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Tackling Gender-Based Discrimination in Education

Human Rights Council

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Introduction and General Overview

The international community, specifically the Human Rights Council, must undertake comprehensive and coordinated action to combat gender-based discrimination in education in an effective approach. The practice persists across the globe and is generated, in most cases, due to unrelenting cultural values and practices, poverty, and bias in the education system. These challenges violate the rights of many individuals, notably girls and women, to access education and stall social and economic advancement at the international level.

Gender as a category of bias in education has dire ramifications as it seeks to undermine the potential of half the world's population and attempts to increase the ratios of impoverishment and inequality. The case is so alarming that it has attracted the attention of the international community including the UN, which has made it its mission to promote gender equity and quality education on all fronts under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Countries seeking to create vibrant societies rail against such policies and provide education to all. Educated women enhance those family members and society who provide services to their

families, communities, and countries.

As a basic principle, the goal of any effort to address gender equity and discrimination in education should be to eliminate and reduce such inequities.

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Definition of Key Terms

Gender-Based Discrimination

Gender discrimination is when someone is treated unequally or disadvantageously based on their gender but not necessarily in a sexual nature. This includes harassment/discrimination based on sex, gender identity, or gender expression. Gender discrimination is often rooted in preconceived, false societal and personal notions about what gender is, how gender "should" look, or how gender is performed.

Gender Equality

Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are considered, thereby recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men.

Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

Gender-Sensitive Pedagogy

Gender-responsive pedagogy refers to teaching and learning processes that pay attention to the specific learning needs of female and male students. Gender matters when considering pedagogy because poor pedagogical practices often reproduce gender inequalities in the classroom.

Gender stereotypes

A gender stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about the attributes or characteristics or the roles that women and men possess or ought to perform.

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Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, is regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Major Countries and Relevant Parties

Sweden

According to the 2005 Swedish Government Bill, all government agencies - including research organisations – must help to achieve objectives concerning equal gender representation in governing organisations. Decision-making boards, committees and panels involved in peer reviewing, etc. are expected to comprise at least 40% of the underrepresented sex. Gender mainstreaming has been a strategy since 1984 and is both a binding policy approach and the Swedish government's main strategy to achieve gender equality policy objectives.

Norway

The Norwegian organisation KUN Centre for Equality and Diversity is organising an international conference in Oslo on June 14, 2022, on gender-sensitive education in early childhood education. Furthermore, on June 15, 2022, KUN will organise several visits to Norwegian organisations that deal with gender-sensitive education in their practice. The

project aims to enable a group of 5 stakeholders from the Czech Republic to participate in these activities, learn examples of best practices and gain inspiration for their work on this topic in our country.

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Afghanistan

Since September 2021, the return to school for all Afghan girls over the age of 12 has been indefinitely postponed leaving 1.1 million girls and young women without access to formal education. Currently, 80% of school-aged Afghan girls and young women – 2.5 million people are out of school. Nearly 30% of girls in Afghanistan have never entered primary education.

Pakistan

Pakistan has a dramatic disparity when it comes to education, as the country has 3.3 million child labourers out of which 0.9 million are girls. The National Educational Policy 1998–2010 aims to raise enrollment figures and equity, a goal of universal primary education for girls by 2015. But the issues persist, such as a high percentage of dropouts and poor facilities which have proved inadequate since only 60% of girls finish their primary schooling.

Timeline of Key Events

2000: The United Nations (UN) paves the road towards gender equality and women's empowerment by developing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the expansion of primary education as a primary focus.

2006: On 13th December, the General Assembly passed the Convention aimed at the Rights of Persons with Disability which included among others women and girls not only

non-disability but also disability-inclusive education.

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2015: The restructured MDGs became the SDGs, in the same line, gender inequality in education drastically lowered, and there was a considerate focus on an increase in participation in quality education through the 4th SDG.

2016: The report provided the relevant literature and evidence about the prevailing situation in educational statistics regarding gender equity and also stressed measures to be taken to address the focus on the specific areas.

2018: The UN announces this widely because conflict has caused collateral damage, adding fuel to the fire sexist narrative surrounding the topic, all-girls education during turmoil has been a point of focus

2020: COVID-19 has hindered breakthrough reforms and major contributions to girls' education, and the UN ESS. Consequently, provides a much needs flamingo strategy to counter external malevolent forces

2021: The 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in the field of education and education for women's rights was the main focus area Education in the Age of Digital was a sub-theme and scope topic.

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UN Involvement & Relevant Resolutions

CEDAW (1979)

This treaty was designed to enhance women's rights in the areas of education, among other things, such that women and girl children have equal treatment among other provisions.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

This platform aims at eliminating education inequalities focusing on the girl child in particular as well.

UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report

This report highlights educational indicators annually as other non-UNESCO or broader goals target educational gender equality.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)

Makes a point of mentioning women's role in peace-building processes and stresses the importance of education in affected regions.

UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development

Promoting gender-sensitive education policies to eliminate gender-based exclusion.

UN Women Initiatives

Such initiatives as "HeForShe" have been established to encourage men and boys to support gender equality and educate girls.

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Past Attempts to Address the Issue

International Campaigns

The movement 'Education of the Girl Child: A Key to Development' has helped to sensitize and mobilize resources for girl's education worldwide.

Funding Programs

The Global Fund for Education is one such organisation which has also assisted countries financially to make the situation of education for girls better.

Policy Frameworks

Some countries have developed comprehensive policies on gender equality in education as a result of international instruments and frameworks.

Community Engagement

Projects that seek to involve the communities in the promotion of girls' education have been successful in changing perceptions and increasing enrollments.

Scholarship Programs

There have been several subsidized scholarship programs targeting girls during some school seasons to enhance regard for attendance and completion.

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Possible Solutions

Strengthen the Legal Framework

The countries have to enact and implement laws which will promote gender equality in education as well as prohibit discriminatory practices.

Access Expansion

Further physical infrastructures such as building schools for remote areas can stride toward access to girls.

Cultivation of Socio-Cultural Barriers

Educational programs in communities may address that kind of social application, such as early marriage and gender-based violence.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Establish systems for assessing the advancement of gender equality within the education sector to identify gaps and help refine policies and initiatives.

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