Committee: Special Committee

Topic: The question of education and technological change in achieving gender equality and economic empowerment of women

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Summary

Digitalisation has proved profound in transforming our societies. While digital technologies can prove extremely beneficial in improved political and economic outcomes for women and girls, they can also give rise to new challenges that deepen existing patterns of gender inequality.

The gender digital divide is becoming the new face of gender inequality, preventing millions of women around the globe from accessing key services, such as education and occupation. These gaps are rooted in longstanding and persistent stereotypes, diminishing women's role in innovation.

Education is also a key part in achieving gender equality. Amartya Sen, referred to by many as the father of the concept of human development, maintains that "if we continue to leave vast sections of the people of the world outside the orbit of education, we make the world not only less just, but also less secure".

Gender inequality is a global priority at UNSECO and is a force for economic, social and political transformation, such that it has the ability to create a more inclusive planet for us all. Many countries with gender inequality as a key problem lack the basic education needed for sustainable and human development. This in turn leads to unjust societies.

Definition of Key Terms

Digitalisation- the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities.

Empowerment- the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

ICT- Information and communications technology (ICT) is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications.

Economic Empowerment- the process of assisting individuals, primarily women from low-income backgrounds, in obtaining the education, training, and job-related skills they require to support themselves and their families.

Background Information

Large gender gaps still exist in education in many settings, most often at the expense of girls, although in some regions boys are at a disadvantage. Globally, 118.5 million girls and 125.5 million boys are out of school. Women still account for almost two-thirds of all adults unable to read, the number reaching 763 million. The power of education in achieving a more just society is clear. Models such as the gender inequality index prove that a poorer education system correlates to such being a larger problem with society.

The role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a tool for development could be the future. Integration of such into needed societies (eg. Nigeria) would prove incredible in the fight for justice. However, for this to occur, the UN must ensure that women become ICT literate through making ICT policies more effective, ICT in education must be part of the curriculum for boys and girls and men and women should be encouraged to educate themselves through existing services. Another large issue of using Information and Communication Technologies in achieving gender equality and women economic empowerment is women earning less than men and therefore have less or no access to land. Thus, not enabling them to avail of ICT services. The gender pay gap in the EU was 12.7% as of 2021. In LEDCs, this number is only elevated due to the larger inequalities.

Emerging tools in technology are giving women a host of new ways to empower their professional lives. Salary information that allows women to measure their salary against personal gender pay gap is already available from GetRaised and Payscale. The female-friendliness of company cultures are being crowdsourced by startups. While a start, these methods could be improved upon, and innovation is certainly needed. After all, the problem is yet to be solved.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

UN Women- "UN Women is the global champion for gender equality, working to develop and uphold standards and create an environment in which every woman and girl can exercise her human rights and live up to her full potential" (as on their website). Said problem was the theme of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) where the problem was debated and a comprehensive, concrete solution was sought after.

UNESCO- UNESCO calls for attention to gender equality to be incorporated into the education systems of countries around the globe in relation to teaching and learning context and practices, learning outcomes, and life and work opportunities. The UNESCO Strategy for gender equality in and through education (2019-2025) aims to provide framework to advance rights and empower through education.

Association for Women's Rights in Development- an international organisation working towards better outcome for women and achieve gender equality as the SDG strives for.

Timeline of Events

1948- Gender equality was made part of international human rights law and adopted by the UN general assembly

1963- Equal Pay Act said employees, regardless of sex must be paid equally

1975- The International women's year and first world Conference on women was held in Mexico. At such, attended by more than the original 51 countries established that the years 1976- 1985 were to be further named as the decade of women.

1979- The General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) which requires states to take all appropriate measures in ensuring equality and the development of women.

1980- Second World Conference on Women was held in Copenhagen in 1980. It brought improvements with regards to women's rights to property and inheritance.

1985- "The birth of global feminism" as oftentimes described was the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. It was a worldwide appraisal of the leaps empowerment for women had taken but to also provide concrete solutions for future.

1998- Education Act 1998 established, section 21 referring to the inclusion of gender equality in the development of the school plan

2004- Equality act 2004 aimed to stop discrimination against women in places such as work

2010- UN women formed as a singled body tasked with advancing women's rights in both MEDCs and LEDCs. It merged four of the world body's agencies and offices: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Sixty-Seventh Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67)- Took place from 6 to 17 March 2023 in New York. Discussed innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Further reviewed the challenges and obstacles rural women and girls face. Was attended by more than 7000 participants and took an increased initiative to give youth speakers centre stage to convey their ambitious ideals.

Key takeaways:

The CSW condemned all forms of violence against women and girls,

They recognized the scale that which technology-facilitated online gender-based violence is at current time,

Called for significantly increased public and private sector investments to bridge the gender digital divide,

Participants recognized that negative gender stereotypes are causing persistent gender gaps in STEM education and that without co-operation and global effort, males will continue to dominate IT sectors.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)- addressed the role of technology and that it is essential that women not only benefit from technology, but also participate in the process from design to application, monitoring and evaluation.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women-
Addressed the legal status of women, mistreatment in work, reproductive rights in relation to their choice. It further acknowledged and attempted to address economic and political constraints placed on women. A culmination of 30 years of work.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education- Efforts are still being made to enforce the strategy, which aims to provide a transformation of systems in order to advance the rights of women and set in place concrete frameworks to empower. They recognise that simple changes, like including more examples of women leaders in textbooks can make a profound difference. However, such strategy has not forgotten the bigger pictures and problems. Putting pregnant girls at the door and protecting their right to an education.

ICTs- Women empowerment in the ICT sector is a topic on the forefront of all media during international women's day. In 2016, MEPs adopted a resolution on gender equality and empowering women in the digital age. It's clear that women are left out, ad not only are the UN making efforts to solve that, the EU have already incorporated different strategies. EU code week, European Network of Women Web Entrepreneurs Hubs, the Startup Europe Leaders Club, and the EU Prize for Women Innovators to name a few.

Possible Solutions

Increased promotion in the value of incorporating gender equality into school curriculum through mass media campaigns etc.…

Development of new strategies of encouragement for women to join the IT sector to advance their economic empowerment.

Increased promotion of existing treaties and laws the UN have adopted.

Incorporating methods that have been proven efficient by countries with a high gender equality into LEDCs where possible

Expansion of UN women in order to bring about an increased pace of change within societies.

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NGO CSW lac:

Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

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