

## The Battle Fight for the Equality and Rights of Women

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**Abstract:** For hundreds of years, women have been committed to improving their social status in many aspects, along the way they have gained a lot significantly. The topic of gender equality has penetrated every aspect and bought a great influence to many people's lives. Nevertheless, prejudice against women still exists in our whole society. This paper analyses women's equality and rights from many perspectives, including social movements, like the recent Me-Too movement, and salary gap, biases in daily life and influences in vocation choice, to demonstrate that everyone should attach more importance to the implementation measures of gender equality, as a result, alerting people to think over women's equality and rights in a critical way. In addition, this paper also takes the Black women into consideration to expose the racial discrimination behind the sexism, but the later is only discussed here.

### 1. Introduction

“For women and men to be truly free and able to realize their full potential today, we all need to be liberated from feminism and the gender wars.” Women had been challenging their social status for hundreds of years. From Suffrage Movement, Black Feminism, the feminist sex wars, to the Riot Grrrl movement, the female status has been elevated gradually historically. Nevertheless, female biases still exist. They are usually invisible for people as they turn a blind eye to the topic. The masculine society is still the dominant sentiment on global basis coincidentally. Gender equality is urgent, and everyone should attach more importance to it. In a society, everyone has the right to lead his/her life accordingly without any discrimination. When this state is achieved, where all individuals are equal irrespective of their caste, gender, color, profession, and status, we call it equality. The most prevalent discrimination is gender inequality. Even in progressive societies and top organizations, we can see many examples of gender bias. Gender equality can only be achieved when both male and female individuals are treated similarly.

A nation needs to value every gender equally to progress at the right place. A society attains better development in all aspects when both genders are entitled to similar opportunities. Equal rights in decision making, health, politics, infrastructure, profession, etc. will surely advance our society to a new level. The social stigma of women staying inside the house has changed. Nowadays, girls are equally competing with boys in school. They are also creating landmark development in their respective profession. Women are now seeking economic independence before they get married. It gives them the confidence to stand against oppression and make better decisions for themselves.

The age-old social structure dictated that women need to stay inside the home taking care of all when men will go out to earn bread and butter. This has been practiced since ages when the world outside was not safe. Now that the time has changed and we have successfully made our environment quite safer, women can step forward, get educated, pursue their passion, bring economic balance in their families, and share the weight of a family with men. This, in a cumulative way, will also make a country's economy progress faster and better.

## 2. Why We Should Pay More Attention to Gender Equality?

### 2.1. Gender Equality and Social Movements

#### 2.1.1. Women's Suffrage Movement in England in the 19th Century

Freedom and equality are the two common ideals of feminism and liberalism since the 19th century. Feminists borrow the liberal concept of freedom and equality in order to explain women's right to vote and to various other things, to reconstruct the concepts of public sphere and private sphere, state, and home from the standpoint of women, and to enrich and develop the traditional liberalism theory. In practice, they go out of the restricted area of private sphere, throw themselves into political life, challenge the traditional society and gender relations, and gradually extend the political and economic rights limited to men to women, so as to make contributions to the establishment of women-centred political culture and to lay a foundation for the realization of women's political equality rights. The following picture gives us a clear impression of how women fight for their suffrage.



Figure 1 Women's suffrage movement.

For example, the liberal ancestors, such as Locke and Rousseau, used to explain women's right to vote and other rights, which extended the principle of freedom and equality of modern capitalism to the female class and denied the liberal view of women. Compared with male thinkers, Locke et al. clearly interpreted the nature of human freedom as the same original nature of human beings determines that men and women share equal rational and political power, and that women's participation in political power is the guarantee of safeguarding women's natural human rights [1].

In the campaign for women's right to vote, more British women's awareness of participation in politics, equal rights and public awareness woke up. They walked out of the restricted area of private sphere, devoted themselves to political life, challenged the traditional society, expanded their social influence, and gradually extended the political and economic rights limited to men to the female class to improve their social status.

Some British feminist started thinking in a representative selection of essays on major themes by influential feminists in the British tradition. It shows that feminist thoughts in Britain had a clear identity, arising from its special political and social formations. This identity is useful when compared with the American and the European traditions of feminist thoughts. It moves from a consideration of feminist history, through the unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism, towards issues of race and class, psychoanalysis, the family, and housework, to the peculiarly British phenomenon of feminist criticism and research existing within the context of cultural studies [2].

#### 2.1.2. Gender Equality and Black Feminism

In the history of American literature, the fate of black women is full of tragedy. From the 18th century to the 19th century, black women often appeared in literary works as a literary image that ended in tragedy. However, mixed-race women are between two races, and their lives are doomed to end in tragedy because of their double confusion of origin and identity. They are full of hatred towards the society, and are very sensitive to their ancestry and race. In addition, the background of

slavery and racism has given mixed-race women a more complex living environment. Black feminism centres the experiences of Black women, understanding their position in relation to racism, sexism, and classism, as well as other social and political identities. Black women have been excluded from mainstream feminism because of their race, while simultaneously being excluded from black liberation movements because of their gender. Black feminism highlights and engages with the many aspects of identity that women have, which was significant because it gave them the opportunity to talk about being black along with gender inequality. Despite the prejudice and discrimination they faced, Black women were and still continue to be critical to the black liberation and gender equality movements [3, 4].

## 2.2. Gender Equality and the Salary Gap

According to PayScale, in 2021, the median salary for women is roughly 18 percent lower than the median salary for men. And one of the biggest reasons for this would be Maternity leave, which stands for the special leave after giving birth to a child [5]. Regarding this women-only leave, the cost of employing the same condition level worker in female increases, which leads the administrator to tend to choose only male as their employee over females. This leads to the gender salary gap and even creates a bias that women shouldn't be too dominant in earning money. In the film "Equity", Naomi Bishop states boldly, "I like money." This creates a jaw-dropping moment and Sarah Megan Thomas commented "We don't show strong women liking money on the screen." The stereotype should certainly be altered, and it is delightful to see more female figures showing their point-of-view [6]. The gender pay gap is the result of many factors, including race and ethnicity, disability, access to education and age. As a result, different groups of women experience very different gaps in pay.

The gender pay gap varies substantially from state to state, due to factors such as:

- The primary industries in the state and the opportunities they create
- Demographics such as race/ethnicity, age, and education level
- Regional differences in attitudes and beliefs about work and gender
- Differences in the scope and strength of state pay discrimination laws and policies

In some occupations, women collectively are receiving billions less than they would with equal pay; for instance, women working as physicians and surgeons are paid \$19 billion less annually than if they were paid the same as men in that occupation. The distinction between women and men can be seen in the following figure:

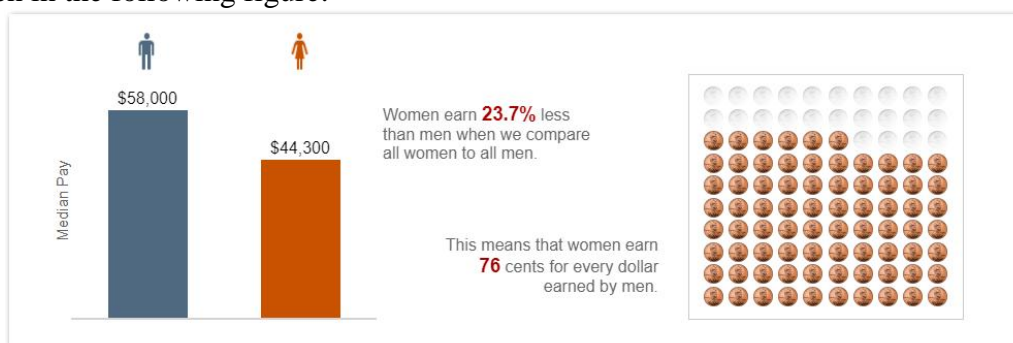


Figure 2 Median pay.

Women's health and safety is another important area. HIV/AIDS is becoming an increasingly impactful issue for women. This can be related to women having fewer opportunities for health education, unequal power in sexual partnership, finally even causing gender-based violence. Maternal health is also an issue of specific concern. In many countries, women have limited access to prenatal and infant care, but they are more likely to experience complications during pregnancy and childbirth. This is a critical concern in countries where girls marry and have children before they are ready; often well before the age of 18. Quality maternal health care can provide an important entry point for information and services that empower mothers as informed decision-makers concerning their own health and their children's health.

### 2.3. Gender Equality and Bias in Life

In daily life, people tend to have specific biases on the female. The first example would be in a relationship. During sex & relationships, female is often portrayed as victims to receive the love from a man. There is so much visual art piece that depicts male as the dominator, and using bossy, crude, and rash behaviour as the USP to attract a female audience. However, the #Me-Too movement, as the figure below shows, which stands for a social movement against sexual abuse and sexual harassment towards women, recently indicates that female status had been paid more attention.



Figure 3 The Me-Too movement.

### 2.4. Gender Equality and Influences in Vocation Choice

In choosing jobs, women are also limited by clichés and stigmas. During the Chinese New Year vacation, I interviewed many elders who visited my house, including both genders male and female, about what I should choose to be, a scientist or Mathematician in the future. Unfortunately, 80% of them presented a query as their point of view that caught my attention. Most of them said what a fitting job a girl would be, they said she should always pursue liberal art, not mathematics or science-related jobs. The result might involve historical content and presumed notions; however, this is the status quo for females. A great amount of data shows that it usually takes more effort for the female to get to the same position as the male.

Juliet Mitchell summarized the mechanism of women's oppression into four categories: production, fertility, sex, and children's socialization, which are closely related [7]. "Women have made special contributions to the reproduction of human beings, shouldered the great hardships of giving birth, and paid hard work which is difficult to measure with economic indicators [8]. However, because of this, they will be at a disadvantage in their career, which in turn determines their disadvantage in social life. To overcome this situation, the society must make full compensation for the losses caused by their fertility [9]."

## 3. How is Gender Equality Measured?

- Gender equality is an important factor in determining a country's overall growth. There are several indexes to measure gender equality.
- Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) – GDI is a gender centric measure of Human Development Index. GDI considers parameters like life expectancy, education, and incomes in assessing the gender equality of a country.
- Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) – This measure includes much detail aspects like the proportion of seats than women candidates hold in national parliament, percentage of women at economic decision-making role, the income share of female employees.
- Gender Equity Index (GEI) – GEI ranks countries on three parameters of gender inequality, those are education, economic participation, and empowerment. However, GEI ignores the health parameter.

Global Gender Gap Index – The World Economic Forum introduced the Global Gender Gap Index in 2006. This index focuses more on identifying the level of female disadvantage. The four important areas that the index considers are economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, health, and survival rate [10].

#### 4. Importance of Gender Equality

A nation can progress and attain higher development growth only when both men and women are entitled to equal opportunities. Women in the society are often cornered and are refrained from getting equal rights as men to health, education, decision-making and economic independence in terms of wages. The social structure that prevails since long is in such a way that girls do not get equal opportunities as men. Women generally are the caregivers in the family. Because of this, women are mostly involved in household activities. There is lesser participation of women in higher education, decision-making roles, and leadership roles. This gender disparity is a hindrance in the growth rate of a country. When women participate in the workforce increases the economic growth rate of the country increases. Gender equality increases the overall well-being of the nation along with economic prosperity.

#### 5. Conclusion

For overall well-being and growth of a nation, scoring high on gender equality is the most crucial aspect. Countries with less disparity in gender equality have progressed a lot. However, we need more awareness of spreading knowledge of women rights. In addition, the governments should take initiatives to check the correct and proper implementation of policies. In conclusion, the topic of gender equality has penetrated into every aspect of people's daily life, and brought great influence to people's lives. Everyone should attach more importance to it. From the four perspectives of Social Movements and Salary Gap, Biases in Daily Life and influences in vocal choice, it is clear to see that there is still a long way to go to truly realize gender equality. Gender equality is intrinsically linked to sustainable development and is vital to the realization of human rights for all. 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.

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