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GENDER RELATIONS

Gender relations refer to relations between men and women that are socially determined by culture, religion, or socially acceptable ways of thinking or being. These relationships between men and women, as they exist in most societies, are characterised by the marginalisation of women in decision making and other forms of power sharing in the home and places of authority. The economic exploitation of women and extensive violence to the person and psyche of women the problem of unequal gender relations is both personal and systemic. The 21st century demonstrates equal participation of both genders in different activities as compared to early centuries that kept women behind by being responsible for domestic chores. In the current generation of 21st Century, gender is often misunderstood as promotion of women who have taken more active role in different sectors and careers despite some traditions still hold women inferior in their society like numerous cases reported in Indian cultures women still come from traditional strict households, they have accepted their roles and feel comfortable in their decisions or lack thereof. Feminist movement gained momentum in the 1960’s and 70’s in the United States together with other Human Right groups that advocated for equal rights among all genders in recent centuries after observing women gender being domesticated by cultural norms, religious believes, traditional marginalisation yet for the few women who were out speaking role models showed great hope. Despite other approaches in the 21st century in creating an understanding of gender, the way people view others of the same and opposite gender as well as they see themselves which is a necessary component of the society passes the message of sometimes miss understanding while sometimes understand what gender implies to others. In other words others misunderstand gender as women promotion in the current century.

Areas of change and the Force driving it:

1)Migration. Migration can be associated with changing gender norms (as in the case of adolescent girls’ and young women’s large-scale migration into manufacturing industries in South East Asia and Bangladesh. However, in other cases, migrant communities conserve older social norms, even where these have shifted in their location of origin.

2)Technological change. The WDR largely discusses the implications of technological change for gender relations via two routes: its impacts on economic opportunities and its impacts on exposure to information. There is some evidence of expanding opportunities in the information and communication technology (ICT)sector in India leading to greater investment in girls’ education and changing norms about unmarried and married women’s employment outside the home. Evidence from Brazil and India also indicates changes in gender norms (concerning fertility, gender-based violence and mobility) related to exposure to cable television.

3)Legal change. There is a substantial discussion of the potential contribution of legal change equality, although less discussion of the barriers to accessing legal justice that many disadvantaged people of both genders face. The WDR highlights the role of laws that increase control over income and assets in increasing women’s position, bargaining power and exit options within their household. It also argues improvements in the legal status of girls can also, by increasing their value, induce other changes, and cites evidence indicating reforms to inheritance laws in India have resulted in delays in marriage for girls, more education (increasing the number of years of schooling by an average of 11-25%) and lower dowry payments.

4)Public investment. The report makes a strong case for public investment – in health, education and water and sanitation – as a route towards gender equality. For example, expanding access to secondary schooling has helped shift norms in favour of both boys’ and girls’ attendance.

5)Education. In some contexts, education is strongly associated with greater decision-making power. ‘In South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, women with more education are not as likely to have to ask their husbands or family for permission to seek medical care. Education gives them more freedom than earnings.’

6)Political mobilisation. The WDR also highlights the transformative role of women’s collective agency – in both formal settings and informal associations – which both depends on and determines their individual agency. Mandating quotas for political representation has also help shift norms concerning women’s leadership capacity – for example in India. There is evidence this has helped girls increase their aspirations and led to changed perceptions of the value of girls’ education.

7)Access to information. Drawing on social norms theory, the WDR argues inegalitarian norms sometimes persist because of misinformation, either about the costs of adhering to a norm or about the extent to which others are doing so. It argues that, sometimes, simply providing more information is the key to shifting sticky norms. For example, Indian villagers’ exposure to women political leaders led to less gender stereotypical views within households and concerning the effectiveness of male and female leaders.