

## **From Gender Blindness to Gender Equality Policy**



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**ABSTRACT:** How important are gender issues in international relations and world politics? The various events taking place in different parts of the world today have led to the inclusion of women in world politics not only as an active subject (in governance, peacekeeping, economic processes), but also as an important object of social relations. It has also become a requirement of the time to focus on women's issues in economic, social and political relations as a segment of the population in need of social protection due to poverty, internal conflicts, diseases, economic and political crises. At the same time, the issue of gender equality has become a voluntary and mandatory obligation for countries. No country in the world has achieved gender equality regardless of its level of development. This inequality has a number of well-established historical foundations. Firstly, long historical evidences prove that women's physical weakness and the task of rearing children had placed them at a disadvantage and made it hard for them to compete with men. This disadvantage had been increased by the exclusion of women from knowledge, from work and from property ownership and political rights. In this article, I try to analyze the importance of gender phenomenon in world politics. Gender blindness of the system had its negative impacts at all spheres that found its proof through historical periods. Today, Gender is not only actual in global peace and stability, but also in sustainability of economic welfare and social maintenance.

**KEY WORDS:** Gender equality, feminism, liberal feminism, the UN, CEDAW, climate change.

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### **INTRODUCTION.**

In most societies, women were traditionally confined to the home as daughters, wives and mothers. Almost everywhere in the world, women are denied their human rights just because of their sex or gender. *Women's rights should not be seen as special rights*: they are human rights enshrined in international human rights treaties and other documents, and include such rights as freedom from discrimination, right to life, freedom from torture, right to privacy, access to health, right to decent living conditions, right to safety, and many others. Women activists and the struggle for equality have always been part of all human societies. The struggle of women for equality has theoretically and practically lasted for years and is still a process in progress.

Gender equality is a critical point of the idea that masculinity doesn't mean domination and femininity submission. However, the protection of simple civic and political rights of half member of population is still under suspicion in some countries. Many obstacles which women face in their daily routine will serve as the main basis of problems tackled by societies. No country in the world has achieved gender equality regardless of its level of development. This inequality has a number of well-established historical foundations. Firstly, long historical evidences prove that women's physical weakness and the task of rearing children had placed them at a disadvantage and made it hard for them to compete with men. This disadvantage had been increased by the exclusion of women from knowledge, from work and from property ownership and political rights. Over time women submitted to masculine versions of female inferiority. Secondly, in many societies female oppression was determined by birth, 'like the skin of the Black', social affiliation or by sex-selection. Also, the existing system of cultural belongings "moulded" [2] women's minds by the way in which men were supreme had also further contributed to women's subjection. Of course, the reasons given above will not be without consequences. Women with spiritual and enlightened liberal views gradually began to demand the full manifestation of their rights and freedoms. Their ranks began to expand and gain political importance, and in history it was sealed under the name of feminism.

By the 1920s, women had won the right to vote in most European countries and in North America. At around the same time, women became more active in communist, socialist and social democratic parties because increasing numbers of women began to work outside the home in factories and offices. The United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women, adopted in 1952, once again legally strengthened women's right to vote and stand for election. The entry of woman into political life as voters and political subjects, an international phenomenon, has been one of the marked changes of the twenties century. Consequently, during the twentieth century, women's priority issues in global scale moved beyond married women's property

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rights, divorce laws, and the suffrage to include labor laws, social issues, including child-care, welfare, health-care and education, access to safe legal abortion, international development, the distribution of economic resources, and human rights.

### **THE ROLE OF THE UN IN ESTABLISHING GENDER EQUALITY VALUES GLOBALLY.**

The United Nations is a universal organization at the global level, which has identified all important issues of human destiny as the main agenda of its activities. Protecting the rights and interests of women, who make up half of the world's population, is an integral part of the UN mission for peace and stability. The United Nations is the first international organization to promote and advance the rights and interests of women on a global scale. The Charter of the organization is the first international instrument to recognize gender equality as a fundamental human right. The United Nations is the only organization of a universal nature that helps to create a historical and modern framework for internationally applicable strategies, standards, programs and goals for the advancement of women around the world. The organization also serves as a platform for the best and most beneficial compromise, discussion and negotiation for important aspects of the issue of gender equality. Ensuring women's legal and civil rights are important challenges facing the world community: poverty; unemployment; social dispersion; disordered population growth; plays an important role in resolving human rights violations, etc. The United Nations has a unique role to play in this process. In this case, the organization acts as the main coordination center.

The establishment of the UN Commission on Human Rights and the Status of Women in 1946 and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 were the first steps in the efforts to establish a legal framework to promote gender equality. From this period, the process of codifying the legal rights of women began. Thus, the United Nations has begun a wide range of activities to assess the situation of women around the world. Full details of the political and legal status of women, an analysis of each country, a catalog of achievements, and the identification of remaining barriers have laid the groundwork for world standards of women issues. On this basis, international legal regulations, treaties, conventions have been developed.

A number of important documents, established by the UN and ratified by member states, provide legal guarantees for the implementation of gender policy at the national and international levels. United Nations Charter (1945), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Convention on the Equal Remuneration of Women and Men for Equal Labor (1951), Convention on the Protection of Motherhood (1952), Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958), Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962), and Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1974). Increasing participation of women on an equal basis with men in all areas of public and political life of the countries, was officially recognized in 1979, when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) [4]. This document is rightly called “The International Bill of Women's Rights” and obliges member states to ensure that women, on equal terms with men, have the right to participate in the formation and implementation of government policies, to hold public office, and to exercise all public functions at all levels of government (Article 7). Governments who have ratified the treaty have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure the rights of women are respected, protected and fulfilled.

The principle of gender equality is also one of the most important goals of the UN Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, UN institutional units are involved in the ongoing monitoring of women's issues and the development of recommendations and suggestions. In late 2013, the UN Women launched a constitutional database. According to him, the constitutions of 195 UN member and observer states are being studied and evaluated in terms of gender equality. There is also INSTRAW, the International Institute for Women's Research and Education at the United Nations, which collects, analyzes and reports on gender issues. Such institutions play an important role in the study and solution of problems in the field of gender relations.

### **EXACERBATING POWER OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON GENDER EQUALITY.**

Climate change is worsening existing inequalities, be that gender or other inequalities. In many countries, women are particularly disadvantaged by some factors – including income, occupation and education – that can affect their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. In addition to this, entrenched social norms and socio-economic structures deprive women of access to resources, decision-making, information, agency, etc.[5] Also, women are more likely than men to be affected by extreme weather events on health, including mental illness, infectious disease, partner violence, poor reproductive, maternal birth and food insecurity[6]. The simplest example is pregnant women who often experience heightened health risks and reduced access to reproductive and maternal care services as a result of climate change impacts.

Any changes in the environment are directly related to women's living conditions. Women who spend most of their time at home are often responsible for preparing food, collecting water and sourcing fuel for heating and cooking. These tasks are more difficult where the lack of infrastructure in rural areas. With climate change, while, extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have a greater impact on the lives of women. Feminization of poverty becomes one of the most urgent issue gaining global scale. Most vulnerable part of population – 70% of the world's poor are women. According to the UN Food and Agriculture

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organization, If woman had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 %, which could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4 %.

The effects of climate change, such as degradation, desertification, droughts, water shortages are not alien to the Central Asia. Especially, global warming affects villagers' way of life. Because of the precarious economic situation, men often have to look for work far away from home, leaving the economic burden on the shoulders of women and children. Central Asian women, mostly who are living in rural areas face the most challenges in the hot dry summer in the foothills and severe winter cold in the highlands.

Therefore, it is more urgent for government leaders to realize that empowering women is important not only for improving their living conditions, but also for strengthening their economic and social status. These will help societies adapt more quickly and easily to the impacts of a changing climate through improved healthcare, education, and representation in decision-making.

### WOMEN IN POLITICS.

The emergence of women as an "invisible power" in world politics is assessed by the fact that international relations are viewed as a "male-dominated" field. It has also been repeatedly confirmed that world politics and governance are based on the principle of "hegemonic masculinity" [7]. As a result, it is no coincidence that men appear in many global management positions as individuals with the strongest attributes.

Masculinity and politics have a long and close association. Characteristics associated with "manliness," such as toughness, courage, power, independence, and even physical strength, have, throughout history, been those most valued in the conduct of politics, particularly international politics. Frequently, manliness has also been associated with violence and the use of force, a type of behavior that, when conducted in the international arena, has been valorized and applauded in the name of defending one's country [8].

Article 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women ("CEDAW") establishes the right of women to represent their governments at the international level, on equal terms with men and without discrimination, and to participate in the work of international organizations. The CEDAW Committee has interpreted Article 8 to apply to regional as well as to international bodies [9]. Consistent with long-standing interpretations of States obligations to prohibit discrimination, Article 8 requires States not only to refrain from discrimination but also to adopt affirmative measures to eradicate barriers that effectively discriminate against women [10].

The view of women as active participants in international relations was not taken seriously and was seen as a realpolitik "field not specific to the nature of women". At the same time, the attitude towards women in international relations has been interpreted by several scholars. In particular, Professor A. Leiphart describes women as "a political minority" [11]. Neo-realist Francis Fukuyama, in his "Women and the Evolution of World Politics" analyzes women's position in world politics, such as, "A world run by women would follow different rules, it would appear, and it is toward that sort of world that all postindustrial or Western societies are moving. As women gain power in these countries, the latter should become less aggressive, adventurous, competitive, and violent. [12]

Women are underrepresented in leading positions, whether in elected offices, the civil service, the private sector or academia. Several obstacles, such as structural barriers, discriminatory laws and institutions still limit women's options to participate in political life. As the 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation notes, "Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women." Data from 133 countries shows that women constitute 2.18 million (36 per cent) of elected members in local deliberative bodies. Only two countries have reached 50 per cent, and an additional 18 countries have more than 40 per cent women in local government [13]. As of 1 September 2021, there are 26 women serving as Heads of State and/or Government in 24 countries. Just 10 countries have a woman Head of State, and 13 countries have a woman Head of Government. At the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years [14].

Despite the existing problems, gender parity in world politics has reached a progressive level in recent years. This can be seen in the example of women in ambassadorial positions. According to the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (AGDA) Women in Diplomacy Index 2021 survey results, the share of women in ambassadorial appointments in Denmark, Norway and Sweden was 40.6%, Oceania (Australia) 40.2%, North America (USA, Canada and Mexico) was 34.0%, the highest figure was Canada. The number of female ambassadors in South America (Brazil, Argentina and Colombia) was 17.0%, the share of female diplomats in the European Union was 23.4% (27.2% in the whole of Europe), South Africa (Africa and Nigeria) was 27.3%, in Asia 12.9%. Finally, the sample percentage for the Arab Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) was 4.8%. However, the final conclusion is unsatisfactory, with women remaining underrepresented in ambassadorship positions. Out of 4,060 ambassadors currently appointed in the sample (a number of posts were vacant at the time of data gathering), only 842 are women. This indicates that the total share of women ambassadors stands at 20.7% for 2021 [15].

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### CONCLUSION.

The empowerment of women and girls needs to be accelerated to achieve the dramatic transformation necessary in our societies to realize the 2030 Agenda in every country. The commitment to women and girls who suffer from discrimination, harmful practices and violence and to girls and adolescents who demand equal access to quality education and health care remains paramount. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male.

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### NOTES.

1. The first country to grant women the right to vote was New Zealand in 1893. French women obtained the right to vote and stand for election in 1944.In Saudi Arabia women were allowed, for the first time, to vote and run for office in 2015.
2. Liberal feminism emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries, while major social movements appeared in Western countries. The significance of this period is the transition from a feudal society to an industrial society, from a monarchical State to a democratic State based on the rule of law, the development of capitalism, etc. Liberal feminists want to apply the philosophy of liberalism to gender equality: the oppression of women lies in their lack of political and civil rights. It can, therefore, be countered by reforms aiming at establishing equal opportunities for both women and men. Women's 'liberation' would, thereby, be achieved by putting an end to discriminatory practices, and by pushing for equal rights. The key notions of liberalism include individual freedom, democracy, equal opportunities, and equal rights.

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Theoretically, liberal feminist thoughts in various areas found its peculiarities in the works such scholars as Mary Astell (1666–1731), Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–99), Harriet Taylor (1807–58), John Stuart Mill (1806–73), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), and Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)<sup>1</sup>. They drew on the liberal tradition's value of equality and individual freedom. However, activists Maria Stewart (1803–79) and Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906) did pay attention to the lives of Black and working middle class women.

3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women art. 8, Dec. 18, 1979, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13 [hereinafter CEDAW] (asserting that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations”).
4. UN Women calculation based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Only elected Heads of State have been taken into account.



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