, 50 years old, It's amazing how these 4-6 women connect through their stories and by one important and beautiful factor, being a woman. We've had a Mexican indigenous woman talk about her experience with money and "the dragon" also known as ATM, and how every time she needed money, she prepared herself so when the dragon "spitted" the money she could catch it, or the rich girl that studied in the most prestigious school in Monterrey, takes out a piece of paper and cleans her fake tears and says that it's her college degree and its only purpose is to wipe away her tears.

Week four

The "graduation", after two workshops, they can finally go up in the stage in a safe place, the majority of people that assists our events are friends of the girls, or people that understand what we are doing, the change and impact we want to make so they are safe to speak their minds, to make mistakes because people go to support their braveness.

We've had different experiences, every event is special, for us is amazing that there are so many women with the need to speak, to shout what they live, to connect with others and to soothe themselves by knowing that we all know what they are living.

In one event in February called: "¿Viejas Tóxicas?" (Toxic women?), a girl who was in the stage, made people laugh with stories of her toxic relationship, when she ended she realized of what she was living and told us: "Thank you, for now I realize I need to leave this person in order to love me".

Comedy is a beautiful, strong and powerful way to tell stories in a way people can be open to listen up, to be empathic and understand the inequalities we live as women, to understand our fight and become allies.

We are proud that this movement continues to grow, we have had our obstacles, cyber bullies trying to beat us down, but we are not afraid, it's our time to speak, to raise our voice for us, for the ones to come. We are aware that we must be disruptive to be able to create a change, to bother to create reflections in the people who attend our events and the ones that see us livestream, but especially, to make an impact in the brave women who have no experience in comedy, but have the braveness to get on stage, expose themselves, be vulnerable and create catharsis through comedy.

This year we are celebrating our 4th anniversary, we have 25 events with more than 2,000 attendees, adding more than 150 women who have made standup, 3 who have participated in Comedy Central and we are going for more.

Mena and I would have never thought of the impact this project we love so much could create. Four years of making people laugh through the stories of extraordinary women, who not only touch other people's life but theirs is touched too.

In my experience through these years, I've learned the importance of having safe spaces for women to speak their mind, to have the courage to talk about deep topics that can be disturbing but somehow making it funny in a way people understand where it comes. The moment I knew I was made for this was in a anniversary of the event, we had an open mic, we had time for only one more girl, she goes up to the stage and starts talking of harassment, but something we have learned here is that you can't laugh at something you haven't healed, so she wasn't ready to make fun of what happened to her, and we felt her pain, when she came down the stage we simply hugged her and I went up and talk about my own story, of how this taxi driver tried to be smart with his harassment.

I for some reason could laugh about it because for me in that time it was normal for a taxi driver to harass you, people were crying tears of laughter, I was laughing too, but before I ended my story I told them: "That's a funny story, so much giggles and laughter, but I want to make something clear, right now, in this instant, I can laugh because I have the privilege of being alive, because that taxi driver could have ended mi life if he wanted too, and this people, this standup is what we are

doing with Estas Son Viejas, tell our stories, laugh, be grateful that we are alive, so we can tell our stories and make people reflect on it, and to stop normalizing harassment and more... thanks for your time and laughs”.

I left the stage with such a power in my body, I turned to Mena and told her that we are doing something beautiful and powerful, and after that moment we promised ourselves to never stop doing the event, to motivate more women of other races, ages, sexual orientation to come to our stage.

Estas Son Viejas has not only impacted other women and peoples life, it has made a change in me, to be more brave, to speak my mind and heal through my comedy, it has made me stronger.

And that's why me and Mena will never stop doing this new and disruptive way of talking about gender equality, we've learned so much of these women, grown as entrepreneurs, and make good impact in these time, that we don't and won't stop, we want to keep empowering women through comedy, and to stand by our project motto: We want to change the world, one laugh at a time.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS —The Latin American Situation

Ms. YANNIZ VALADEZ* AND
Ms. ELDA BARRON**

I don't get my inspiration from books or a painting. I get it from the women I meet.

-Carolina Herrera

Women's participation in entrepreneurial activity has increased in the last decades. It is estimated that today there are 252,053,113 women worldwide engaged in entrepreneurship,. According to the 2018 State of Women-Owned Businesses Report, the number of women-owned businesses has increased by nearly 3,000% since 1972, in the US. Likewise, The World Bank data indicate that currently in the world, 1 in 3 businesses are women-owned (Halim, 2020). This growing tendency brings it with that many researchers, both from academia and practitioner fields, focus on exploring this phenomenon.

Women entrepreneurs offer particular characteristics to analyze and learn. For example, some studies highlight the differences and similarities across countries that affect women entrepreneurs. The proliferation of activity and research, there are many questions around it: what is the woman's role in entrepreneurship? What conditions enhance business

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venturing from women, and what factors hinder women's participation in entrepreneurship?

Concretely, this chapter explores women entrepreneurs in Latin America. Latin America has a particular economic, social, and political conditions that impact entrepreneurial activity. We present a series of data and findings that illustrate the role of women in different entrepreneurial activities such as commercial entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and innovation in Latin America. We invite to reflect on women entrepreneurs and their conditions in Latin American countries.

Entrepreneurship in Latin America

Entrepreneurship ecosystems are beyond Silicon Valley, and success cases as Facebook or Google. Entrepreneurship is everywhere and there are particular contexts to know, explore and learn. Latin America is an specific context where the opportunities are growing and its conditions impact entrepreneurial behavior. Nowadays, it is more common that Latin American entrepreneurs appear in rankings and boost their economies through their ventures. For example, Latin American women are moving the world with their ventures; for example, Carolina Herrera in the fashion industry, and Iris Fontbona, in mining.

Some examples of Latin America entrepreneurship ecosystems are countries as Chile, Colombia, and Perú that are ahead with an advanced entrepreneurial ecosystem, according to GEDI (Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute) 2019. According to GEM (Global Entrepreneurship), in 2019, countries show rates of entrepreneurship higher than last year. Specifically, Latin America shows high rates of entrepreneurial activity, head this ranking Colombia, Guatemala, and Chile, in comparison to Asia, Europe, and countries as Canadá and the US.

Entrepreneurs are crucial engines for economic growth; that's why it is so important to focus on generating useful ecosystems in order to generate the conditions that facilitate new venture creation. These conditions include regulations, incentives, and opportunities of investment with a non-gender vision, focusing on the attitudes, abilities, and aspirations of the entrepreneur, among others. These factors can help to

break down the barriers for men and women to undertake in similar circumstances.

It is important to show the entrepreneurial panorama for women, what is the presence of women around the world, and in Latin America. Globally, women present fewer rates of entrepreneurial activity. Just six countries present equal rates of entrepreneurial activity of women and man. The gap between women and man entrepreneurial activity is only smaller in African countries. In the rest of the world there are a significant differences, particularly in Latin America, where the rate difference is the more than 10% (GEM, 2019)

According to GEM (2019), the highest rates of entrepreneurial activity of women are in Africa and Latin America. Latin America is a region with a large number of middle-income countries. Ecuador, Guatemala, y Chile are the countries with the highest rates of women entrepreneurs. Although Latin America has high levels of women entrepreneurs, it is essential to analyze the nature of these ventures and the conditions in which they are developed.

For the entrepreneurship field, there is a dichotomous entrepreneurial motivation: necessity-driven and opportunity-driven. That means the people decide to start a business for two reasons 1) economic support or employment (necessity) or 2) seeking a business opportunity. Globally, women are more likely than men to start a new business by necessity motive (GEM, 2019).

Necessity-driven motive tendency is consistent with low-countries income, where women present more necessity-driven, while high-income countries are motivated by opportunity. Latin American women entrepreneurs present a more likely necessity-driven motivation to start a business, in comparison with men. According to the GEM (2019), only 10 countries shows equal rates of necessity-driver between women and man, among them Peru.

Regarding the industry, female entrepreneurs have a more significant presence in wholesale and retail, financial and administrative consumer service. In addition to these sectors, in Latin America, manufacturing and transportation have high women participation.

Latin American Context

A critical aspect to examine about women entrepreneurs are the conditions that supports entrepreneurial activity. According to the FEI, Female Entrepreneurship Index , (2015) the e top 10 countries that have a support for female high-growth entrepreneurs are (1) United States, (2) Australia, (3) United Kingdom, (4) Denmark, (5) Netherlands, (6) France, (7) Iceland, (8) Sweden, (9) Finland, and (10) Norway.

No Latin American country is one of the first places, which shows the lack of support system in these countries. An examination of regional differences across the globe show that the strongest areas in Latin America for entrepreneurship are the Executive Status, Entrepreneurship Ratio, and the Female Leadership. While weakest areas are a lack of R&D Expenditure and Finances (Terjesen, S. A., & Lloyd, A. (2015)

In Latin America and the Caribbean just 1% of the entrepreneurship woman have access to angel investments, seed capital and risk capital, the three most important channels of financing. In contrast with men they have 7% access to this form of capital.

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THE SOCIETAL GAME OF BEING A VIRTUOUS MARRIED WOMAN

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Introduction

The concept of patriarchy is often looked down upon from the perspectives of Gender Studies as it can solely be held responsible for the oppression of women- socially, politically, culturally, mentally, physically, etc. They are treated in a way where they start questioning about their own existence and individualities. Such an inferior status is mostly seen in a married woman whose individuality becomes almost a non-existent one when she gets married to a man and bears him children.

The current scenario of the society has advanced a lot where both the wife and the husband contribute equally to every sector that they are associated with. However, such was not the case in the past centuries. Girls from a young age were taught the virtues that they must adapt in their lives. They were never asked to learn about the importance of their selves but were rather, taught ways to keep their future husbands happy. The status of being a virtuous woman strongly speaks about the traditional decorum of gender roles framed by the society. Once a woman gets married, she stops enjoying the basic rights that a human has which ultimately makes her unwillingly devote herself to her husband who is now, the owner of her mind and body.

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The Virtuous Wife : An Act of Surrendering Oneself to Patriarchy

The word “happily” is often connected with marriage, such as “Happily married”, “Happily-ever-after”, but can the phrases be happily applied to a wife’s life is the main question. During the past ages, the lives of the wives in general were quite harsh, sad and disheartening. The place where they had little or no liberty was only the ‘homes of their husbands’. At their homes, they were not allowed to enjoy their individualism but were forced to stay inside merely to fulfill their duties as devoted wives, mothers and homemakers. This in turn, provided them with almost no opportunities where they could uplift themselves in any manner.

In the previous times, when it came to a “virtuous wife”, a married woman was taught and expected to be pure, calm, sober, tender, well-dressed, well-mannered and have motherly senses. Associating herself with the state of marriage meant that she was expected to bear her husband a child as soon as possible and later, take care of them properly by providing them with a warm and comfortable home where they could grow up nicely. She was asked to abandon her individuality and instead, find joy within her family’s choices. Also, the wives were rarely allowed to study or have a job. Their interests in the academic/intellectual areas were strongly discarded by the society and/or by the families as their “hearts were valued over their minds, the mind being associated with the masculine” (Cruea 189).

Sexism : An Attitude Resulting in the Rational Awakening of the ‘Fairer Sex’

In simple terms, ‘Sexism’ can be defined as an act of gender-based discrimination, leading to the downfall of individualism, identity, existentialism, power of the “Fairer Sex”(women). The term “Fairer Sex” itself shows the sexist attitude of the society towards a woman where she is expected to be fair in complexion so that she might possess the beauty standards set by the sexist people. This sexist attitude of the society stopped women, mostly the married ones from gaining higher education, getting jobs and/or enjoying their basic human rights as individuals. A

wife was always expected to be the “Angel in the House”. It is a phrase coined by the English poet Coventry Patmore in his poem *The Angel in the House* which simply means that a wife is expected to have traits like an angel- devoted to her husband, caretaker of her children, a good homemaker, graceful, calm, powerless, pious, self-sacrificing, and find contentment in others’ choices. However, this game of sexism gradually started giving burning sensations inside the hearts and minds of women which ultimately led to the birth of ‘Feminism’, all started initially by the Feminist philosopher Christine de Pisan in France in the late 14th and 15th centuries. As a result, many women came forward with their writings in order to express themselves among which many are considered as major women writers till date.

One of such major women writers is Kate Chopin who hailed from America. She was a strong woman of the 19th century America whose family and husband were supportive enough to her. As a middle-aged woman, she started writing fiction which made her very successful as a writer. Her most acknowledged and famous work is the novel *The Awakening* (1899) which provided her with a higher social status as a result of which, she had built her own literary salon at her home. However, though *The Awakening* is one of the most widely read novels today, it was criticised and not accepted by the 19th century society wholeheartedly as it tries to depict a married woman’s independent state of sexuality which allowed her to fulfill her individual urges to a certain extent which was considered as a taboo during those times.

The plot line of *The Awakening* is quite simple but complex at the same time. The main character is Edna Pontellier, a married woman who is seen suffering from emotional conflicts where she often ends up throwing away the societal boundaries in order to find her true individuality. She is unhappy in her marriage and not interested in taking care of her children. Also, she ends up having an extra-marital affair which puts her into more emotional conflicts within her mind as she is confused between what is right or wrong for her as a married woman. The novel has an open-end to it where she is seen walking towards the sea, gradually becoming invisible. Chopin has kept the ending of the novel open so that the readers might imbibe their own perspectives into it.

Another major woman writer from the 19th century America is Charlotte Perkins Stetson, also known as Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Her most famous work is the short story *The Yellow Wall-Paper* (1892) which is biographical in tone and was inspired from her own experiences as a wife to Charles Stetson. Charlotte gave birth to a beautiful daughter named Katherine. However, after giving birth to her, she suffered from what we know today as 'postpartum depression'. She went through a lot of weird treatments on her husband's advice such as complete bed rest, focus on her domestic life, take care of their child properly and do not pay attention to her rational thoughts. Instead of supporting her emotionally, her husband tried to dominate her as a result of which she finally granted a divorce from him in 1892.

The short story *The Yellow Wall-Paper* is one of the major feminist works that tries to portray the ignorance of the 19th century sexist society towards the physical and mental health of a woman. The title is framed as *The Yellow Wall-Paper* because when the protagonist starts becoming insane, she often sees a woman coming out of the yellow wallpaper pasted on her room which symbolizes the freedom of a woman once she stops herself from following the societal boundaries put on her. The story is a collection of journal entries written by the female protagonist who is referred to as the 'narrator' in it. She is suffering from postpartum depression and anxiety. Her physician husband John diagnoses her with 'neurasthenia' (disorder of a person's nervous system that arose mostly out of depression and anxiety; a term first used in the 1820s). He advises her to take bed rest and stops her from working or writing without trying to understand her mental state. As a result, his dominance in the relationship made her insane towards the end of the story.

Conclusion

The sexist attitude had been prevailing in the society since ages and still exists today to a certain extent. We, as humans, must learn to see each other equally which is possible only if we start treating both the sexes equally. The terms like "Fairer Sex", "Angel in the House" must be discarded totally and women must be provided with equal opportunities in their lives just like

the men. Prioritizing individuality and identity of a woman must be the main agenda in Gender Studies and only then, the world would become a more vibrant place for the women to live in as well.

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GENDER, LANGUAGE AND PRESS

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The stereotypes regarding women in the press go through not only the society view of women and gender, but the way women are portrayed in relation to the own language use: there are plenty researches, such as presented in the book *The Female Brain*, where the neuropsychiatrist Louann Brizendine says that women use 20.000 words per day, while men use only 7.000.

At the university of Arizona, in 2006, a research (1) was developed concerning this subject over 8 years, and it's conclusion shows that between the 396 participants (210 women and 186 men) the difference between the amount of words used in the daily life was only of 546 words (women spoke around 16.215 and men 15.6699), showing that there was no remarkable difference between the number of spoken words used during the 17 hours analysed for each person (only 7% difference).

Another research (2) published by the Cambridge University Press, in 2008, investigated if the listener bias contributed to the wrong conclusion that women talk more than men:

Dialogues were recorded in mixed-sex and single-sex versions, and male and female listeners judged the proportions of talk contributed to the dialogues by each participant. Female contributions to mixed-sex

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dialogues were rated as greater than male contributions by both male and female listeners. Female contributions were more likely to be overestimated when they were speaking a dialogue part perceived as probably female than when they were speaking a dialogue part perceived as probably male. It is suggested that the misestimates are due to a complex of factors that may involve both perceptual effects such as misjudgment of rates of speech and sociological effects such as attitudes to social roles and perception of power relations.

The conclusion of the research is yes, the listener bias contributes to the conclusion that women talk more than men. How does this kind of social behaviour interfere on the way women speech is seen?

According to the research above, it is a result of hate speech and power relations: the own way women's speech is seen is related to the men's speech, to the hate speech it might carry when answering to a woman.

Besides, it is important to emphasize the relation of this behavior with power relations in our society. This is not the only paper that shows this relation between language, power, and hate speech. We can see examples of researches showing it across many countries:

In Brazil we had a research (3) analyzing how hate speech towards women is used to stop them on the Brazilian Parliament. In order to apply the research, they have done 45 interviews, given that 19 were the deputies and 26 were with the advisors. After the interviews they organized the discursive violences related by the participants in 15 different forms.

Some of these different forms of discursive violence were: 1- disrespect to women who were leading the sessions at the Deputy Chamber (who were in power positions), 2- aggressive interruptions when women were speaking, 10- call them 'histerical, crazy, out of control', when the women reacted to the verbal violence.

Besides of Brazil we can also see studies in United Kingdom and many other places. On the article Sex Effects in

Conversational Interaction: Another Look at Male Dominance, it is said that

Results demonstrated that the average duration of speech acts was significantly longer for females than for males; that communicators, regardless of sex, speak for a greater proportion of the total conversation when the listener is female as opposed to male; and that within the sex-same male dyads, far interpersonal distance is associated with significantly greater simultaneous speech when compared to the near condition. Results are interpreted as refutation for traditional notions of male dominance.

This research was created through an experiment to analyze the differences regarding the position of the speech (speaker or listener) and if it was different when the speaker/listener is a woman; the relations power through language and its use is clear here. This Oxford study shows that yes, it is different: when a woman is the listener the speaker (even if the speaker is another woman) talks for a longer time.

Although the result of this research is slightly different from the other one we saw above (here it says that women speak more than men), the goal of this research wasn't an analyse about the duration of speech, therefore we can't take into account this information when compared to researches which the main purpose was to research about the duration of the speech.

As shown above, there are specific mechanisms in language used for power domination, even the grammar (4):

Grammatical and syntactical rules are built in a way that feminine terms usually derive from the corresponding masculine form. Similarly, masculine nouns and pronouns are often used with a generic function to refer to both men and women. However, such linguistic forms have the negative effects of making women disappear in mental representations. (Menegatti and Rubini, 2017)

In the State University of São Paulo, another research was conducted regarding the power relation in language: women's stereotypes in self-help discourse (12). They analyzed books

of self-help made for women and what was the language used on it, they analyzed the semantic field of these books.

The analysis shows the contradiction inherent to the self-help discourse for women, which proposes to women a pattern of behaviour consistent with their emancipation, but, at the same time, contributes to keeping certain female stereotypes associated with their traditional role.

Now we are getting closer of this article's goal: how are women portrayed in the media? We have seen how language is used as way of male dominance, now we will see in the practical world of media how it works. As we live in a capitalist society, where the kingdom of consumption rules, the first door to mass media is the advertising (5):

Advertising effectiveness largely depends on the manipulation of the consumer's self-image (Weibel, 1977, 142). Since women are perceived as the major consumers, advertising manipulates the female image in order to persuade women to buy. Recurrent sexist charges focus on three aspects of the female image in advertising: as employed woman, as housewife, as sex-object (X, Report National Advertising Review Board (NARB), 1975).

It is an interesting reflection to realize that this research, done on the 1980s, is still actual. According to the last report (6) on gender bias at advertisement on the Cannes Lions Festival (the biggest advertising and creative event of this area), 'male characters are twice as likely to be shown working than women in 2018 ads'. The discrepancy is even higher than in the previous years (2006-2017), the report says, when the difference was 11% and nowadays is 26%.

The report shows that in an overall the differences are decreasing, although in some cases the differences got higher. The main concern is: those differences exist and they are still high.

We have seen how power relations shape the language even grammatically, how women are portrayed in the mass medias, and now we will see about women working on the media.

According to the Women's Media Center (7), male journalists continue to report most news of the mass media vehicles:

- 69 per cent of news wire by lines (AP and Reuters) are snagged by men – by far the biggest gender gap in news media; 31 per cent by women. 63 per cent of TV prime-time news broadcasts, feature male anchors and correspondents; 37 per cent are women.
- 60 per cent of online news is written by men; 40 per cent by women.
- 59 per cent of print news is written by men; 41 per cent by women

Although there are more women in journalism training (8), there are less women in the work market of the mass medias. The differences showed above are immense and present to us a wide view of what need to be changed: 'at the moment, there is a disproportionate lack of female sources, female experts, and even women considered as newsworthy subjects (except when they are victims or royal)'.

Besides of the number differences and even the subjects differences (it is more likely to find a woman working on the life-style session than on the criminal part of the newspaper, according to *Women and Journalism*, by Suzanne Frank), there other concerning parts: the prejudice and violence female go through on the work environment.

To battle against it, the International Federation of Journalists, in partnership with UNESCO, created a charter called *Getting the balance right: gender equality in journalism*.

After seen how power relations shape the language even grammatically, how women are portrayed in the mass medias, and how it is like for women working on the media nowadays, it is possible to conclude that although the current situation is slowly changing, we need to keep fighting to change the way we are portrayed in the media and how we are treated as workers. It is important to write and show the connections of media, gender and language in order to make people know what is really going on, in order to keep changing the world.

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WOMEN WHO DO “MEN’S JOBS” —An Analysis of Coping Strategies Employed by Women in Male Dominated Careers

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Background to Feminism

Since the inception of its development, feminism and feminist theories within International Relations have focused on addressing the hitherto neglected contributions of women to global development (Smith, 2018). Based on how diverse and broad the issues of feminism can be, they have been grouped into three distinct eras of waves. These waves are the first wave, second wave and third wave feminism. It is however important to note that many contemporary African feminists have argued against the hijacking of the “pioneership” of the feminist movement as they believe feminism has been vibrant and existent in Africa and many parts of the world long before the recording of the activists and the labelling of the term. It is however unfortunate that the issue of recording of history has been a major blockade in the claims of many African activists of different genres of activism, including feminism.

First-wave Feminism

This is placed around the 19th- and early 20th-century feminist activity in most parts of the English-speaking world (England

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and Americas) which sought to win women's suffrage, female education rights, better working conditions, and abolition of gender double standards. The term came into existence upon the coming in of the second wave which sought to distinguish itself from the earlier version of feminism, hence the term first wave. The first wave feminism also brought attention to how women dressed (rigid and uncomfortable) in the early parts of the 20th century known as the Edwardian era. (Gardiner, 2003)

Second-wave feminism

This era of feminism gained grounds and prominence during the early 1960s through the late 1980s and it brought attention to cultural and political inequalities as indistinguishably connected. In this era, feminists encouraged women to pay attention to how their personal lives had been politicized and look at the power structure which was heavily laced with sexism. Unlike the first wave which focused on suffrage, the second wave feminists placed their attention on issues of equality and discrimination (Freedman, 2003).

Third-wave feminism

This wave began in the early 1990 as a reflex to what younger women saw as the failure of the earlier waves of feminism. They saw it as very restricting and inherently sexism in some of its ideologies. The second wave held a very conservative approach to femininity, sex, gender and sexuality which focused on white upper-class women and this was where the third-wave came in.

Introduction: Women in the Workforce



The image above is a great illustration by Thoker Maerof of the shift of women from predominantly domestic roles into the ‘working world’. However, for some reason, the shift has not made much impact on the subservient domestic roles women play. These roles have only been given formal attires and titles.

Within the last century, the involvement of women in state economies has greatly increased as labour markets globally have experienced reforms. Over the span of revolutions over the century, many states have allowed for women to bridge their domestic settings in order to contribute their quota to economic development. The rise in female labour-force participation has a number of causes, among them globalization of the economy, technological transformation, labour-market flexibilization, and economic restructuring (Moghadam, 1995).

Neoliberalism and its tenets of an emphasis on individualism and consumption as a source of identity and a vehicle for social participation, gives a good explanation for these changes. It allows one to establish a connection between central state authority and individual citizens, as each citizen is a tax-payer. Hence, over the years, states have seen the benefit of creating opportunities for women to be merged into the workforce as it diversifies and increases their tax streams. When these neoliberal ideas meet feminist theory, it goes without saying that the emphasis comes to stand on the empowerment of women to facilitate their involvement in the global labour market.

A glance into history, reveals that historically, women’s contribution in the work force was intellectualized differently than men’s mainly due to the fact that women’s income was simply of auxiliary to man’s income (Rettler, 1992). This is good explanation of why even after women were bridged into the workforce, certain work domains up until now have remained the exclusive preserve of men. For women are able to enter these sectors and excel (very seldomly), they need to adopt certain coping mechanisms that enable them surf and solve the many problems that come with their jobs. These coping mechanisms would be the focus of this paper. The paper would conduct a case study of Jane Mugo, a successful and popular private investigator in Kenya.

Male Dominated Jobs and the Challenges Posed to Women

Women constitute about a half of the global population and approximately 40 per cent of the world's working population (Otope, 2014). This percentage includes both the formal and informal sectors. Invariably, this means that though the global male population is about the same as women, the former makes a larger chunk of the world's working population. As mentioned earlier, the last decade has seen progress in advancing gender equality in the world of work. However, many sectors have still remained the exclusive preserve of men. Even with much change, many science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) related fields such as engineering, still appear stubbornly resistant to gender diversity (Fernando, Cohen, & Duberley, 2018). The fields of work that would be discussed in this paper; security, intelligence and sports have also for several years remained male dominated. (Elson 1999) argues that the working world has many stereotypes and rules- many unstated- about what woman and men should do and the rewards that should be given to them, and how these reflect the situation of inequality in gender relation in International Relations. (Townsend, 2019) discusses,

“Being treated like an outsider. Feeling like you have to prove yourself. Struggling to make your voice heard. Whether it's overt discrimination or more subtle forms of bias, male-dominated industries like engineering can pose challenges for women. Research shows that even well-meaning mentors direct female engineers into less technical, less valued roles. It's no wonder so many women end up leaving the industry.”

(Catalyst, 2020) identifies societal expectations and beliefs about women's leadership abilities; pervasive stereotypes, such as that of the “caring mother” or office housekeeper; higher stress and anxiety compared to women working in other fields; lack of mentoring and career development opportunities; and sexual harassment as some of the challenges women in male-dominated industries experience. In the light of these challenges, (Catalyst, 2020) goes on to explain that women use various mechanisms to cope with working in male-

dominated work environments, such as distancing themselves from colleagues, especially other women; accepting masculine cultural norms and acting like “one of the boys,” which exacerbates the problem by contributing to the normalization of this culture or; leaving the industry.

Private Investigation and Intelligence Industry

The PI industry is highly dominated by men globally. Private investigation is a highly specialized field that serves as an essential function in supplying a demand for law enforcement and crime prevention that is not adequately met by the public sectors (Gill, 2006). The job presents many dangers that could be encountered while one undertakes duties such as body guarding, criminal investigation, undercover investigation, employee theft investigations, surveillance and intelligence collection. Aside the dangers of the job, assertions that workers in the field must possess a high acumen in various issues has been a real blockade to the entry of women. In the US, where there has been much success in the inclusion of women in the industry, the total percentage of women currently stands at about 38% (Office of Intelligence Community Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity (ICEEOD), 2018). In Africa, this industry is not very popular, even for men. Hence, for women participation, it is nearly non-existent. In Kenya, the industry has experienced a recent boom that has attracted much monetary value for services that are rendered therein. Like in the global scene, the private investigators in Kenya are mainly men. The industry due to its secretive nature is not formalized. However, research indicates that the industry is currently worth several US Dollars.

The Kenyan Private Investigator- Jane Mugo

Jane Mugo, is a female private detective in Kenya. She is one of the most popular and solicited PIs in the Kenyan private investigative industry. Being such a popular PI, public opinion about her spans across a wide divide. Some abhor her and call her the ‘Spy Queen’ and troll her, especially on social media. Others celebrate her, saying that she is the best in the Kenyan PI industry. Even her success and popularity does not cover up for the fact that she is a woman in the field. She faces several challenges including threats to her life and that of her family. In

2018, she came up against many criminal charges for which she had to appear in court. Though she was acquitted, her reputation and the secrecy of her professional operations were tarnished beyond easy restoration. She still suffers trolls on social media due to this.

Challenges in her career and her coping mechanisms

Jane Mugo, working in a male dominated industry first faces the challenge of societal expectations to manifest certain social orientations and tendencies that are characteristic of male behaviour within the field (Martin & Barnard, 2013). The findings of this research indicate that to a large extent, this expectation has affected Ms. Mugo's preferences especially in clothes and gait. Women workers may adopt habitually adopted features of males, such as foul like foul language and aggressive verbal and non-verbal behaviour, in order to fit into society.

She prefers to wear typically male clothes; trouser suits, vests worn over button up shirts and jeans and many other clothes of the like Appendix 1). Her gait, also seems very masculine because she attempts to give off a strong and resolute image whenever she is in public. Labour-intensive work, inadequate physical strength and hormone cycles add to the emotional strain of working in a male-dominated occupation.

Generally, women are assigned the gender expectation of gentleness. Jane Mugo however, can in no certain terms be described as gentle, she is a tough and rugged looking women, wearing deadlocks and dark shades in addition to her masculine inspired clothes and gait. The public however, troll her and how her curvaceous body is revealed in these clothes. After the release of an investigative piece by the BBC in January 2021 on her and her work, Jane was severely trolled for her body. In response, she wrote on her social media handles;

Nobody is speaking about my range, many cases but my physique. I'm an African woman, I don't regret, I love myself. I pray you stay longer to witness my blessings. Thanking God for this work he gave me. I will comment later in the evening. Reading trends and handling incoming cases. Blessed day world.

Another challenge that Jane Mugo faces is bad

remuneration for contracts she is hired to carry out. She lamented that on one task, she was paid 200,000 Kenyan shillings, instead of a requested one million shillings. In response to this challenge, Mugo usually decides to consider viewing the contract as an opportunity to obtain more clients and hence, accepts the counter offers given to her. In other extremes situations, she is forced to keep the findings of her investigations from her client in a bid to force them to pay the requested amount in order to access the investigative findings.

Due to the kind of work Jane Mugo finds herself in, her life and that of her family and team is constantly under threat. Mugo recounted how her son was almost kidnapped because of information she happened to discover during a politically motivated investigation. As mentioned earlier, her work involves a lot of politically motivated contracts; politicians who want to gather intelligence on strategies of opposing parties. These threats have created a sense of paranoia which she employs positively to put measures of caution in place. Her kitchen staff must for each meal, taste her food to ensure it has not been drugged. Also, her home is heavily guarded and secured with hidden web cameras. She is also very tough on her closest workers and regularly takes them through gruesome training sessions to ensure they do not defect to the camps of her ‘enemies’.

Jane Mugo has two children but no husband. When asked if men are afraid of approaching her with love proposals, she confessed that her career intimidates many men and makes them shy away from having love relationships with her. In a society where woman’s worth could be measured by her ability to sustain a love relationship (preferably in the setting of marriage), this makes for a very negative image on Jane. As though this was not enough, her personal fashion sense and tough outlook makes public think of her as a lesbian.

For this challenge, Jane buries herself in her work and leaves very little room for romantic affairs. In this way, she has no time to frolic with any possible male suitors. Furthermore, her two children, which she had from previous relationships unfortunately therefore, have no ‘father figure’. Jane, due to her work is unable to spend as much time with her children as

other mothers in more 'feminine' roles. She has to rely on hired help to assist in the care of her children whenever she is unavailable to spend time with her children due to work. This could lend emotional drain while she conducts her work.

In February 2021, Mugo expressed the dream to establish a PI training school to train younger ones who are interested in the field. It is her hope that in this school, there are few daring ladies who would aim to be like her. Jane is not alone in the challenges she faces in her experiences from working in a male dominated setting. Research has shown that when women in such careers reach success, their colleagues—both male and female alike—may unfairly judge them as stand-offish and problematic to work with. A professor psychology at New York University Madeline Heilman says "Success is OK for a woman if it's in an area that is not [seen as] off limits to them," Heilman notes. "What we are seeing is a reaction to their violation of stereotyped norms." In a research study, Heilman discovered that

"when the person's performance was ambiguous, the students rated the male employee as competent and the female employee as floundering, but both were seen as likable. However, when it was clear the female employee performed well in her position, the students ranked her competence as high, but her likability score dropped. Meanwhile, her successful male counterpart was seen as more pleasant as his competence increased.

"The successful women were characterized as more selfish, manipulative and untrustworthy—your typical constellation of 'bitchy' characteristics."

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GENDER SPECIFIC VIOLENCE DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

MRS. ANKITA SINGH*

For every creature of the world home may be considered a safest place. But the COVID 19 pandemic has proved that it is not the safest place for all. With *COVID-19* lockdown in place, there has been a surge in cases of domestic violence. The victims of domestic violence are more vulnerable and at risk to a frighteningly new degree of violence, all over the world. "Home is not a safe place for many women and girls. Gender-based violence – affecting 1 in 3 women globally over their lifetimes – is a risk now with COVID-19. Mandatory lock-downs trap and isolate; other sheltering options are inaccessible; added stresses trigger perpetrators; medical care and psychological support are overburdened,"¹

In addition to the violation of human rights, victims of domestic violence can face several physical and mental health difficulties such as risk of chronic disease, depression, sexual disorders, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and substance abuse. Domestic violence also involves a pattern of psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. Acts of assault, threats, humiliation, and intimidation are also considered acts of violence. One of the reasons for an increased

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risk of domestic violence during these times is disconnection from social support systems. As a result, there are fewer options to find safety or help for victims. Normally, the victim could flee a violent situation by staying elsewhere, but that option is not available right now. When households are placed under strain and in contexts of family violence, as strategies for self-isolation and quarantine are employed, the risk of such violence tends to increase. Reports from some impacted communities are showing that COVID-19 is driving similar trends right now. The evidence is also mounting that the economic impacts of COVID-19 will hit women harder, as more women work in low-paying, insecure and informal jobs. Disruptions, including movement restrictions, are likely to compromise women's ability to make a living and meet their families' basic needs.

Present Scenario in World

A data released by United Nations² shows that about 243 million women and girls under the age of 15-43 have been subjected to sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner in the last 12 months. Emerging data shows that violence against women and girls has been intensified during COVID 19 outbreak. In France, for example, cases of domestic violence have increased by 30 per cent since the lockdown on March 17³. Helplines in Cyprus and Singapore⁴ have registered an increase in calls by 30 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively⁵. In Argentina, emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by 25 per cent since the lockdown started⁶. In Canada, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom⁷, and the United States⁸, government authorities, women's rights activists and civil society partners have indicated increasing reports of domestic violence during the crisis, and/or increased demand for emergency shelter.

Scenario in India

In India, the **National Commission for Women (NCW)** has raised an urgent alert about the increasing number of domestic violence cases since the national lockdown began. As per the numbers provided by National Commission of Women (NCW) in mid-April, the cases of domestic violence had doubled during lockdown compared to pre-lockdown days. In 25 days between March 23 and April 16, the commission received 239 complaints,

mainly through email and Whats App number. This is almost double the number of complaints (123) received during the previous 25 days, from February 27 to March 22. The first lockdown from March 25 to April 14 was eventually extended to May 3.

Unlike other crimes in Delhi and beyond the statistics have indicated that incidents of domestic violence have shown a rising trend, during the on-going lockdown,. The World Health Organisation (WHO) says that the risk of intimate partner violence is likely to increase, as distancing measures are put in place and people are encouraged to stay at home.

According data compiled by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) a total of 727 domestic violence-related cases were reported to legal services authorities across the country during the lockdown.⁹

The Report of NALSA document the cases from the start of the lockdown till may 15, 2020 and was collected through 28 State legal Services (SLAs). In this interim report on legal aid provided during the period, the Authority, which has the second-most senior judge of the Supreme Court, Justice N V Ramana, as Executive Chairman, said the highest number of cases were reported from Uttarakhand (144), followed by Haryana (79), and Delhi (63). Kerala reported 18 cases and one cases was reported from Andhra Pradesh. The UTs of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Puducherry and states of Jharkhand, Karnataka and Nagaland reported no cases.

Women in Telangana had to face a spike in domestic violence too. As per cases registered through Sakhi One Stop Centers (centers that provide integrated support and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces in a phased manner) in April, 89% of the total number of cases registered were of domestic violence.

As per DCP Delhi (Operations and Communications) SK Singh the total no. of calls were 900-1000 calls per day of domestic violence, eve teasing, molestation before the lockdown but after lockdown the calls has been increased to around 1000-1200 calls per day, mostly of domestic violence.

India is ranked 68 among 126 countries on the Rule of Law Index, 2019; it ranked 111 on order and security, 97 on civil justice, and 77 on criminal justice.¹⁰

The 2018 CSDS survey suggested that 50% of all Indians believe there is nothing wrong with violence towards criminals. As India's police and courts strain under a backlog, and India's women continue to suffer from savage crimes, the clamour for s Police and courts take time to process all crimes against women, not just rape cases. And since law enforcement is a state subject, the time taken to process these crimes, which include acid attacks and dowry deaths, can vary significantly across India.¹¹ It has been observed that sexual harassment victims in India face significant barriers to obtaining justice and critical support services. The report¹² found that women and girls who survive rape and other sexual violence often suffer humiliation at police stations and hospitals. According to the survey, 27 per cent of women have experienced physical violence since the age 15 in India. This experience of physical violence among women is more common in rural areas than among women in urban areas. Domestic violence cases, where women reported physical abuse in rural and urban areas, were at 29 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively.

Under Indian law, police officers who fail to register a complaint of sexual assault face up to two years in prison. However, Human Rights Watch found that police did not always file a First Information Report (FIR), the first step to initiating a police investigation, especially if the victim was from an economically or socially marginalized community.

Most of the domestic violence, sexual violence, and marital rape cases in India are also never reported. Going by the pure numbers, these cases are grossly under-reported when comparing the National Family Health Survey and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data.

Under this situation the question arises how these gender specific crimes will end up in justice? Under “normal” conditions, *access to justice for most women* is limited and outright unavailable in some instances. This pandemic brings new challenges to judiciaries- and applying a gendered lens to these challenges, further highlights extra layers of concerns

for women's ability to safely, promptly and efficiently access justice. Judiciaries will have to find innovative ways of handling cases of recurring domestic violence, rape, child custody, divorce, right to alimony and property, among others. Women experiencing violence at home often face a range of barriers to accessing justice. They and their children may rely on their partners for financial support; they may fear violent retribution if they leave or seek assistance. They may not know the law or what legal protections are available to them. Engaging with the justice system can heighten trauma for victims, as when, for example, the process is protracted. This is true for all forms of violence against women.

Considering the prevailing situation The supreme Court of India has also issued guidelines on 17 May, 2020 to hear matters in the coming weeks since the Hon'ble Virtual Courts will be functioning from 18th May, 2020 to 19th June, 2020], through Video Conferencing / Tele-Conferencing mode only.

As courts around the world are racing to use technology for hearing cases remotely, a major concern is the exacerbation of existing challenges, where lack of access to, or inadequate technology prevents many women from having their cases resolved expeditiously. In order to contain the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19),

Again the question arises How well will teleconferencing be for hearing pleadings and presenting evidence on gender-related violence cases? What happens in jurisdictions where the judiciary does not have the capacity to use such tools?

Courts are adopting *different approaches* in classifying limited in-person appearances in “exceptional”, or “urgent” cases. The list of what constitutes “exceptional” or “urgent” varies widely and the question is whether gender-related cases will be considered “exceptional” or “urgent” enough by judicial administrators. The need to decongest public spaces, shelters and even prisons has been put on the table. What are the implications of such closures for shelters for women who are victims or survivors of domestic violence? Will governments or organizations providing such shelter be able to provide safe, alternative spaces for women?

On April 18, the Delhi High Court directed the Centre and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi to hold top-level meeting to deliberate on measures to curb domestic violence and protect the victims during the lockdown.

National commission of women India has released number of helplines for domestic violence and free online counselling websites that victims can use for relief.

The Supreme Court in case of *Rishad Murtaza Vs Union of India*¹³ observed that It is essential for all judicial administrative changes to take into account the gendered nature of existing laws and institutional practices which sometimes maintain, reproduce or exacerbate gender inequalities. The highly dynamic nature of this pandemic requires open and constant communication within judiciaries and across judicial networks such as the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network on well-informed strategies to balance citizens' needs with national priorities. Now more than ever, judiciaries must abide by the *Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct* and other international and national laws that seek to protect the rule of law, promote access to justice, ensure human rights and enforce judicial standards during and after this crisis.

Access to justice for some women is a matter of life and death-access to justice for women in a global pandemic cannot be put on hold. Hopefully judiciaries will be cognizant of women's needs and take extra measures to address the related challenges.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cynthia Steele, President and CEO of EM power, a foundation.
2. United Nations (9 April, 2020), Policy brief: The impact of COVID-19 on women (pages 17-19).
3. Domestic violence cases jump 30% during lockdown in France" <https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/28/domestic-violence-cases-jump30-during-lockdown-in-france>, accessed 3rd April 2020 11.
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WOMEN IN THE MODELLING ADVERTISEMENT WORLD —“The Ideal Look”

Ms. VERONICA IULIANA APARICIO MACOVEI CLARK*

Ever since the beginning of time, women have been gendering stereotyped. Women are supposed to be the innocent, caring, beautiful looking, and even obedient. The focus I am going to talk about is when women are stereotyped in the modeling world. In the modeling you must have “the look” meaning the perfect imagine that people either want to be you or what society wants you to become. In the article, *The Construction of Beauty: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Women's Magazine Advertising*, Katherine, Ping, and Hong explains many studies have studied women in the advertising sectors in many different societies. They mentioned that fashion has been divided into eight different fashion categories. Within those categories that can also determine the type of women they want to be the model or in the photographs. The eight beauty looks or trends that were created: trendy, classic, feminine, exotic, sensual, cute, sex kitten, and girl-next-door. Years later in 1994 the three researcher English, Ashmore, and Solomon said that the most common beauty looks we see in magazines are feminine, exotic, trendy, sensual, and classic that The United States of America does. (English, Ashmore, Solomon 1994, p. 7). With the eight beauty looks, I want to give a brief history for you to get a better understanding.

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*Picture this, during the 1920s we think of women's image to be the "bombshell" with hair up usually and bright red lips, and skinny. Then 1930s the image was to have a body with a little bit of curves, but not too much because the model still had to be slim. In otherwise, the models also had to have that hour-class-figure. By the 1940s women models had to be hour-class-figures once again, full figures, needed to be curvy, and a must have makeup. So that nature look wasn't exact there yet. 1950s the women bodies had to still have curves and slim. Perfect examples would be celebrities such as: Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn and Sophia Loren. Those three ladies not only had the perfect image and body but were also leading ladies in films too. They also helped with the advertisement industries by modeling for different magazines and commercials. Besides being perfect ideal body, there comes a lot of pressure to maintain the look. Marilyn Monroe had difficulty at times since she was considered to have struggled to keep that perfect figure. Although she was curvy there were times when even the movie industry would ask her to lose weight to get that perfect body. 1960s is when the body image in modeling is the most changed and impacted. This decade focused on women that needed the skinny and slim body type. This is the decade that is the most current that modeling agencies look back to the most, in my opinion. Both in 1970s and 1980s is when the standards went up even higher. You think they could not get higher, well be prepared to be wrong. Models had to ultra-skinny and slender. The height of a model had to be taller. The next issue came about was the start of eating disorders. There is Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia nervosa that are both eating disorders. Anorexia Nervosa means you starve yourself. Bulimia Nervosa is means that every time you eat you feel that you need to throw up the food that you consumed and get it out of your body. A side note, Rhodes talks about in his article, *The Parent Versus Anorexia Scale: A brief measure of parental efûcacy in the Maudsley model of family-based treatment for anorexia. European Eating Disorders Review*, about this specific hospital that was established in the 1980s and "The Maudsley model of family-based treatment for anorexia nervosa was ûrst developed by Christopher Dare and colleagues at the Maudsley Hospital in London" (Dare et al., 1995 p.392). This hospital*

focus is to create a treatment or early intervention program to help parents and the patient or child or adult to get her out of her eating disorder. After the 1980s the beauty image or looks seems to keep getting stricter and stricter in the advertisement world. 1990s was about having women basically skinny and skinnier to almost where you could see the models' bones.

Now to the present times, we have not really changed much in women in the modeling world. Although, we have worked on doing more on early intervention programs and helping educating parents on this issue. There are several intervention programs that do help address this main concern. However, there are much to improve to help women models to not have to suffer to create the beauty looks standards in the advertisement world. Some of the intervention programs have helped women to improve on gaining back their self-esteem, bring a healthy body and mental health too, to help lower anxiety, and to let them think for themselves and go back to what they want to do again. One organization that helps women with eating disorders is called, "The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)." This organization was founded in 2001. Another organization is called, "The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, (ANAD) was also founded in the 1970s. This organization to establish to help educate people, advocate, and help find the resources that either the patient or the individual and the family member(s).

The body image statistics in the image above is comparing American Woman and the average American Model. As we can tell that both American women are different in both weight and height. In about 3% of adolescents trying to change their weight end up having eating disorders.

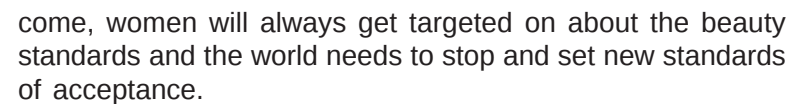
In the article, *Comparison of the Ideal and Real Body as Women Age Relationships to Age Identity, Body Satisfaction and Importance, and Attention to Models in Advertising*, Levinson in (1996) said, "women between the ages of 30 and 45 experience the culminating phase of early adulthood, slowly transitioning into middle adulthood, which lasts from about age 40 to 65. Within these stages of the human life cycle, women, as they transition from one era to the next, begin to assert



Photo from: Teen-Beauty-Tips. "Body Image Statistics." Find Your True Beauty... In Christ. SBI, n.d. Web. 17 Apr. 2014.

more authority within their lives, thus creating new ideals and goals (Levinson & Kozer 1996 p. 202).

Along from all the body image in the advertisement world, women should feel comfortable about themselves. Women and including models should not allow others or even the model world to tell them what is required or to be the "ideal women or model" to make the world be better or to compete with other advertisement sectors. No matter how many years there are to



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CONTRIBUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EMPOWERING THE WOMEN OF ASSAM

Ms. ANWESHA HAZARIKA*

Introduction

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, belief, values, habits. Education empowers women to overcome social. Mental, economic barriers faced by them. It also enhances legal, social and economic security for the women. Higher Education in India is still at its initial stage as far as women are concerned and it would be too early to predict that higher education releases the road to empowerment of women. But the picture is contrasting to the sanctity of what higher education stands. The false definition of femininity constrained the women to the standards of “good women”, “good wife”, “good daughter”. Liberal feminist demands for equal rights for women in the higher education institutes through reservations but the radical feminist questions the root of cause of women depravity, patriarchy.

The table of empowerment served to women through the provision of primary and secondary education does not suffice to make them self-independent, economically and support their families. However, the relevant policies undertaken by the Government of Assam and the various schemes has seen a

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high per cent of women, pursuing higher education via different modes and earning their degrees.

Literature Review

In the article written by Jitendra Kumar, “Status of Women Education in India”, the writer mentions about how a gender friendly education policies formulated by the government are not sufficient to make women resilience to the cumbersome challenges of life.

In the research article, “Development of Women Education: A Case Study of Darrang District”, by Binita Nath, there she is quite specific in discussing about the women’s higher education in the Darrang district of Assam, where women has faced injustices in the form of violence and deprivations from equal opportunities, as the district has socio-religious variations and less number of educational institutions compared to the other districts.

In the write-up, “Status of Women and Higher Education in Assam”, jointly written by Lila Bora, Nayana Teron and Rupali Boro, where they have tried to present a picture of higher education in Assam and Women participation in it. They have also made suggestions for a flexible, accessible and equitable education system that can foster in which women along with their male counter-part can easily fulfil their aspirations.

Highlights of All India Survey of Higher Education(AISHE) Report of 2018-2019, where higher rate of male enrollment is witnessed at all levels than females in most states, including Assam.

The piece written in Factly,”Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of Higher Education” by Bharat Kancharla, stated that the female GER has been steadily increasing but there is a wide gap that still persists amongst the developed and developing countries.

Objectives of the Study

- (1) To study the obstacles behind the picture for women’s less enrollment in higher education.
- (2) To draw inferences about the level of success of the Assam State Government policies in ensuring access to higher education amongst its women lot.

Methodology

The Type of Research undertaken is empirical and descriptive in its nature. While the Sources of Information is gathered from secondary sources like AISHE Report-2018-19, Statistical Hand Book of Assam, Economic Survey of India and Global Data Lab, Gender Parity Index (Year 2018-9), Gross Enrollment Ratio of Assa (financial year 2018).

Analysis of the Obstacles reinforcing Gender biased enrollment rates in Higher Education

In India, University Grants Commission (UGC) serves as a vital link between the Union and State Governments and the institutions of higher learning. However education in general and higher education in particular, is yet to engulf within it the women group. According to 2011 Census, the literacy rate India gender wise - men is 78.81% and that of women is 67.27%.

However, Assam being located quite a distance away from the Centre, but has faired well in implementing the national level scheme of “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao”, since 2015, which sought to protect the daughters from the social evil and to empower them through education. According to the 2011 Census, the literacy rate for Assam is 72.19% out of which Urban literacy rate is 88.47% and rural literacy rate is 69.34%, where female literacy rate is 66.27% and male literacy rate is 77.85%. The All India Survey on Higher Education (2018-19) published by the Union ministry of human resource development, shows that while the national GER in higher educational institutions is 25.2 per cent it is only 17.2 per cent for Assam.

All such indicators determining Human Development Index(HDI) but its unequal distribution clearly states that the socio-cultural fallacies against women.

Two Different views fostering women in Higher Education

Assamese society is a liberal one but not matriarchal. Patriarchy as a torchbearer for societal upliftment is deeply rooted in the beliefs of Assam too. The liberal Assamese society which has given equal rights to women is also adhered to strong cultural

stereotypes so far as the private sphere is concerned. The socialization of children in Assam is no different from the rest of the country. Gendered roles are prevalent in this part of the country as well. As such it has its impact felt on the public spaces in terms of women empowerment as well.

There are two views associated with educating women in Assam:

Traditional view: This view believes in imparting education to women for creating into meek and sluggish who do not question the age-old values that are considered natural for women to abide by. Cases of domestic violence, honor killings are fate of this women who are educated for looking after their husbands, children and confine within domestic works.

Modern View: But modern attitude visualizes education as an instrument for women's equality and development. Women education has two aspects- individual aspect and social aspect. Education increases rationality and confidence in a woman. It provides them with the understanding of being career oriented and ponder upon the demerits of early marriage and high birth rate. The fruits of education are enjoyed not only by the woman concerned but it passes to her family in later life, which is also means prosperity of the nation.

However, Women has themselves come out from the mere shackles of male chauvinism and demanded for their right to education, by enrolling themselves in the colleges or universities, be it by consent of their families or not and proved themselves to be a better bread-winner.

Gender Parity Index and Gross Enrollment Ratio assessment(GPI) of Higher Education in Assam

After completion of secondary level, majority of the students in Assam get admitted in under graduate courses. After completion of graduation, students go either for post graduation or for post graduate diploma courses. And after post graduation students go either for M Phil or for PhD. Diploma and certificate courses may be done at under graduate level also.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is a socioeconomic index usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females. The GPI in 2010-11 was high since the

variation between male and female was 1.01, whereas in 2014-15 the variation lowered to 0.93. That indicates that gender gap has risen in Assam. However, the gender gap has lessen down in 2018-19.

Trends in gender parity for different course level of higher education in Assam for the years 2018-19 has been that there is lesser gender parity in the enrollment for the undergraduate courses, whereas MPhil, Integrated, Certificate and PG courses has not any gender disparity lying.

The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in India is calculated for 18-23 years of age group. GER for male or female or both in Assam is always lower the all India level. GER for female in higher education has increased from 14.3 in 2014-15 to 19.8 in 2018-19.

Role of the Assam Government in assurance of empowerment of women in Higher Education

In case of higher education, Assam has limited number of educational institutions. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report 2017-18, AISHE portal registered number of higher education institution is 604, out of which universities are 21, degree colleges are 512 and state-alone institutions (not affiliated universities) are 71. Out of the total 21 universities, general universities are 12, agricultural university is 1, Women's university 1, Cultural studies is 1, law university is 1, medical university is 6 and technical universities are 4.

Number of colleges per lake population (18-23 years age group) is 14 only in Assam but this figure for all over India is 28. Average enrolment per college in Assam is 983 and it is higher than national average of 698 for all over India. Thus, number of higher education institutions is lower and students have limited options for higher education in Assam.

All the colleges have Women Cell in Colleges both for the girls students and the female teachers. Emergence of areas like Women Studies and Gender Studies has seen good number of students both for male and female enrollment.

The prospect of Distance Education in Assam has flourished amongst the nook and corner of the villages where both men and women have enrolled in various courses be it UG, PG,

Certificate, Diploma and even M.phil and Phd. It covers all those women who due to some burden of families, marriage or victims of gender discrimination were debarred from pursuing higher education.

Free Admissions: Recently, to reduce the burden on parents for admission of their children due to Covid-19, the Government of Assam in the Secondary Education Department decided that, no provincialized / Government Higher Secondary Schools and Junior Colleges of Assam will take fees including admission fees, tuition fees and any other fees from the students who will take admission in the HS 1st year provided that the income of their parents is below or Rs.1.00 lakh (Rupees one lakh) only per annum from all sources, subject to the following terms and conditions.

Moreover, scholarship of Rs. 2,000, Rs. 4,000, Rs. 6,000 and Rs. 10,000 is proposed for girl students belonging to minority communities studying in class 10, 11, 12, graduation and post-graduation, respectively.

Another impetus for ensuring women continuance with education is providing of free scooties to the female students who secured first division in the Class Twelfth boards, to reduce the barrier of distance from home to the institutions.

Conclusion

Education is the only answer for women empowerment. But through the inclusive policies, the GEP has gradually been rising but still not in favor of the women of Assam. The establishment of higher educational institutes for women especially in rural areas are still in dearth and women enrolment is still low as compared men enrolment. However, the recent schemes and policies of the State Government might be beacon of hope to liquidate the gender parity visible in the strand of higher education of the state. The most important requirement here is to challenge the age-old stereotypes challenging women's education psychologically, sociologically and economically.

Note: The writer is indebted to different write-ups while preparing this article and the views expressed here are her personal.

UNMASKING THE CHALLENGING TRUTHS OF THE GENDERS' CONTINUA AND MOMENTA The X and WhY Axes

Ms. ELENA SOROLIOU*

To all these Genders, Identities and Bodies that unequivocally Matter, have been continuously Performing and Performed, constantly Re-Delineated and were un-cordially Asked to Answer for herself/himself/themselves¹...

In the End, we will remember not the words of enemies,
but the silence of our friends.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

The Personal is Political.

—Eleni Varikas

*Male domination is so rooted in our collective
unconscious that we no longer even see it.*

—Pierre Bourdieu

*A woman knows very well that, though a wit sends her/
his poems, praises her judgment, solicits her criticism,
and drinks her tea, this by no means signifies that he
respects her opinions, admires her understanding, or*

* Social Scientist, Global Citizen, Ex-Change maker, researcher, project manager, Greece.

will refuse, though the rapier is denied him, to run through the body with his pen.

—Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*

As a departure point of this article, I feel grateful beyond words and blessed for Anurag Hazarika, Editor of this book who cordially asked me to share my colorful experience from the UNITE 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs hereinafter) hackathon. However, the undertaking and core aims of this article is to underline, demystify, provoke and destabilize genders as binary, viable(?), rigid and crystallized identities and intentional subjects in terms of acceptance of a position in society, form of power, label, “gravitas”, and identity/ies performed. Gender(s) should be perceived as the effect of a “stylized repetition of actions” (Butler, 1990), while the subject is shaping and shaped in parallel and continuously/meticulously (Foucault, 1977).

“Progress processing” for women and girls is a cornerstone for achieving the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. The 2030 Agenda has Gender Equality as one of its main ambitions and set priorities, with a dedicated, but incomplete goal (SDG 5), which includes a broad plea to end discrimination(s) between women and men, as well as references to gender-specific concerns in numerous SDG targets. Hence, measuring progress on SDGs for women and girls is a key statistical challenge for National Statistical Agencies worldwide.

However, I would like to ponder my second thoughts and doubts regarding all the other genders that are not represented or are underrepresented. Are they socially invisible and accountable? At this stage, it should be acknowledged that the SDGs are(?) or at least should be universal and integrated, relevant to all people, everywhere. Even though, reflecting on SDG 5 (UNSC, 2016), we will understand that gender (in terms of sex) equ(al)ity addresses only men and women. Simply put, all the other genders’ spectra and continuum appear to remain totally invisible and unrepresented. We cannot convey and reproduce messages about equity, “sustainability” and real democracy. Hence, doing the aftermath, my core argumentation is that SDG 5 should be firstly de- and thoroughly re-

contextualized, re-framed and re-labeled from “*Gender equality*” to “*Genders’ Equity*”. This should be the starting line and not an empty shell, the endpoint, the blind-spot or even worse the dead-end.

But how far are women from achieving the SDGs relative to men? According to OECD (2019) and the UN (2019) women are closer to SDG targets than men on all indicators related to health (SDG 3), but are further away from targets in many employment-related targets such as labor market participation, share of researchers, youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) and managers’ earnings, as well as on feeling safe and ICT skills. Simply put, we should re-mind all the previously alluded voids.

Please keep in mind Simon de Beauvoir’s (1997) diachronic research question: “*Why should the female be the “second” sex?*” With my re-presentation to this hackathon, I tried to degrade and disintegrate the gender that according to the norm(s) and the dominant narrative I should adopt and adapt as my “second skin”. To be more precise: regressiveness, passiveness, taciturnity, fragility, obedience, and amiability are some of the characteristics that I should adopt, in order to become “acceptable” and “likeable”. What about characteristics, such as innovation, originality, efficiency, and diagonal thinking? I decided to follow the “harsh” path. However, plenty people would probably express the old-fashioned and cliché opinion that these are males’ core features... It’s the patriarchy and the sexism, idiot²! Doing a proactive blocking and tackling to my dissidents and protestors, I would kindly reciprocate them that brains and parachutes work better (even though only) when they are open and open-minded, respectively.

In terms of my “zooming on” storytelling, I decided to participate in this hackathon because I am a life-long learner and I wanted to exchange knowledge and practices. Honorably, I received a positive response. In terms of genders’ equity, representation, inclusiveness and political correctness, I am certain that I didn’t notice the choices “Other” or/and “Prefer not to say” in the abovementioned application. The choices offered were: “male” and “female”. Having the abovementioned

mindset, I thoroughly thought that there were vacua of equity, inclusivity, and re-presentation that should be straightforwardly addressed. Following this logic path, there were no prolepsis and concern to express the pronouns that attendees might have preferred to use for themselves, i.e. “her, him or their”. I honestly and wholeheartedly believe that all these cha(lle)nges will and should be adopted in the next UNITE 2030 SDGs hackathon.

Since all the (information and implementation) strategies start with a number, or even better with numbers, following the current statistics in Greece (a and b) and worldwide (c and d) it is possible to notice that:

- (a) women do have the last position within the European Union’s participation in politics and high-level positions,
- (b) 34% of women are paid less than their male colleagues in the private sector,
- (c) 85% of women daily take care of the elderly and children, while the respective per cent for men is only 16%, and
- (d) women between 15 and 44 years old are more endangered by rape or/and domestic violence than cancer, war or malaria.

In our bizarre (and digital) era, this nexus of discriminations against women is placing them in vulnerable groups and are intertwined with core opinions and stereotypes even by women themselves. However, following de Beauvoir’s logic “*Nobody is born a woman, but is performing as a woman*” (Butler, 1990). It is agreed that we cannot refer to gender without men and those who self-defined, identified or/and determined as males. Amid the human crisis and the pandemic, I crucially decided to address and highlight this issue by providing a reply for the issue of the days: Covid-19 as a woman ex-change maker, interactive citizen, project manager, volunteer, and passionate human rights’ watchdog. Multiple women (but also men of course) including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, educators, care-workers, and cleaners (ETUC, 2020; Robertson & Gebeloff, 2020) and in parallel mothers have been forced to become frontline practitioners. Thus, Please Stand Up and

Applause (especially) the frontline wo-men for struggling with and juggling their multiple de-valued, overlooked and un-paid responsibilities and commitments(s)!

According to the statistics of the UNITE SDGs 2030, females were underrepresented. Five promising youngsters and I decided to address the “hot potato” of the Covid-19, a magnifying glass-ceiling for multiple inequalities. According to the UN SDGs (2020) the drop in human development is expected to be much higher in developing countries that are less able to cope with the pandemic's socioeconomic fallout than richer nations. The pandemic is crucially affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary cross-nationally, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale, rendering the reframed achievement of SDGs even more urgent.

Without urgent socio-economic responses, global suffering will escalate, jeopardizing lives and livelihoods for years to come. Immediate development responses in this crisis must be undertaken with an eye to the future. Development trajectories in the long-term will be affected by the choices countries make now and the support they receive. This endeavor could be characterized as a Sisyphean task. Over half of European respondents to the Eurofound's survey (2020) are concerned about their future as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, with only 45% feeling optimistic. In sharp contrast to surveys carried out before the pandemic, countries like Belgium, Italy and Greece are seeing optimism drop below the EU average (i.d., 2020).

However, due to multiple commitments and set priorities, we have been four in this team. I am proud of being the only European non-native woman amid a male-dominated team, consisting of Marshall Woodmansee, Hon Akan James and Martins Abebe JP. Paraphrasing Steve Jobs, great breakthroughs in society are never done by one person, they are done by a spiritual team of people. Undoubtedly, this team is intercontinental. Furthermore, the grasp of this team, which evolved to an “e-nternational SDGs family”, co-sharing its core “p-values”, i.e. health's promotion, human dignity, benevolence, humility, proximity, solidarity, togetherness, equity, peace, transparency and of course well-being.

Due to the web connectivity there were no geographical boundaries and obstacles. Our project and platform, entitled “*ESKP Crisis Response*”, i.e. Experiences, Skills, Knowledge and Practices was our set priority for and still remains a dream, which will be implemented in the near future, since all of us understood that we should be properly prepared regarding the next pandemic. Amid we built bridges, and innovative solutions. I was thrilled for my team members’ “out of the box” mentality. This project had 4D’s: “*Discover-Define-Develop-Deliver*”. We co-acted as four “*CCEO’s*”, i.e. Crisis Chief Executive Officers regarding Covid-19.

Our common mission and central aim was the successful combat of the multi-sectoral Covid-19 crisis. We envisioned a democratic global, glocal and digitalized society that will combat future manifold challenges and multiple crises in the sections of economy, health, humanitarian aid and human rights, but also human dignity. We will perform through “agile” humanitarian crisis management and vividly create a hub with two main sections: (i) Scientific, concerning how we can exchange expertise and good practices regarding multiple face(t)s of crises, such as Covid-19 and (ii) Non-Scientific/Personal, in terms of exchanging good practices, storytelling and narratives for and about Covid-19.

Portraying myself, I fully adored the whole process and of the passionate organizers, Alyssa Chassman and Rachel McCave as during this hackathon amazing and deeply inspirational fe-males mentors, fundraisers, diplomats, change makers, consultants and activists co-shaped my thoughts and my future. I would like to wholeheartedly thank them for sharing their screen, world’s “screenshot” and mentality with me. I strongly felt proud of and honored for being the mastermind of our elevator pitch and co-shaping our presenting idea. Reflection with team members, hackathon’s attendees, organizers and mentors made me strengthen my active citizenship and energetic policy making. It was a revolutionary movement from different “screenshots” and places of the world.

Expressing my humble opinion, we remained “*sustainably attached and aligned, @lone*” and later “*together, at a dist@nce*”. Remembering benchmark and momentum, I decided

to rethink my priorities, inter-action and focus once more on human centric issues and solidarity. Solidarity hacked our narratives. Nowadays, I strongly feel that I care and I should address the challenges that other colleagues face. Undoubtedly, by embodying and implementing this experience, I insisted on not “logging out” from systematic endeavor, happily doing the extra (s)mile, “poking” my orderliness, and adoring daily intercontinental “stretching”.

Yet, during the hackathon, the trial for Eleni Topaloudi, a 21-year old female student in Rhodes (Greece), who was savagely raped and murdered by two young men was taking place in Athens. This is a “*bleeding*” and black mark we have in common with India. If greatness of soul is crucially defined by ethos and impactisation, then (every) “Eleni” is a catalyst and forever “locked” in our consciousness! My UNITE 2030 experience and writing is kindly dedicated to her memorial and to every woman-sister who has suffered. With the demand and hope that their perpetrators and victimizers will re-think their role(s) and responsibilities. Let’s all be part of the change(s) that we want to see worldwide and not be complacent only to hashtags, but committed to co-actions. To every fe-male, whose body should matter (equally to every person’s), remembering Judith Butler. This is the last, but not least that I can do, in order to enhance the feeble echo of invisible gender(s) and provide with voice the voiceless or unplugged and power the powerless. Alternatively, fe-males should have -inter alia- the power, self-activity, and freedom to safely “breathe”, self-define their identities, control their own bodies, and be fully equal to the other genders.

Finally, paraphrasing and enriching Abraham Lincoln’s thesis, the best way to predict the (backbone of the) future, for the genders’ percipience and coexistence is to co-create it with the previously mentioned perceptions, terms, pre-conditions, lifestyles and milestones. In a nutshell, Re: loading the X and whY axes, our future mainly relies on, reveals and is revealed (by) the quality of our culture, govern-mentality, and govern-activity.

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FOOTNOTES

1. I am always thankful to all the luminous academicians, who promptly co-shaped my mentality and co-action via dialectical "crosswords", i.e. Athena Athanasiou, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, Alexandra Chalkias, Angela Davis, and Michel Foucault.
2. Reframed wordplay from "It's the Economy, Stupid" by James Carville. This is a "virus" without Corona. Disclaimer: The author doesn't intend to offend anyone.

THE MOTHERS OF ALL NATIONS

DAQUAN LAWRENCE*

I want a matriarchal society again, because I believe in Mother Nature...

Women endure double standards, inequality and oppression on a daily basis. Of the many myths, fallacies, and social constructions they suffer from through society is the belief that women are not “strong” or “tough”, and “femininity” is synonymous with “weakness” and/or a “lack of physical strength”. That false nature of this claim is demonstrated by nature as women are responsible for the physical birth of all human beings in existence and the requirement of menstruation to do so. In defense of all women (*who may need no defending due to their invaluable role in all societies*), physical weakness *denotes* physicality, and physicality *denotes* biological nature, and physically and biologically: speaking women are technically stronger than men. I do not intend to be a “typical male” by introducing the topic of sex or reproductive organs, but Betty White infamously and aptly said:

“Why do people say ‘Grow some balls?’ Balls are weak and sensitive. If you wanna be tough, grow a vagina. Those things can take a pounding.”

This statement is closer to truth and reality than the notions of women being “weak”, “soft”, un-“tough”, or physically incapable. Change appears to be inevitable, as everything

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changes with time. However, one particular aspect within society has endured the test of time: *society's domination of women*.

Women are members of the *human race*, and entitled to all freedoms that are considered *human liberties*, but the reality of the situation is that women all over the world are treated as subordinates. The magnitude of the oppression women face is alarming to say the least. Women *all around the world* endure mistreatment on a *daily basis* and face major scrutiny for behavior that society believes is “acceptable from men”. Unfortunately, I can use an infinite number of examples to prove my point and illustrate my concern.

Women endure daily/perpetual sexual harassment and are often instructed to “*cover their bodies*”, or “*sit with their legs closed*” so they won’t *distract* their male counterparts, exiled from their families or communities for “betraying the values” of their culture, and must often decide *if and when* they will have children because “maternal leave” is not guaranteed and women’s families and the working/professional world alike do not always accommodate their needs or interest in child-rearing.

Relationships, marriages, and civil unions are supposedly full of love and comfort, but also serve as avenues of oppression as women endure neglect, verbal abuse, and domestic violence. Women are *constantly objectified* on a global scale, meaning: both democratic and autocratic societies use various methods to subjugate women and treat them as objects. The objectification of women has even become a theme and selling point in mass media as advertisements, movies, songs, and shows promote viewing women as objects.

Sex ALWAYS sells, and beauty is often defined as “pretty”, “thin/slim/skinny”, “fair colored” or “lighter” skin tones.

Both men and women subconsciously and passively accept the negative portrayals of women by buying into mass media depictions, purchasing merchandise, and supporting social institutions that capitalize off of negative images.

I’m NOT trying to UNDERMINE THE PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE WOMEN’S RIGHTS MOVEMENT! I am just presenting my thoughts and how I feel based on the status quo and real life experiences, events,

and circumstances that have been *submissively allowed and legitimized* through the actions and inaction of members of society. In some parts of the world, women's rights movements and organizations have attained equality of rights under law.

But equality is not equity, and both equality and equity are required for true liberation. The progress of international and national women's rights movements must not take our attention from the obvious: society is unjustly patriarchal and both blatantly and subtly misogynist. Women are humans and DO NOT have to demonstrate why their innate rights should be recognized by nations' civil legislation and/or international law.

All men and women should recognize, recall, and relate to the suffering of all women. Women are victims of acid attacks, rape, gang-rape, murder, castration, sex trafficking, kidnapping, domestic violence, double standards, the glass ceiling, and the old boy network. Sadly, many of these acts have been committed by "men". The same "men" who have mothers... The same men who have grandmothers... The same "men" who have daughters, sisters, nieces, and aunts...

As a man, I am ashamed and dumbfounded because all men were brought into this world through the labor of a woman. Women are the primary caregivers of all children, men, and humanity. Therefore no man should feel entitled to mistreat any woman based on his status as a man alone.

Remember, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

I pray all men wake up or have some eureka moment and realize that as men, we are collectively failing our women. Women deserve true equality, not equality based on some lawful amendment that can be ambiguously interpreted and applied based on context and language. Men are given exceptional consideration and preferential treatment as women are often overlooked and discriminated against when it comes to matters such as employment, domestic violence, educational opportunities, and sexual assault. The institutions that govern the policies and procedures of these matters uphold the oppression that women endure. As a result, patriarchy persists and perpetuates a paradoxical society.

Enough is enough. We have complied and accepted a dreadful reality for girls who grow to become women in an ambiguous world. It's time to be real with ourselves. Women deserve true equality. Institutions are based on ideas and all humans have ideas, especially: women.

So, I dedicate these words to all the mothers, sisters, grandmothers, daughters, aunts, wives, little girls, and women who deserve nothing less than a chance to be themselves. Girls, girls, girls... indeed you do run the world, because throughout HISTORY, given less opportunities, women have always produced more.

Matter of fact: women birthed all nations. They should always be recognized, respected, and protected as such.

EQUALITY AND GENDER —Closing Gender Gaps and Promoting Gender Equality

UWAGBALE OFURE COURAGE*

Equality is referred to as “the state of being equal.” Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. It means that both men and women should receive equal treatment. Gender equality can also be called sex equality, gender egalitarianism.

While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals (including equal access to primary education between girls and boys), women and girls continue to suffer discrimination in every part of the world.

A child’s understanding of gender roles impacts how they socialize with their peers and form relationships. They develop their gender identity through observing and imitating gender-linked behaviors, and they are shaped by the people surrounding them through trying to imitate and follow them. Gender roles are influenced by the media, family, environment, and society. While Many children have a firm sense of their

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gender identity, some experience gender identity confusion.

There are ideologies behind equality and gender in most part of the world, whether it's cultural or religious, it stems from somewhere, and its lengthy existences imply means the causes are as strong as the impacts. Below are some of the common causes of gender inequality.

1. Tradition and Culture

"Why should a woman be leading when there are able ment of that could lead?" such is the typical cultural dogma that has plagued many thrones and political seats. Tradition is said to be the custom of a particular society, while culture is simply the way of life. When was the last time you heard about a female traditional ruler among the ethnic groups? The reason it has never happened is that it is deemed an abomination in almost every ethnic group.

You might lose your head if you dare to suggest female leader ship to the elders of the community. For instance, gender inequality in Nigeria is influenced by different cultures and beliefs. In most parts of Nigeria, women are considered subordinate to their male counterparts. It is generally believed that women are best suited as home keepers.

2. Religion

Should religion be erased? No. Infact, religion is one of them anything that guide the masses in living a good and peaceful life.

It's not a secret that religion is one of the top contributors to gender inequality in the world. Religion is one of the biggest contributors to peace on earth. However, some religions or religious practices restrict the role of women to just domestic roles, making it impossible for them to even think about holding a political post.

3. Improper Education

"Knowledge is power", they say. It might not come as a strong point, but this is pointing more towards some parts of some nations that are rejecting western views on women, to stick to cultural ones. A community that's poorly educated can never know the worth of women and a woman that is not educated

can not know her rights, talk less of the myriad of things she's capable of contributing to the modern society. It has been noticed that parents in some communities here in my country Nigeria don't usually encourage the education of their female children because they believe it will be of no benefit to them, as any money or success she earns in the future, due to her education, will be of her husband's, not their's. Education is nothing if you leave all you learn in school and still behave like a savage when you get back home. In other words, it must be obvious that you are educated.

4. Mentality

Mentality is largely influenced by culture and tradition. However, if you look at it from a subjectively, from a woman's view, it stands alone, how? Many women are not ambitious because they believe top positions aren't meant for men. Till date, some ladies complain about having a female boss simply because are used to having a male boss.

It almost seems clandestine for women to want to occupy a political position or the hot sit in a company. Such a mentality is usually created and forged by a woman's immediate environment. If you've never seen a woman lead, you would think that it is normal for women not lead even if you weren't directly told, right?

There certain problems with gender inequality that shouldn't be ignored by any society. Though usually viewed as a human rights problem, gender equality is vital for the attaining of progressive and sustainable economic development and a peaceful environment. This is even truer about Nigeria because women are about 50% of the population of the country; therefore, not allowing women to contribute to the country's prosperity may as well become an economic self-termination..

According to the United Nations Population Fund, gender inequality hinders the growth of countries, development of individuals, and the progress of societies, with both women and men losing out in the process. On the other hand, the contribution of women to a society is usually through the workforce. In situations when women aren't included in the labor force, only a particular portion of the workforce is being used,

thus leading to the wastage of economic resources, on a large scale. It is imperative for us to know that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world and people should not be discriminated against because of their gender. Improving gender equality in itself may be a goal with clear, intrinsic value. However, a substantial body of research now suggests that gender equality and the achievement of other development goals, such as health, education, social and economic rights fulfillment, and even growth, are inseparable.

In promoting gender equality, we need to treat all everyone fairly, create an inclusive culture for all, ensure equal access to opportunities to enable both genders fully participate in the learning process and also enable all to develop to their full potential, be it male or female.

In conclusion, the overall objective of gender equality is a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Gender equality is so important because it is as such linked to sustainable development and is vital to the realization of human rights for all, both male and female.

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA —The Case of Cameroon

EMILIA EPETI MIKI*

A gender stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives. In the media, focusing on broadcasting, publishing and the internet as key sectors in this article, we will look at how Gender Stereotypes play in Cameroon. Cameroon (French: Cameroun), officially called the Republic of Cameroon is a country wedged in West and Central Africa.

Gender stereotypes compounded and intersecting with other stereotypes have a disproportionate negative impact on certain groups of women, such as women from minority or indigenous groups, women with disabilities, women with lower economic status.¹

In Cameroon like several other countries around the world the film and television industry does not have a gender quota or policy that guides in the selection of characters and as a result we find a growing presence of male characters as opposed to female characters. Other scenarios see more female representation of movie characters than male.

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Women and young female journalists and those in the field of broadcast and publishing are faced with discrimination, harassment, stigma and intimidation and have work so hard to prove their worth as fit for the job or task that should have initially been theirs. In communities where we had respondents and mentees of our programs; they are still faced with stigma and religious push-aside for being female and working as a Journalist. This is because it is still believed by these religions that the woman's place is in the kitchen. The lack of capacity as a result of differential placements on specific roles as been for male while others are for female makes the situation even more alarming. We had film makers respond to a question on if they ensure that women and men are equally represented in film and television program that skills set is a key factor they consider. That they will not hire a female with no skills over a male with skills or vice versa just in a bit to respond to gender representation.

Men have emotions but in a typical cultural context they are tasked to always show off as very powerful and strong. In moments of weakness and stress they are not expected to cry. Men should not show any form of weakness despite their emotional and physical challenges. This situation which is dated from many years in history plays strong on maintaining the ideology of the male sex been strong and tough.

In all media spaces the woman is used to attract clients and customers. We see this in advertisement a lot where to sell a product a half-naked, naked or anything that shows that a woman is sexy is used to attract customers. This stereotype has many other women growing with a deferring idea of what beauty is. A practical example in Cameroon is the advertisement of a beer where a woman is projected more than the product on sale itself and this is done as a national marketing campaign. The message this typically sends out is that; drinking may give you access to a beautiful woman which is a great devaluation of the value of a woman. It is also seen a lot in most industries where to climb up the professional ladder, women have to present themselves as being beautiful first before presenting themselves as being intelligent to attract the attention of their male senior colleagues for possible promotion and favours.

With no guiding national policies and regulation on the quota of female and male representation in all sectors, platforms and programs we are faced with challenging situations of these absences getting unquestionably felt by audiences, and children as they grow learn to accept the stereotypes represented. What they see affects their attitudes toward male and female values in our society, and the tendency for repeated viewing results in negative gender stereotypes imprinting over and over.

FOOTNOTE

1. Gender Stereotyping; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/wrgs/pages/genderstereotypes.aspx>

**ROLE OF WOMEN IN POLITICS
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
PANCHAYATI RAJ
—A Case Study of Lepa Rada District
of Arunachal Pradesh**

MISS JUMTER LOYA*

Introduction

The role of women in politics is very important phenomena at present scenario in the world wide. Women participation in politics is a new dimension and it emerged in recent year in India as well as in the world. Now more women are entering into politics from grassroots to the parliament level. In India prior to independence, women were not much participated in politics, but after independence the Constitution of India had made various provisions of rights and equality for women. Women get started to enter into politics, which is integral part of women empowerment. And various welfare policies had been constructed and reinforced for the development of women from the traditional position. Before 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 in Panchayat Raj Institutions the role and participations of women were very less.

But after passing the bill of 73rd Constitutional Amendment

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Act of 1992, the 33 percent reservation seats were given to women, the representatives of women at the grass roots politics has been increased. Before this Act the Central Government has amended various Panchayati Raj Act but did not mentioned or amended any reservations quotas for women. In Arunachal Pradesh *NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967* was made for the first time, but in this act, it did not mention any reservations policy for women. Finally the Act of 1997 was passed to replace the *NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967* by a comprehensive law; and to conform to the provisions of constitution of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 which was based on reservation policy for women in grassroots democracy and for greater participation of the people and more effective implementation of rural development programmes.

Now Arunachal Pradesh has increased women participation and representation in Panchayat Raj Institutions up to 40%. Women representatives in Panchayat Raj have done noteworthy work for the improvement of overall development of the villages like rural development programme, education, sanitation and healthcare.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To examine the role and function of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions.
2. To examine the difficulties faced by women members in PRI's.
3. To examine the suggestive measures for effective participation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Source of Data

The data for present study were collected from both primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data was collected from present, former and defeated women members of Panchayat Raj Institutions of study area through field survey. The required data and information was collected with the help of specially designed through interview schedule. Secondary data were collected from relevant official acts, reports, records and any other published and unpublished material wherever available.

Methodology

The method of study was mainly empirical through field survey and participant observation. The present research work was based on extensive field survey and participant observation covering the area under study. The area of study comes under Lepa Rada district of Arunachal Pradesh. The data was collected through structured interview. The sample size for the study has been taken 50 respondents. 20 present, 20 former and 10 defeated women members of PRIs under study area.

Role of Women in Panchayat Raj Institutions

Panchayats Raj Institutions has been the backbone of decentralisation democracy in the rural India. It plays a very important role in the overall development of rural areas. Women play a significant role in democratic decentralisations, which is an integral part of women empowerment. Women entered into politics are the new aspects in the world wide. Now-a-days more numbers of women are entering into politics in comparisons to the olden days. The government had been constructed and reinforced for the welfare policies of women and child development.

In 1980's the government of India appointed a number of committees to adopt strengthen and empower to the Panchayat Raj Institutions. After taking so many measures the Prime minister Rajiv Gandhi gave one unique slogan " Power to the people" and undertook various steps to provide more power and responsibility to the Panchayat bodies and ultimately to the village people. Finally, P.V. Narasimha Rao government got the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 passed by the Parliament. After 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act thirty three percent reservations seats were given to women, they play very important role in grassroots politics. The idea of politics and democratic decentralization was increasing around and women also gradually play a very significant role in local governance.

Participation of Women in PRI's election

The 73rd constitutional amendment Act provides for the reservation of seats for women not less than one-third of the total number of seats. Prior to the introduction of 73rd

Constitutional amendment act in 1992, there was not much in politics. Participation of Women in politics was very less. But after 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, thirty three per cent (33%) reservation quotas were given to women. Galo Women of Lepa Rada district was made conscious about their lives and opened the doors for their equal rights and privileges. There is no bar for women in these days for being a member of any organisation, in holding posts of office. In modern political system, the women are participating or representing village and engaging in campaigns and working for strengthening political parties and activities. Hence women have equal right in politics and they play important role in party politics. Women participate in voting, contest election, run for public offices and become a good leader, women are not only participating in reservation seats in PRI's, but also participated election in open or general quota and very actively participate in the various activities. Besides the participation of women in PRI's election, they involves in activities for the welfare of the community.

Participation of Women in Decision-making Process

Decision making can be defined as the process of making choices among possible alternatives. The skills considered important to effective decision making are based on a normative model of decision making, which prescribes how decisions should be made. It is found that after 73rd constitutional amendment act, it created a good condition for political representation to women in Panchayat Raj Institutions. It provided a greater participation for women in political life and decision making process. However the participation of decision making is a useful indicator of women empowerment. To take right decisions in right manner is very important, decision making process is required, because to take the right decisions may leads right path in the near future. The women of Lepa Rada district are actively participated in the decision making process in the PRI's from the village level to the district level.

Participation of Women in Rural Development Programme

The term 'Rural Development' refers to a wide range of developmental programmes which aim at all round development

of the rural areas and improve the conditions of the rural people. Now-a-days women play a key role and actively participate in rural development programmes which include agricultural development, establishment of rural industry, constructions of roads, electricity, communication, markets, water supply, welfare services, improvement of nutrition, family planning, village sanitation etc. The Central and State Governments are implementing many schemes for rural development programmes through Panchayat Raj Institutions. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act transferred twenty nine subjects to Panchayat Raj Institutions. The women representatives are concern not only the economic progress but also social progress like development of the poor people, women and children in the village. Women are not only participate in the rural development programme, but also guide and motivate to the people and other women of the village to participate in rural development programme, and discuss everything with other Panchayat members for the proper implementation of rural development programme, and the beneficiaries of different rural development schemes are selected through Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings in the villages.

Participation of Women in Panchayat Meeting

The Panchayats meetings are held in the village level to run the local administration for the rural people. Generally the Panchayat meetings are conduct and regulated on the basis of Panchayat Raj Act. In the village level the Panchayat chairman is chaired and convenes the session of the meetings. They presides the meetings and keep records to all the important points which has discuss in the meeting. And in the absence of chairman the Vice chairpersons presides these meetings. In the Panchayat meeting women is actively participating, make influence and encourage to the rural women to get participate in the PRI's meeting, They revealed that due to the participation in Panchayat meeting they get courage to speak in public meetings and it make improved the status of rural women. The 73rd constitutional amendment has created a space for women in political participation and decision making at the grassroots level. The meeting provides them an opportunity to voice their grievances and problems of their own

village. Members of Panchayat are required to attend these meetings and listen to the problems of people.

Participation of Women in Deliberation of Gram Sabha Meetings

The Gram Sabha is a meeting of all adults who live in an area covered by a Panchayat. Anyone who is 18 years old or more and who has the right to vote is a member of the Gram Sabha. In Gram Sabha meetings it discusses regarding village level problems and development activities under Panchayat. The women are actively participated in the Gram Sabha meeting and they keep their views, opinion, suggestions in the house. They revealed that majority of the women are participating in deliberations of Gram Sabha meetings, they also opinion that to deliberation in the Panchayat meeting is very important, because it get courage for women to speak in public platform and give their views and opinion,

Women Practising Participatory Democracy

Prior to the reservations seats were given to women, most of the rural women are confined only in house hold chores and they didn't involve in political activities. But now-a-days participation of women in political life is increasing day by day and the life styles of women have been changing and they are taking much more interest in political activities. The status of rural women is turns into democratic way. And the representative's democracy is transforming into participatory democracy. The women are participating into all round development activities of the villages.

Women are Agents of Social Revolution

Women act as an agent of social change and social revolution in the society. The women are always raising the questions and issues against atrocities and injustice prevailing in the society. They could not tolerate injustice and malpractices which happening in the present society. The women made changes various issues and challenges which are exist in the society, they are focus in the development of education system, drugs abuse, child marriage, protection of women and children, polygamy, cleanliness of the locality.

Reducing Corruption and Violence

Due to the development of women representatives in Panchayat Raj Institutions, the connections of officers and male representatives of the PRI's are breaking, which has directly and indirectly impact on the reducing of corruption system. The role of money power and muscle power has automatically decreased due to active participation of women in political life and they are awareness of their rights, duties, power and function. Many researchers are revealed that after the participation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions the corruption system of grassroots democracy are reducing. Women representatives are focus on the development of the society and they are using development fund in the proper way without any hesitation.

Difficulties Faced by Women Members in PRI's

- Illiteracy or low standard of education among rural women.
- Household Chores or over burden of family responsibilities.
- Lack of Political awareness among the rural women.
- Dominance of Male members of the Panchayat.
- Economic dependence on husband and member members.
- Lack of political support from family and male members of the Panchayat.
- Negative public opinion regarding women leadership.
- Lack of training programme especially for women representatives.
- Political intervention in the working of the Panchayats.
- Depend on their husband's and male members of the Panchayat.
- Shyness nature and lack of communication skills.
- Negative attitude of Officials towards Women members.
- Interference of MPs and MLAs in the working of Panchayat.
- Lack of Political experience of Women.

Suggestions for Effective Participation of Women in Panchayat Raj Institutions

1. Women representatives must be self-confidence, ability, capacity and demonstrate to assume for take up their responsibility for own work without dependence on their husband and male members of Panchayat and avoid their interference. Because the constitutional machinery and legislative provisions which made for women alone will not help too far in empowering the women representatives.
2. Education is one of the very important factors for political empowerment of women. The Government take some important measures to conduct literacy programmes and adult female literacy programme for illiterate rural women and it should be initiated in mission mode with active involvement of Panchayat Raj Institutions.
3. The women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions should be educated and well informed. So, they can do their official work independent, without depend on their husband, family members and male members of Panchayat.
4. The participation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions is very poor because of lack of political awareness and shyness nature. To overcome these constraints the State Government and NGO's group should be organised frequently in the training programme for rural women to give awareness and take active participation in local governance.
5. Educated women should give awareness programme, encourage and supervise to the rural women in the overall development of the political process.
6. Women representatives should be chosen on the basis of their ability or capacity, rather than their family background. That person should be chosen as a Panchayat member, those have the quality of leadership and who could lead the society and community.

7. Special training programme and awareness camp should be conducted from time-to-time for women representatives. It gives them more knowledge, confidence and creates political awareness among women members.

Conclusion

After the establishment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 women gets an opportunity to participate in grassroots politics and it could be prove that her worth as a good leader, politician, administrator and decision-maker. This act is a milestone for women, it provides women to get chance and come forward in every activity. This study is proving to be a grand success specially by giving opportunity to women to come forward of their household chores and participate in political and administrative field. For more active participation of women in grassroots politics the government and NGO's should conduct training programme for the rural women at least women should know their responsibilities, duties, power and functions. They must be providing extra financial, administrative or political assistance to women for the success of the provision of the amendment.

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