

**Forum: CSW – Commission on Status of Women**

**Issue: The question of ensuring women's rights in Middle Eastern and Asian countries**

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## **Introduction**

Women's rights have in the last century grown into a question, of not only equality between the genders, but a question of human rights. Although, no matter what gender you prescribe to, you are subjected to social conventions, and sometimes laws that only apply to your gender. Women in general suffer the greatest injustices in the world. Aforementioned, injustices are particularly harsh outside the Western countries, although there has been some improvement in the process of promoting equality. There must be a distinction made between equality and equity, as they have different implications.

## **Definition of key terms**

Equality refers to equal rights for everybody. Despite any differences that there may be.

Equity recognizes differences, and gives different amounts of aid to different needs.

Women's rights must also be defined: it is the idea that women ought to have equal, (especially legal) rights as men have. This has come up in key issues, such as women's right to vote, reproductive rights, and rights to work for equal income.

## **Key issues**

Although, it must be recognized, that there is no country in the world today that doesn't allow women to vote. Women, and men have the equal rights to vote. Nevertheless, despite having the right to vote, women are not always aware of their political rights, or are even prevented by relatives or spouses from exercising their rights, due to conflicts about gender roles. There have therefore been other media campaigns that have been producing videos such as "BIBA - Change the Convention #ChangeIsBeautiful", which encourages females to have an equal status at home as men have, and for them to be able to choose their own spouses.

The Global Gender Gap Report, which measures female educational attainment, political empowerment, health and survival, and economic participation and opportunity when compared

to male, frequently reports the Middle East and Asia as the regions with overall high gender inequality. Although a notable exception is the Philippines which is among the top 5 score in the entire world, when it comes to gender equality according to the Global Gap Report.

In order to ensure women's rights, legislative bodies must first reconsider any biased laws they have. For example, if there are any laws that forbid women from driving, like in Saudi Arabia.

Another law, which is even more significant, is in Turkey where women are not allowed to have a job, without their husband's permission. This has resulted in that only 29% of women have a job in Turkey. This leads to economic dependence on their husbands. Especially for women who live under abuse, this can be very hard. As for if they get a divorce, the husband gets to keep all economic assets. Unless the woman is supported by a rich family, but is unable to divorce her husbands, she sometimes must endure very harsh conditions such as physical, and mental abuse.

Another important detail is that in many countries, women are not entitled to get married at the same minimum age, as men are allowed to. Consequently, they can legally be forced into an unwanted marriage and economic dependence at a very young age.

In Yemen women are not allowed to leave the house, without their husband's permission. It is often considered the worst country for women to live in.

## **Major parties involved**

Some interesting key actors are Russia, China, US, as they all have influence in Asia and in the Middle East. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women, also known as UN Women, which is a United Nations organization, working towards better rights for women globally.

## **Possible solutions**

Peaceful methods which aim to not only change governments, legislative bodies, and the police force, but also to changing the conventions, expectations, and limitations will be the most effective way to ensure women's rights globally. Previously there have been some discussions with local religious leaders about, how women were perceived, which were proven effective as religion often has an important role in the Middle East, but also increasingly in Asia.

To succeed in making a good resolution for this topic, it is important to remember that in order to ensure women's rights, there must be legally binding methods, as well as changes in attitudes. Perhaps legislative bodies should more often review old laws, regarding women and see if they still are truly fair. Or changing attitudes should be the first step. Consider what you think is most

important, whilst still keeping in mind that in many countries in the Middle East and in Asia, there aren't always that many of women's rights you can ensure in the first place.

## **Bibliography**

1. <http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/news/a9882/most-ridiculous-sexist-laws/>
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4. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s\\_rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_rights)
5. <https://www.thenational.ae/world/why-more-and-more-girls-are-going-to-school-in-india-1.1824>

## **Appendices**

- I. [Reason more girls are going to school in India](#)
- II. [Global Gap Report- See where your country is!](#)
- III. [Wikipedia Women's rights for some more history](#)