

The Issue of Gender Pay Gap

Topic: The issue of gender pay gap

Forum: UN WOMEN

Student Officer: Gülnur Berfu Bebeli

Position: President Chair

1) INTRODUCTION

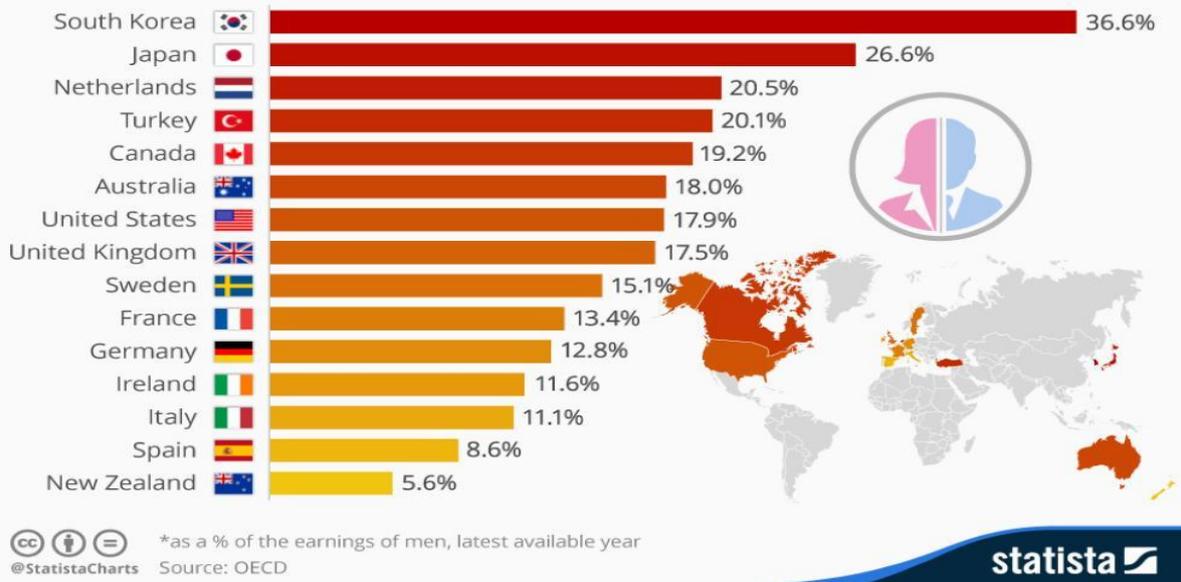
a) Introduction

Since the dawn of humanity, women have been discriminated against in patriarchal societies around the globe. They have been forced into submissive roles and were expected to leave the control of their lives to dominant male figure in their lives, whether that is their father, brother or husband. As a result of the democratization in the 19th century, many women all around the world organized into suffrage movements to campaign for the extension of the right to vote to everyone. The first country to grant women this right was New Zealand in 1893. Following New Zealand's example, most countries have embraced universal suffrage, with Saudi Arabia being the latest country to grant women the right to vote in 2011.

However, full equality has still not been achieved. Women are still mistreated and discriminated against in many societies. These mistreatments can show themselves in many different ways, from violent acts committed upon those who do not conform to the gender roles to simpler non-violent forms of discrimination. The most common of these is the existence of the gender pay gap, the difference between the wages or salaries of men and women who work the same jobs.

The Gender Pay Gap In Developed Nations Visualized

% difference in full-time earnings between men/women in selected OECD nations*



The existence of the wage gap has been one of the most controversial topics in the subject of women's empowerment. Women's right activists claim that this is proof that full gender equality has still not been achieved and demand that governments take action to make sure that women are not discriminated against by companies and have achieved some success. Many countries have passed legislation to combat discrimination based on gender, however, the enforcement of these laws is generally seen as insufficient. For example, in 2008, the US Government Accountability Office created a report indicating that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Labor have not been fully monitoring the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in the private and public sector. The report concluded that "federal agencies should better monitor their performance in enforcing anti-discrimination laws."

b) Definition of Key Words

Gender Equality: The concept of treating men and women equally, with no different treatment being given to individuals because of their sexes.

Gender Pay Gap: The concept of people being paid different wages purely on the basis of their gender.

Empowerment: The process of becoming more confident and stronger, particularly in controlling one's life and asserting one's rights.

UN Women: The United Nations entity concerned with the rights of women.

Cultural Exclusion: The process of the entire communities and individuals being blocked from some fundamental rights which another group from a different culture has full access to.

Discrimination: The act of treating a group of people differently because of their traits.

2)BODY

a) General Overview

i. Historical Background

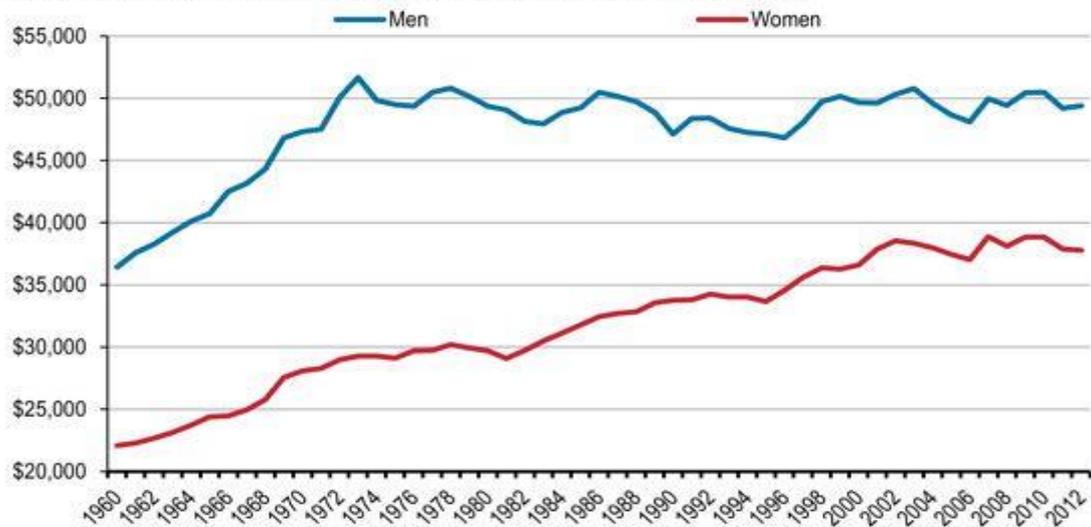
The gender equality in the workforce and the gender pay gap have been serious issues throughout the history. In particular, the combination of women into the workforce, giving them the requirements needed to be employed and incorporated into the workforce, and equivalent wages (based on hours and labor) for men and women alike are pressing issues. Religious customs and convictions have very impacted the percent of ladies in the workforce. In religions, for example, Islam (particularly in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria and numerous other African countries) the customary convictions and, at times, the laws of that nation keep women from being appropriately incorporated into the workforce or notwithstanding accepting the training to do as such. Moreover, in both created and immature countries' societal standards have influenced balance for women in the workforce.

The prejudice and discrimination that women have faced in the workforce and in their day by day lives is a genuine type of segregation that has been around since the beginning of time, in any case, with our persistently evolving society, this disgrace was previously a social standard is presently getting to be something of the past. The main issue is that different nations, civilizations, societies, religions, and different gatherings of individuals neglect to perceive women as equivalents, particularly in the workforce. This stems from the male centric culture that inside has dependably existed that trusts that ladies are substandard compared to men and are not as skilled, keen, solid, or deserving of a vocation, particularly a lucrative or essential occupation, for example, a situation in an expansive organization. This ideal has been demonstrated false as found in the United States where 37.1 percent of women

hold no less than a four-year certification contrasted with 34.9 percent for men as indicated by the International Labor Office (ILO).

77 Cents for Every Dollar

Median earnings of full-time, year-round workers, age 15 and older

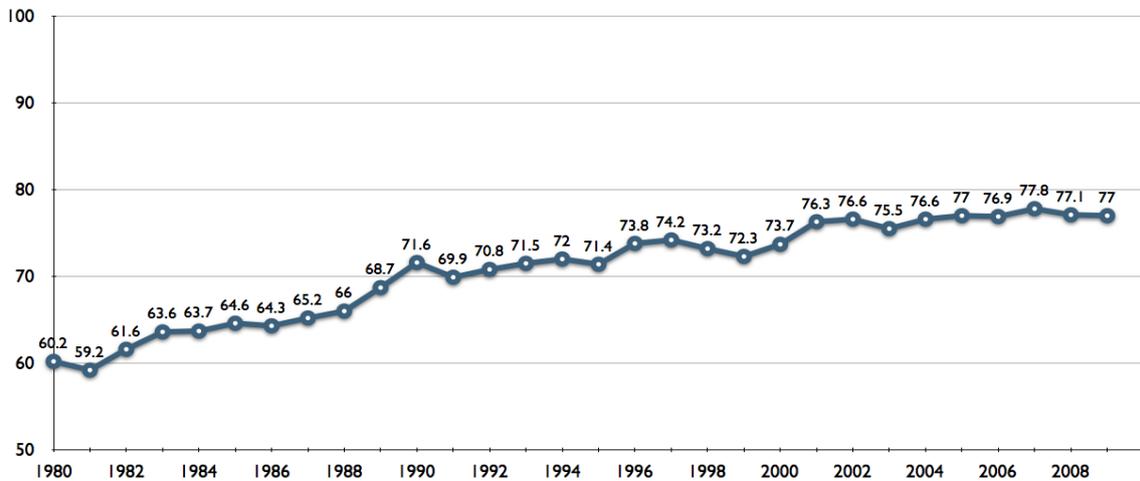


Source: U.S. Census Bureau | WSJ.com

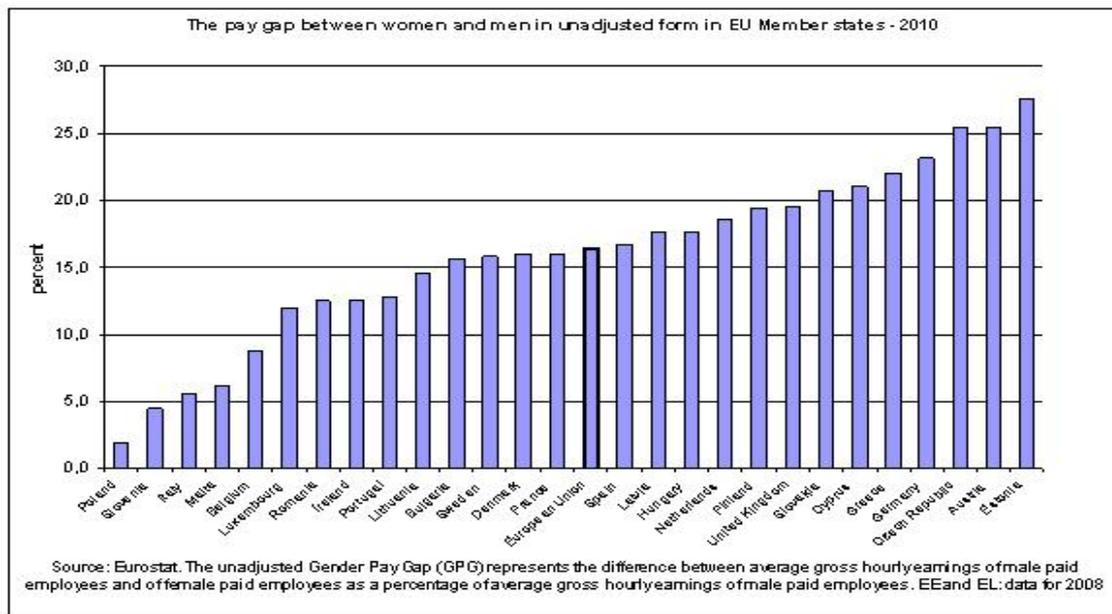
However, developments, for example, the women rights development are helping different social orders to perceive the significance of ladies as more than "homemakers" or individuals subservient to men. Lately, the HeForShe activity has been exceptionally prevalent around the world. This is a development that calls for sexual orientation uniformity around the world, as it is one of the supportable improvement objectives. This activity has not just exposed the issues encompassing sexual orientation correspondence, for example, in the workforce, yet it has likewise empowered different United Nations part states to likewise make a move in their own particular nation to accomplish sex balance. For instance, in Australia, level with circumstances in the workforce is being advanced around the world. Already, men had fundamentally a larger number of employments than ladies in Australia, yet with a national exertion, more women are incorporated and engaged with the workforce, in any case, issues, for example, parallel pay for ladies and men are as yet predominant.

Even though actions are taken, the issue still remains. The United Nations has passed different resolutions to enhance sexual orientation fairness, for example, Security Council determination 1325, which features that peace and security for ladies is a chance to advance women part at the transaction table and in peacebuilding work. What's more, in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was embraced by the UN General Assembly. Usually perceived as a universal bill of rights for women. Additionally, at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was built up and has since been embraced by different distinctive countries who resolved to measures in twelve basic regions of worry, with the help of the UN, different NGOs, and provincial and universal foundations. In any case, in spite of every one of these headways, the issue still continues.

Female-to-Male Earnings Ratio, 1980-2009



As per open data gathered by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and distributed by the ILO, the worldwide gender inequality pay-hole ranges from 3 percent to 51 percent with a worldwide normal of 17 percent (ITUC 2009). As indicated by the United Nations Secretary General, twenty years prior, 12% of parliamentarians on the planet were ladies. Today, 22% of Members of Parliament are ladies. While this is as yet a huge increment it isn't sufficient, as it is still just a proportion of 1 to 5. What's more, in the United States in 2010, there were around 65 million ladies in the work compel and 53 percent of these ladies were packed in the accompanying three enterprises a) training and wellbeing administrations, b) exchange, transportation and utilities and c) neighborhood government. This demonstrates while ladies are being utilized all the more, enhancing uniformity, they are still just acknowledged to a couple of concentrated positions, which causes overrepresentation for a few positions and underrepresenting in others, which not the slightest bit advances balance in the workforce for men nor ladies.



ii) Major Parties Involved and Their Views

UN WOMEN



UN Women is the United Nations entity concerned with the rights of women. It aims to improve the empowerment of women. UN Women works with the United Nations in order to eliminate discrimination against women in political, economic and social areas. The gender pay gap issue also has been one of the main concerns of UN Women for a long time. UN Women usually takes part as the main supporter in the resolutions adopted by the United Nations. It holds conferences in different regions with the aim of raising awareness, and it supports the actions taken against gender inequality.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION(ILO)

International Labor Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations which works on promoting jobs and protecting workers. It also focuses on gender equality in workplace. ILO organizes activities in order to put an end to gender pay gap. For instance, The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) was led by ILO. Also, in 1958, The ILO Convention has been established which was made to abolish the laws which contained inequality amongst genders.



International
Labour
Organization

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY AGENCY (WGEA)

Workplace Gender Equality Agency aims to eliminate gender inequality in Australian workplaces. The Agency works with the employers and companies in order to reduce the current amount of gender pay gap and raise awareness within the nation about gender equality. The Agency contains a database on how companies implement gender equality in their workplaces.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

With the Equal Pay Act signed in 1963, discrimination against women in the workforce has been banned from the American law. Currently gender pay gap exist in USA, even though it is very small compared to other countries. The changes in the government affect the view towards gender pay gap as well.

SAUDI ARABIA

Even though Saudi Arabia has also signed the Equal Pay Act, the government provides women workers with 56% less salary than men. The discrimination against women in workplace is supposed to be against their law, however it does not change the outcome.

b) Timeline of Events

1957	Treaty of Rome has been signed.
1958	ILO Convention C111 has been ratified.
1963	Equal Pay Act was signed by John F. Kennedy.
1979	CEDAW was signed.
1997	Treaty of Amsterdam has been signed.
25 July 2008	Resolution 2008/34 has been adopted by ECOSOC.
March 2010	Women's Charter has been formed.
9 September 2010	Decision 2010/261 has been adopted by ECOSOC.
14 July 2011	Resolution 2011/5 has been adopted by ECOSOC.

c) Conventions and Treaties

- **ILO Convention C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958)**

The convention has been adopted on 25 June 1958 and entered into force on 15 June 1960. The convention focuses on the abolishment of discrimination based on gender in the workplace. Japan, United States of America, Malaysia, Palau, Tonga and Singapore have refused to ratify the convention.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW (1979)**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) had been adopted by the General Assembly with the resolution A/RES/34/180 in 1979, and it entered into force on 3 September 1981. The countries who accepted the convention basically promised to abolish the laws that they currently have against the equality and the empowerment of women and adopt new laws which provide women with an equal payment and treatment in all areas. Also, with the convention, the countries agree on banning organizations which work against the willpower of women. All Member States have ratified the convention apart from Somalia, Iran, Tonga, Palau, Sudan, South Sudan, and the USA.

- **Treaty of Rome (1957)**

The rules of equal pay for both women and men have been introduced in 1957 with an article in the Treaty of Rome. The principle of equal pay for men and women was initially introduced in 1957 as an article within the Treaty of Rome. The additions made to the treaty expanded the European approach of the treaty.



- **Women's Charter (2010)**

In March 2010, under the direction of Madame Viviane Redding, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, the EU Commission exhibited a 'Women's Charter' which was formed as a policy declaration. In making this stride, the Commission communicated its expanded responsibility to sexual orientation correspondence throughout the following five years. The Charter strengthens the Commission's commitment to sexual orientation mainstreaming; to be specific, thought and focused on help for balance amongst ladies and men in all arrangement zones. Specifically, the 'Europe 2020' methodology intends to give full thought to parts of equity. In general, the Charter is the Commission's reaction to calls by the European Parliament for expanded activity to combat violent actions against women.

The Charter focuses on the following areas which were aimed to be implemented in the duration of 5 years:

- the promotion of equal economic independence through a more equal atmosphere in the labor market,
- equal pay for equal work and work of equal value,
- the promotion of equality in decision-making,
- a comprehensive policy to protect human dignity and eradicate violence against women
- the promotion of gender equality beyond the EU to other countries and international organizations.

- **Equal Pay Act**

The Equal Pay Act is a labor law that was signed by the President Kennedy in 1963. It prohibits gender-based pay gap in the United States. The law implements equal payment for both men and women by prohibiting the employers from giving these two genders different salaries. The Equal Pay Act was one of the first laws in America which was dedicated to reducing the gender inequality in the workplace.

- **Treaty of Amsterdam (1997)**

The Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997, has taken a crucial decision in order to make the advancement of gender equality to be the main aim of the European Union. The Treaty introduced new articles about the promotion of gender equality in all areas of activity and it aimed for EU to take further actions upon all kind of discrimination against women.



3) CONCLUSION

a) Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

- **Resolution 2011/5** adopted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) / The role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women

This resolution has been adopted by ECOSOC on 14 July 2011 and it aims to empower women with the assistance of UN Women. The resolution focuses on improving gender equality in workforce and payment.

- **Resolution 2008/34** adopted by the Economic and Social Council / Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programs in the United Nations system

This resolution has been adopted by ECOSOC on 25 July, 2008 and it aims to strengthen the coordination between policy and practice in the main fields of work focusing on gender equality.

- **Decision 2010/261** adopted by the Economic and Social Council/ Procedures for the election of the members of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

This decision has been adopted by ECOSOC on 9th of September 2010 in order to agree upon a future meeting where the executive board will discuss about the gender discrimination at work.

Also, the aforementioned conventions and treaties can be considered as previous attempts to solve the issue. These resolutions, conventions and treaties have all took a step against gender pay gap and gender inequality, however if they were successful gender pay gap would not be a problem today. They were temporary solutions, but they did not solve the issue completely. The main reason that these past attempts have failed was that they were not sustainable.

b) Possible Solutions

A quota system could be implemented in different countries in order to provide gender equality in the workforce. This quota system would result in more women being employed since it would be mandated by the government, it would require companies in different regions to contain a certain number of female workers.

Also, nations, for example, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and different nations that don't recognize equality amongst people would need more exertion put into this considering they would change the social standard of the nation, which requires significant investment and a great deal of association with the entire nation.

Another solution would be creating mentoring programs for women. Mentoring programs would enable women to coordinate better when the projects are made particularly for them. For instance, tutoring women on the best way to arrange their pay and working conditions and how to accommodate maternity and function, is a decent begin. In addition, some women may feel more comfortable and greater being guided by another woman. The greater part of tutors are senior male representatives and, as indicated by considers, half of female junior workers revealed feeling anxious about the one-on-one contact with senior coaches. Thusly, organizations ought to give female and additionally male guides.

Also, a transparency in salaries can be implemented in companies to solve the gender pay gap issue. If the employers are aware of the data, they can work upon decreasing the gender pay gap. Notwithstanding, being aware of the salary ranges would allow all employees to have a better knowledge for being paid fairly.

Furthermore, implementing a policy without negotiation to salaries could decrease the pay gap between genders.

c) Notes from the chair

You may use the following links in your research in order to gain more information about the agenda item:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>

<http://www.unwomen-usnc.org/>

<http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/pakistan/wee/the-gender-wage-gap>

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/equal-pay>

d) Bibliography

- “ECOSOC Resolution 2008/34 .” *United Nations*,
www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2008/resolution%202008-34.pdf.
- “ECOSOC Resolution 2011/5. “ *United Nations*
<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2011/res%202011.5.pdf>
- “ILO Convention C111 1958.”

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C111

- Guibourg, Clara. “Gender Pay Gap: Six Things We've Learnt.” *BBC News*, BBC, 7 Apr. 2018, www.bbc.com/news/business-43668187.
- “Search Gender Pay Gap Data.” *Gender Pay Gap Data - GOV.UK*, gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/.

