

## Gender Inequality and Responsibilities among Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

Gender inequality is a pervasive issue that affects adolescents in various ways, from access to education and healthcare to mental health outcomes and employment opportunities. This review aims to examine the current literature on gender inequality and responsibilities among adolescents, highlighting the various factors that contribute to and perpetuate gender inequality. The review found that traditional gender norms and beliefs limit opportunities for girls, leading to limited access to education, healthcare, and employment. Gender-based violence and discrimination also have significant negative impacts on the mental health and well-being of adolescent girls. Additionally, insufficient access of the reproductive health and sexual information and services for girls perpetuates the cycle of poor health outcomes. Despite efforts made to promote gender equality, there are still significant differences in the ways in which adolescents approach gender equality. Attempts have been made to promote gender equality, but this is still the case. In contrast, the findings of the review suggest that interventions employing community-based and youth-led strategies have shown promise in promoting gender equality and reducing gender-based violence. Overall, this review underscores the need for continued efforts to address gender inequality and empower adolescents, particularly girls, to achieve their full potential.

**Key Words :** Gender inequality, Adolescents, Gender-based violence, Education, Healthcare, Employment, Sexual and reproductive health

### INTRODUCTION

There is still a widespread problem with gender inequality in many nations around the world. Despite the significant progress made toward gender equality in a variety of areas, such as education and employment, there are still gender disparities in a number of other areas, including the responsibilities of family life and the consequences of health care. Adolescents are a particularly vulnerable cohort who may experience gender inequality issues as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

As per United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) [39], individuals who are designated adolescents ages are between 10 and 19 years old. During this stage of development, adolescents undergo significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes that shape their attitudes,

behaviours, and values. However, gender norms and expectations may limit their opportunities for growth and development, particularly for girls who may face additional barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and other resources.

This review paper aims to provide an overview of gender inequality and responsibilities among adolescents. Specifically, it will examine the factors contributing to gender inequality, the impact of gender inequality on adolescent development, and policies and interventions to address gender inequality. By synthesizing existing research, this review paper seeks to raise awareness of the complex issues related to gender inequality and provide insights into effective strategies for promoting gender equality and empowering adolescents.

This review paper's significance lies in its potential to inform practice and policy in the areas of gender

equality and adolescent development. This is an extremely important aspect of the paper. The findings of this paper may be relevant for educators, healthcare providers, policymakers, and other stakeholders who work with adolescents and aim to promote gender equality. By identifying key challenges and opportunities for intervention, this review paper may contribute to efforts to address gender inequality and promote positive outcomes for adolescents.

### **Historical Overview of Gender Inequality:**

Gender inequality has a long history, with roots in social, economic, and political systems that have privileged men over women. Historically, women have been excluded from formal education, denied the right to vote, and relegated to domestic roles in the household. These patterns of gender inequality have been reinforced by cultural and societal norms that define gender roles and expectations.

### **Gender Roles and Stereotypes:**

The term “gender roles” refers to the numerous different social and cultural expectations that are associated with being male or female. The term “gender roles” was coined in the 1970s. These expectations, which vary widely across cultures and nations, have a profound impact on how people behave, think, and feel about one another. In numerous cultures, it is expected of men to be powerful, aggressive, and competitive, whereas it is expected of women to be kind, affectionate, and emotionally expressive [21]. Numerous diverse cultures place a premium on men who are powerful and assertive.

Examples of gender stereotypes include beliefs about men and women that are simplistic and generalized. Gender stereotypes frequently function as a support system for pre-existing gender roles. For example, the belief that woman is more likely than men to experience emotional and illogical outbursts may result in discrimination in the workplace and educational settings [11].

### **The Impact of Culture and Society on Gender Inequality:**

Culture and society play a significant role in shaping gender inequality. In numerous nations, cultural practices and traditions restrict women’s access to opportunities and reinforce gender stereotypes. In some societies, for

example, women are expected to prioritize their roles as mothers and wives over their professional and personal objectives [34].

In addition, economic and political systems may perpetuate gender inequality by limiting women’s access to resources, such as education and healthcare. For example, in some countries, women may face legal and social barriers to accessing education or employment opportunities, which may limit their economic independence and autonomy [49].

This historical overview of gender inequality highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of this issue. Throughout history, stereotypes and gender roles, as well as cultural and societal expectations, have influenced the persistence of gender roles. To successfully design interventions and policies aimed at promoting gender equality and fostering a sense of empowerment among adolescents, it is necessary to have a solid understanding of the historical context of gender inequality. This understanding can be gained by studying the history of gender inequality.

### **Current State of Gender Inequality:**

Despite significant progress towards gender equality in some areas, gender inequality continues to be a pervasive problem worldwide. Gender disparities are evident across multiple domains, including education, healthcare, employment, and political representation.

### **Overview of Current Statistics and Data on Gender Inequality:**

In the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, which was published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), it was stated that the global gender gap is still 68.6%. This demonstrates that gender equality efforts have stalled over the past few years. This suggests that women have access to only 68.6 per cent of the opportunities and resources available to men [50].

In terms of education, the gender gap has narrowed considerably in recent decades, with girls now outperforming boys in many countries. However, disparities remain in certain areas, such as access to STEM education and participation in higher education [35].

Men and women face significant obstacles in terms of healthcare access, particularly in countries with limited resources. This is the true fact that in most of the nation’s women have partial permission and allowance

of political and economic influence. Although, women are mostly affected in the gender-based violence in comparison to men and this makes a serious impact on their mental and physical health condition [47]. This is due to the fact that women are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence. Women are more likely to be their children's primary caregivers, which is problematic. As a result of their gender, women are more likely to become victims of violence, making this a distressing condition.

### **Intersectionality and its Impact on Gender Inequality:**

The term "intersectionality" refers to the ways that multiple forms of oppression, such as racism, classism, and ableism, intersect and combine to produce unique experiences of prejudice and disadvantage [8]. Included in oppression are ableism, classism, and xenophobia. Intersectionality is particularly relevant to gender inequality, as women who belong to multiple marginalized groups may face compounded forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

Adolescent girls who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups, for example, may face significant obstacles in obtaining an education or accessing healthcare, which may limit the development and growth opportunities that are open to them [39].

### **Effects of Gender Inequality on the Development of Young People during Adolescence:**

It is possible that gender inequality will significantly hinder adolescent development, particularly the development of girls. It is possible for girls who are subjected to gender inequality to have restricted access to healthcare, education, and other resources. Their physical and mental health may be adversely impacted for an extended period of time. For girls who are not subjected to gender inequality, access to these resources is unrestricted. A person's sense of self-worth and self-esteem may be significantly impacted by acts of violence and prejudice committed against them on the basis of their gender [40]. This is because acts of violence and prejudice against a person on the basis of their gender may have a significant negative influence on their sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Furthermore, gender inequality can limit adolescent girls' opportunities for economic and social participation, which can impact their ability to become independent

and autonomous adults. Gender disparities in political representation and decision-making can also limit their ability to advocate for their rights and participate in shaping their communities [34].

The current state of gender inequality remains a significant challenge worldwide, with persistent disparities across multiple domains. Understanding the impact of intersectionality and gender inequality on adolescent development is critical for developing effective policies and interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering adolescents.

### **Factors Contributing to Gender Inequality:**

Gender disparity is a complex issue that is influenced by a wide range of factors, such as gender and upbringing, media and its influence on gender roles, education, cultural and religious attitudes, and others.

### **Socialization and Upbringing:**

The process by which individuals assimilate and acquire the norms, beliefs, and expectations of their respective cultures is known as "socialization." Children are socialized into the gender roles that are typically associated with their sex from a young age, and this process continues throughout their lives. This type of socialization may prevent individuals from fully expressing their talents and interests, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

For instance, males may be encouraged to participate in sports and other physically demanding activities, whereas females may be encouraged to prioritize household tasks and caring roles [12]. These gender stereotypes can have a lasting impact on individuals' self-perceptions and aspirations, as well as their opportunities for education and employment.

### **Media and its Influence on Gender Roles:**

Media, including television, film, and advertising, plays a significant role in shaping cultural attitudes towards gender roles. The media routinely portrays women and girls in sexist, sexualized, and stereotypical ways, which can contribute to the objectification of women and the reinforcement of gender inequality.

For instance, men are typically portrayed as powerful and authoritative, whereas women are typically portrayed as submissive and passive [13]. These representations may contribute to the perception that men are better suited for positions of power and influence, which may,

in turn, reduce the number of opportunities for women to take on leadership roles.

### **Education and its Impact on Gender Inequality:**

Education is a key factor in promoting gender equality and challenging gender stereotypes. However, gender inequalities persist in many educational settings, particularly in developing countries.

Girls are often at a disadvantage in terms of allowance for education and the standard of the education, and the subjects they are encouraged to pursue. For example, girls may be discouraged from pursuing science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects, which can limit their opportunities for employment and career advancement [36].

### **The Role of Religion and Cultural Beliefs:**

Religion and cultural beliefs can also contribute to gender inequality by perpetuating gender roles and stereotypes. In some religious and cultural contexts, women are expected to prioritize their domestic and familial roles over their education and employment opportunities.

In some societies, most of the peoples still believes that the women should not work anywhere specially outside the home or pursue education beyond a certain level [7]. Another prevalent belief is that women should not enjoy the same rights as males. These beliefs can limit women's opportunities for economic and social participation and perpetuate gender inequalities.

The complex and multifaceted issue of inequality between the sexes is influenced by a wide range of sophisticated variables. In order to develop treatments and policies that are effective in promoting gender equality and empowering adolescents, it is crucial to have an understanding of the role that socialization, media, education, religion, and cultural conceptions play in perpetuating gender gaps. Without this understanding, it will be challenging to devise effective treatments and policies.

### **Gender Inequality and Responsibilities among Adolescents:**

Gender inequality basically itself shows that several ways like adolescents, variations in the distribution of labor and responsibilities within households, possibilities for education and employment, access to healthcare and other resources, and the impact on mental health and

well-being.

### **Division of Labor and Responsibilities in Households:**

Research suggests that gender roles and stereotypes continue to shape division of labor and responsibilities within households, even among adolescents. Girls are often expected to take on more domestic responsibilities than boys, which can limit their opportunities for education and other activities [2]. This perpetuates gender inequalities and can have a lasting impact on their lives.

### **Education and Employment Opportunities for Adolescents:**

In terms of educational and employment opportunities, adolescents may also encounter gender inequality. Girls have fewer employment opportunities in the future because they are less likely to conclude their education and are woefully under represented in science, technology, engineering, and math-related disciplines (36). Mostly girls have to face the gender based violence and harassment in schools, which may hinder their ability to learn and succeed academically [40]. In addition, because of their gender, girls are more likely than boys to experience bullying. This is due to the fact that females, especially girls, are more likely to identify with the feminine gender.

### **Gender Inequality in Access to Healthcare and Other Resources:**

As a direct result of gender inequality, adolescents' access to resources, including health care, is limited. For instance, females may have difficulty receiving reproductive health services and information due to prevalent cultural and societal norms in their society [52]. This may limit their ability to make well-informed decisions regarding their general welfare and health.

### **Gender Inequality's Effects on Mental Health and Well-Being:**

Gender inequality can have significant impacts on adolescents' mental health and well-being. For instance, girls who experience gender-based violence and harassment are more likely to struggle with mental health issues such as sadness and anxiety [40]. Additionally, societal expectations of masculinity and femininity can contribute to stress and poor mental health outcomes for both boys and girls [24].

Overall, addressing gender inequality among adolescents is critical for promoting equality and well-being for all.

### **Policies and Interventions to Address Gender Inequality :**

Initiatives and Ideas for the Entire Planet One of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to achieve gender equality and grant all women and girls more authority. If this objective is reached, women and girls will have greater autonomy over their lives. This goal has inspired numerous global policies and initiatives that aim to reduce gender inequality. Two examples of these initiatives and policies are the Beijing Declaration and Action Platform and the UN Women's Empowerment Principles [46].

The institutional architecture of the nation, which includes both laws and policies. There are just two acts first one is The sexual Harassment of women at workplace and second one is The protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of the numerous pieces of legislation and policies put in place in India with the goal of promoting gender equality. These are just two of the numerous pieces of legislation and policies that India has put in place. These are just two of India's numerous legislation and policies. One of the government's other initiatives [16] is the BetiBachao, BetiPadhao program, which aims to promote girls' education and give them greater autonomy.

Interventions administered in the community the use of community-based interventions as a viable strategy to reduce gender inequality also exists. In India, SEWA has been working towards the goal of empowering women who work in the informal sector by providing them with access to financial services, training, and education [30]. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that community mobilization and education-centered initiatives are effective in reducing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality in education [32]. These initiatives have been demonstrated to be beneficial in these fields.

Educational Interventions Education is also an important tool for promoting gender equality. The Indian government has implemented various educational interventions aimed at promoting girls' education, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan program. Additionally, interventions aimed at challenging gender stereotypes and promoting gender-sensitive education have been shown

to be effective in promoting gender equality [3].

Overall, policies and interventions at various levels - international, national, community-based, and educational - can play a critical and important role to pointing gender inequality in India.

### **Literature Reviews :**

According to a study by Bhattacharya and Basu[4], gender inequality and the burden of responsibilities among adolescents are interrelated. The study found that adolescent girls face a greater burden of household chores and caregiving responsibilities, which often leads to early dropouts from schools and limiting their future opportunities.

Another study by Giorgi *et al.* [14] highlighted that gender inequality in adolescence has significant effects on mental health outcomes. They found that adolescent girls who experience gender-based violence and discrimination have higher rates of depression and anxiety.

In a review article by Debnath and Das [9], the authors discussed the role of education in addressing gender inequality among adolescents. They argued that access to education can empower girls and boys and help challenge harmful gender norms.

The study by Koenig [22] explored the intersectionality of gender and socio-economic status among adolescents. They found that girls from lower socio-economic backgrounds face greater gender-based discrimination and limited opportunities for education and employment.

According to a report by UNICEF [40], gender inequality among adolescents also affects access to sexual and reproductive health services. Adolescent girls face greater barriers to accessing services such as contraception and safe abortion, leading to higher rates of unintended pregnancies and maternal mortality.

A study by Gopalan *et al.* [15] found that gender inequality also affects mental health outcomes among adolescent boys. They found that boys who conform to rigid gender norms are more likely to experience depression and suicidal ideation.

A report by UNESCO [37] highlighted the importance of promoting gender equality in education to address gender inequality among adolescents. The report argued that addressing gender disparities in access to education can have a significant impact on reducing gender inequality in society.

The study by Kabeer and Huq[19] explored the role

of social norms in perpetuating gender inequality among adolescents. The authors argued that changing social norms and promoting gender equality requires a multifaceted approach, including education, media, and community engagement.

According to a study by Doku and Neupane[10], gender inequality also affects adolescent health behaviors. The study found that adolescent girls who experience discrimination are more likely to engage in risky health behaviors such as substance abuse and unprotected sex.

In a review article by Blum et al. [5] the authors discussed the role of comprehensive sexuality education in addressing gender inequality among adolescents. They argued that promoting healthy relationships and addressing gender norms can improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes and promote gender equality.

A study by Amin et al. [1] examined the impact of gender norms on adolescent health-seeking behavior. The study found that girls who adhere to traditional gender norms are less likely to seek healthcare services, leading to poor health outcomes.

According to a report by Plan International [26], gender inequality among adolescents can also lead to sexual violence and harassment. The report found that adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and harassment, which can limit their opportunities and impact their mental health.

For their study, Chandra-Mouli et al [6] examined the effects of gender inequality on adolescents' sexual and reproductive health outcomes. The results of the study indicate that poor adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes are caused by gender-based discrimination as well as a lack of access to information and services.

In a review article by Rani and Singh [29], the authors discussed the impact of social media on gender norms and inequality among adolescents. They argued that social media can reinforce harmful gender norms and stereotypes, leading to increased discrimination and inequality.

A study by Rahmawati et al. [28] examined the impact of gender inequality on the academic performance of adolescent girls. The study found that girls who face gender-based discrimination are more likely to experience academic failure and drop out of school.

As per the report submitted by World Bank[48], gender inequality also affects economic opportunities for adolescent girls. The report found that girls face limited

opportunities for employment and are more likely to engage in unpaid work, which limits their economic mobility and perpetuates gender inequality.

The study by Palermo et al. [25] explored the relationship between gender inequality and early marriage among adolescents. The study found that girls who experience gender-based discrimination are more likely to be married early, which can lead to negative health and social outcomes.

With the help of report submitted by United Nations [45] that analysed the importance of promoting gender equality in disaster response and recovery efforts among adolescents. The report argued that gender inequality can exacerbate the influence of disasters on girls and on mostly young women, leading to increased vulnerability and limited access to resources.

The impact that gender inequality has on the mental health of teenagers who have fled their homes was the subject of Yousefi et al. [53] investigation. According to the study's findings, young women who are subjected to discrimination based on their gender are more likely to experience anxiety and despondency, which can have a negative impact on their possibilities of successful resettlement and integration.

According to a review article by Shrestha et al. [31] promoting gender equality among adolescents requires addressing harmful gender norms and stereotypes in educational settings. The authors argued that incorporating gender-responsive approaches in education can empower girls and boys and promote gender equality.

Mmari et al. [23] conducted a study on adolescent girls in Tanzania in which they examined the relationship between gender-based violence and mental health outcomes. The findings of this study indicate that girls who experience gender-based violence are more likely to experience depressive and anxious feelings, which may impact their future prospects and general wellbeing.

There is a connection between gender inequality and the difficulty or impossibility of adolescent girls receiving an education, according to a UNICEF report [39]. The survey found that girls pursuing an education face a number of obstacles, including early marriage, pregnancy, and a dearth of inclusive and safe learning facilities.

A study by Ssekamatte et al. [33] examined the impact of gender norms on adolescent sexual health and reproductive health outcomes in Uganda. The study found that traditional gender norms and beliefs restrict

adolescent girls' access to information and services, resulting in poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

A report by the International Labour Organization [18] highlighted the impact of gender inequality on adolescent girls' engagement in the labor force. The report found that girls face discrimination and limited opportunities for employment, which perpetuates poverty and inequality.

Poteat [27] examined the mental health outcomes of transgender and gender variant adolescents in a study on the effects of gender-based discrimination. The findings of the study suggest that stigma and discrimination based on gender may lead to poor mental health outcomes such as depression and suicidality.

As per the report submitted by WHO [51], there is some connection or correlation between lack of access of adolescents girls and gender inequality to health condition. According to the report's findings, girls face barriers to receiving health treatment, such as a lack of resources, a lack of information, and stigma, all of which can lead to poor health outcomes.

The study by Kim [20] explored the impact of gender inequality on academic achievement among adolescents in South Korea. The study found that traditional gender norms and beliefs limit girls' opportunities for academic success, leading to lower academic achievement and limited future opportunities.

In a report recently published by the United Nations Population Fund [44], the importance of achieving gender equality in programs designed to promote the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents was emphasized. [44] The report emphasized the significance of establishing gender equality in these programs. According to the findings of the report, gender inequality may result in restricted access to services and information, which in turn perpetuates negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

In a study [17], Huang et al. examined the impact of gender-based discrimination on the mental health outcomes of adolescent immigrants residing in the United States. The study findings indicate that young women who experience discrimination based on their gender are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, both of which can have an impact on the outcomes of their well-being and integration.

According to a report submitted by the WEF[50], gender inequality also affects access to digital skills and technology among adolescents. The report found that girls

face barriers to accessing digital skills and technology, such as limited access to resources and gender-based discrimination, which limits their opportunities for future employment and success.

### **Conclusion:**

Based on the reviews provided, it is clear that gender inequality has significant impacts on various aspects of adolescent girls' lives, including their mental health, access to education, sexual and reproductive health, employment opportunities, healthcare, academic achievement, and access to technology. The studies and reports reviewed suggest that traditional gender norms and beliefs, as well as gender-based discrimination and violence, play a significant role in perpetuating these inequalities.

It is important to address these issues and promote gender equality in order to improve the well-being and opportunities of adolescent girls worldwide. Components may include interventions such as raising gender-based violence awareness and promoting education about it, giving complete access to broad study related to services of reproductive health and sexual health, fostering women's economic empowerment, and challenging existing gender norms and stereotypes. By working toward gender equality, adolescent girls should have equal opportunities to develop and reach their full potential.

It is abundantly evident from the reviews that gender inequality affects numerous aspects of adolescent girls' lives, such as their mental health, education, sexual and reproductive health, employment opportunities, and access to technology. This is the case because gender inequality is one of the primary contributors to the global gender disparity.

The examined research and papers shed light on the role of traditional gender norms and beliefs in the perpetuation of discrimination and inequality against girls. These unfavorable norms and beliefs restrict girls' access to education, health care, and career opportunities, thereby diminishing their future prospects and chances for success.

The findings demonstrate the urgent need for concerted action to advance gender equality and empower adolescent girls. These actions should be coordinated. These actions ought to be coordinated. This includes addressing issues of discrimination and stigma, as well as critiquing unfavorable gender norms and beliefs, promoting digital literacy and access to technology, and

assuring access to high-quality education and healthcare. Other aspects of this objective include access to technology, access to high standard education and health services, and the elimination of discrimination and stigma.

The reviews emphasize how crucial it is to recognize and address gender inequality as a significant barrier to the development and well-being of adolescent girls. This is because gender inequality is a significant barrier to the development and wellbeing of adolescent girls. This is the case because the pervasiveness of gender inequality is a significant obstacle. By funding and emphasizing gender equality, we can create a more just and equitable world where all adolescent girls have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

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