

# The fight for gender equality

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## **Gender stereotypes as the foundation of gender inequality**

According to Ellemers (2018), the foundation of gender inequality is gender stereotypes. In most societies, the male gender is assumed to be tougher and strong. “ Boys do not cry” is a common proverb that comes out of most mothers as they bring up their male children. Contrary to this, most societies believe that the female gender is delicate and requires special attention. It is a common teaching for boys to be more responsible and girls to remain submissive. Whenever a girl child develops assertive character, they are presumed to be “ bossy”. These child teachings may seem meaningless, but have an infinite impact on the gender roles and gender parity. On the basis of these social norms and gender stereotyping, the male gender is expected to be more responsible for the female gender. They assume more social, economic and political responsibilities than the female. The gender stereotyping has undermined the female gender, training them to be less responsible. The awkward truth is that most women believe that men should be more responsible than women, both in private and public life. The irony of the matter is when such common figures are anticipating for gender parity, with the odd belief still inside them.

Among other rituals and stereotypes undermining gender parity is the aspect of family chores. The biological fact that the female sex bears the child exposes them to a wider range of family chores such as taking care of the children, cooking, and washing. In most societies, family chores are meant for ladies even with the exemption of bringing up children. Such responsibilities have rendered male gender to less contribution to family duties, as it undermines the female gender to taking public responsibilities

such as leadership and business. Such social norms have forced women to be more of housewives even outside marriage (Ellemers, 2018).

Such rituals and social beliefs have undermined the female gender since the ancient times. The female gender was barred by the social norms to limited exposure in terms of education and social enlightenment. This promoted gender inequality, where men took responsibilities in economic and political activities privileged by the exposure to education. Male gender roles are often given a higher status of power compared to the female, with every individual attempting to perform their roles in correspondence to the social norms.

As much as the social gender and social norms remain acceptable within their respective communities, the fact that they undermine either gender's contribution to the social, economic and political aspects is prone to criticism (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). The profiling of gender to particular roles has been criticized to be the major factor undermining gender parity. Feminists argue that biological facts such as giving birth and breastfeeding should not be assumed as gender roles. Each gender should give an equal contribution to the society. However, the female gender has been undermined, given limited exposure, few slots in leadership and job opportunities. Even with the few who have had exposure to education, getting employment a job is a challenge. The belief that female gender is weak has been entrenched deep within the society.

Gender roles, which is the pillar to gender parity is developed through social interaction (In Groner & In O'Hara, 2014). When one is born, they have a

small concept of gender that is only explained by their characters and genetics. However, the social responsibilities are established through social interactions with the environment either from parenting, media among other forms of interaction such as school and work. Genetic makeups that one is born with only shape their character. Although such traits affect their physical abilities, people assume their gender roles through interaction with their environments. The fight for gender equality has been in its climax since the begin of the 21st century. However, the role of the media to shape gender parity is a controversial aspect that is contradicting in nature.