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Gender Equality, or Lack Thereof

Is gender equality important to society? Recent studies show that gender equality is important to many, if not all, aspects of society and daily life (Aghavni). Despite countless surveys and actual evidence proving that it is important, gender equality is still not totally embraced today. Even though women make up almost half of the total population and workforce, they do not reap equal benefits from being a part of either. Generally, people tend to believe that women are treated equally today because of recent advancements dealing with gender equality, but that is not the case. Women are still the largest demographic living in poverty, and they still do not receive equal pay within the workforce (Rahman). Gender equality is important because it reduces poverty, helps businesses, and improves other people’s wellbeing.

According to The Institute for Women’s Policy Research, gender equality would cut poverty almost in half for different groups of working women (Milli, et al.). A majority of people who live in poverty tend to be women or households with only female financial providers (Rahman). This is caused by women not having sufficient funds to provide for themselves or their families. In most areas, women make around 20% less than men in the workplace, which leads to insufficient funds (Miller). Different surveys have been conducted in Israel, and they have proven the principle of women’s place in business directly affecting poverty rates in the country (Stier & Lewin). Not only do women make less than men in the workplace, they are also less likely to be hired for the job. Studies show that even if women have the same qualifications as men, people, typically other men, are more likely to hire the male applicant. Women only make up 4.2% of CEOs at Standard & Poor’s 500 firms, which makes the chances of women getting hired for positions in that area slim (Gerdeman). If gender equality was implemented in the workplace, women acquire jobs more easily, have better wages, and in turn, reduce the poverty rate.

Gender equality in the workplace is not only important in reducing poverty by improving women’s wages, but also in helping the business’ success rate. Studies show that professions that include gender diversity are 15% more likely to make more money than businesses that do not (Villa). Not only does gender equality in business benefit the employee, but it also benefits the employer, the business itself, and the economy. According to Cable News Network (CNN), “An increase in female labor force participation, or a reduction in the gap between women's and men's labor force participation, results in faster economic growth” (Georgieva & Okonjo-Iweala). A recent study by McKinsey Global Institute shows that by advancing gender equality, especially in the workplace, up to $12 trillion could be added to the global economy (Woetzel, et al.). If women were allowed to work the same hours at the same wage as men, they would be able to provide for other people who they may care for more efficiently.

Not only does gender equality benefit women, but it also benefits other people. Women are often looked at as the caregivers, and even though this is now seen as somewhat of a stereotype to limit women to only housewives and mothers, it is still quite true. Women tend to be the ones caring for those who cannot care for themselves, specifically children. If gender equality was put in place, there would be more care and benefits provided for demographics that may be unable to care for themselves. For instance, in the United States just a year after women were given the right to vote, more healthcare funding was approved, which decreased childhood morality rates by nearly 15% (Hyde). Not only does gender equality help others individually, but it also helps them on a large-scale.

Women are universally known as caregivers to individuals, but people rarely consider how much they help countries and the environment as a whole. Women in governmental positions are known to propose bills that work with environmental problems, states of war, and disaster relief. Studies show that when women are more politically active that more funds are set aside for environmental issues (Georgieva & Okonjo-Iweala). Nations where women are able to be more politically involved are also less likely to engage in war and are more likely to be active in disaster relief (Breuning) (Austin & McKinney). Based on these studies, gender equality not only helps other individuals, but it also helps entire countries and the planet.

If gender equality does not continue to improve, poverty rates will not decrease, business’s success rates will not increase, and others who are dependent on women will not have necessary attention or funds. While there has been improvements in gender equality, they should be looked at as small steps towards a huge goal. The current percentage of female CEOs has only risen one percent in two years, and the pay equity gap only closed by one percent in 2015. Also, the current amount of women in Congress has only gone up by one member since the previous terms (Butler). Not only do these statistics prove that gender equality is improving extremely slowly, but it also proves that business’s success rates are increasing slowly and environmental issues are not getting the attention they need. In order to mend certain situations, such as poverty, the workplace, and other’s wellbeing, women need to have equal pay wages and equal opportunities in politics as men do.

Gender equality is important to society because it lowers the poverty rates, improves businesses, and benefits other people’s health. In recent years, there have been steps taken to advance gender equality, but more action needs to be taken to make sure that gender equality is put into place. Some people do not believe that gender equality directly affects them, but it does benefit other individuals. Not only would gender equality be beneficial, but it is also a basic human right. In other words, gender equality should be implemented whether there are benefits or not. There are no downsides to gender equality, only advantages, which is why people need to realize how important this issue actually is.

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