

A SNAPSHOT OF GENDER **INEQUALITY**

50 OF THE WORLD'S MOST **SEXIST** LAWS, POLICIES & NORMS



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Across the globe, gender inequality pervades nearly every sphere of life – from the classroom and the workplace to the hospital room and the home. The UN Foundation surveyed the latest global research on discriminatory laws, policies, and social norms from some of the planet’s most authoritative sources, including the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law team; UN Women; and the UN Statistics Division. In no particular order, here are 50 of the most egregious, absurd, and discriminatory examples of how girls and women are being held back.



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GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE HOME

- 1** 18 countries have laws that require a married woman to obey her husband.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

- 2** Women spend about 2.5 times as many hours as men on unpaid care work.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN AND UN STATISTICS DIVISION)

- 3** In 25 countries around the world, children can attain citizenship only from their fathers. In 41 countries, daughters cannot inherit the same way as sons.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK AND UNHCR)

- 4** In 23 countries, the minimum age of marriage for girls is below 18 years, and only 40 countries have a minimum age set at 18 for both boys and girls, with no exceptions.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN)

- 5** Nearly 40% of countries limit women's property rights.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

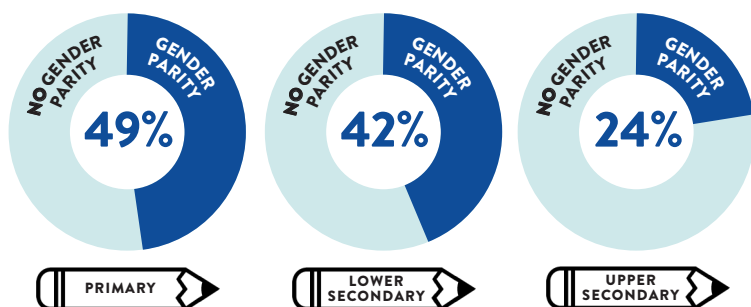
- 6** Globally, only 56% of women are able to make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

(SOURCE: UNFPA)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE HOME

- 7** Only 49% of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education. At the secondary level, the gap widens. Just 42% of countries have achieved gender parity in lower secondary education, and only 24% have done so in upper secondary education.



These gaps are largely due to discriminatory norms, including child marriage, gender-based violence, lack of hygiene or sanitary products for girls, lack of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls, and favoring investment in education for boys.

(SOURCE: UNICEF)

- 8** In 68 countries, women do not have the same rights as men to remarry.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

- 9** As of 2016, girls between 5 and 14 years old spend 40% more time — or a collective 160 million more hours per day — on unpaid household chores than boys their age.

(SOURCE: UNICEF)

- 10** 28 countries have no laws addressing domestic violence.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE COMMUNITY



11 Today, nearly 2.4 billion working-age women live in economies that do not grant them the same rights as men. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

12 On average, women across the world are afforded just three-quarters of the legal rights as men. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

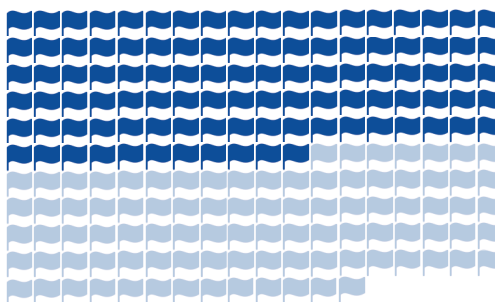
13 In 20 countries, the law exempts perpetrators from rape charges if they marry the survivor. (SOURCE: UNFPA)

14 30% of countries restrict women's freedom of movement. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

15 As of 2016, in 16 countries, women's testimony does not carry the same evidentiary weight in court as men's. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

16 In 28 countries, women cannot apply for a passport in the same way as men. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

17 Laws in 101 countries allow financial institutions to make it harder for women to access loans.



(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE **WORKPLACE**

18 34% of countries restrict women from working in certain jobs or industries.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

19 Globally, 23.2% of women have experienced physical, psychological, or sexual violence and/or harassment at work. Of those, more than two-thirds faced these incidents within the last five years.

(SOURCE: ILO)

20 73 countries do not offer paid leave for fathers (either through paternity leave or father quota in parental leave policies), which has a disproportionate impact on women in the workforce because women shoulder the bulk of childcare.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

21 While 67% of the world's health and social workers are women, they are paid 24% less than their male counterparts.

(SOURCE: WHO)

22 93 countries are not legally required to provide equal pay for work of equal value.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

23 More than 70% of women-owned small- and medium-sized enterprises have inadequate or no access to financial services.

(SOURCE: GOLDMAN SACHS/INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION)

24 19 countries require women to have their husband's permission to work outside the home.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE **WORKPLACE**

- 25** Despite the fact that globally, 70% of women prefer to work in paid jobs, the rate of female participation in the labor force is only 47% compared with 72% for men.

(SOURCE: ILO)

- 26** In 65 countries, women face industry restrictions when looking for jobs.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

- 27** In 43 countries, there is no legal protection against sexual harassment in the workplace.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

- 28** More than 1 billion women do not have access to the financial system.

1,000,000,000



(SOURCE: WOMEN'S WORLD BANKING)

- 29** In 41 countries, employers can legally dismiss pregnant workers.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP



30 Women currently lead only 53 Global 500 companies, an all-time high.

(SOURCE: FORTUNE)

31 Only 26.8% of parliamentarians — in single-house legislative systems and in lower chambers — are women, up from 11% in 1995.

(SOURCE: IPU)

32 Women comprised 45% of all new Fortune 500 board appointments in 2021, a new high.

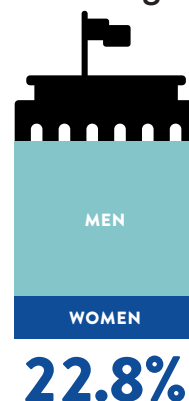
(SOURCE: HEIDRICK & STRUGGLES)

33 There are 31 countries where 34 women serve as Heads of State and/or Government. At the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP

- 34** Women represent 22.8% of Cabinet members heading Ministries leading a policy area.



(SOURCE: INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION AND UN WOMEN)

- 35** Despite the contribution women make to health systems and supporting the realization of health for all, women hold only 25% of senior leadership roles in the sector. If leadership roles were allocated on merit then, since women are 70% of health workers, 70% of health sector leaders would be women.

(SOURCE: UNDP AND UN WOMEN)

- 36** Data from 136 countries shows that women constitute nearly 3 million (34%) of elected members in local deliberative bodies.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN AND UN STATISTICAL DIVISION)

- 37** Less than 1% of leading global financial institutions have achieved gender parity.

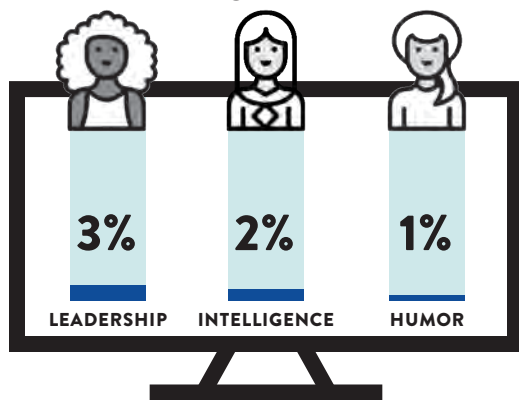
(SOURCE: OMFIF)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA

38 In 2021's top films, females represented 35 % of major characters and 34 % of all speaking characters.

(SOURCE: WOMEN AND HOLLYWOOD)

39 A survey of global advertising in 2016 revealed that only 3% of ads featured women in leadership roles, just 2% portrayed them as intelligent, and only 1% portrayed them as having a sense of humor.



(SOURCE: UNILEVER)

40 In a 2020 study across 116 countries, only 25% of subjects and sources in mainstream news media were women, a 1 percentage point increase from 2015. At this rate, it will take at least 67 years to close the average gender equality gap in traditional news media.

(SOURCE: GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA

41 During 2020, women made up 27% of health specialists appearing in coronavirus stories, far less than the 46% world average given in labor force statistics.

(SOURCE: GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT)

42 In 2020, 40% of stories in traditional news media were reported by women, compared with 37% in 2005 — an increase of a mere 3 percentage points over the 15-year period.

(SOURCE: GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT)

43 In a 2019 10-year survey of ads that won or were shortlisted for the prestigious Cannes Lions awards, male characters outnumber female characters 2 to 1, yet female characters are four times as likely as male characters to be shown in revealing clothing.

(SOURCE: GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN TECH



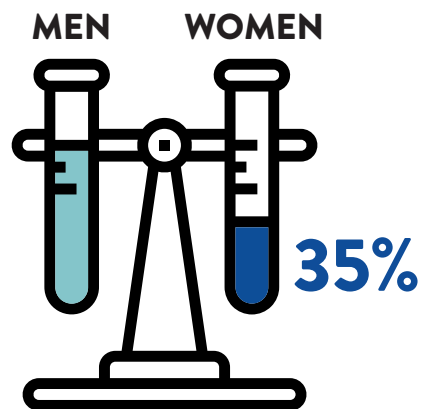
- 44** One large tech company's automated resume screeners were found to reject female applicants more often than male applicants. The AI system showed systemic bias against women, even downgrading graduates of two all-women's colleges.

(SOURCE: REUTERS)

- 45** A 2020 study of gender bias in leading facial recognition technology found that women were misidentified 18% more than men.

(SOURCE: WATCHGUARD)

- 46** Only 35% of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students in higher education globally are women.



(SOURCE: UNESCO)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN TECH



47 An analysis of 133 artificial intelligence (AI) systems across industries since 1988 found that 44.2% demonstrate gender bias, with 25.7% exhibiting both gender and racial bias.

(SOURCE: STANFORD SOCIAL INNOVATION REVIEW)

48 Women make only 12% of AI researchers, represent only 6% of software developers, and are 13 times less likely to file an ICT (information, communication and technology) patent than men.

(SOURCE: UNESCO)

49 A study of 189 software algorithms from 99 developers found that when running the algorithms against an FBI database containing 1.6 million domestic mugshots, there were higher rates of false positives for African American women.

(SOURCE: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY)

50 A study found that one social media company disproportionately targeted men with jobs in stereotypically male industries and women with ads for stereotypically female industries, despite similar job qualifications.

(SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA)

GENDER INEQUALITY

THIS IS JUST A SNAPSHOT.

There are far too many egregious examples to list here. There is nowhere on Earth where girls and women can escape sexist laws, policies, and social norms.

Yet wherever there is injustice, there are also brave advocates — of all genders — who are fighting to eliminate discrimination and achieve the benefits of equality for everyone, everywhere. In fact, more than 2,000 reforms have been passed over the past five decades to dismantle sexist rules and regulations, and progress on this front has been achieved in every region of the world.

These courageous champions won't stop, and neither will we.

Though progress has been made to repeal discriminatory laws and pass new legislation protecting and promoting gender equality, putting these changes into action remains a stubborn challenge. Simply reforming sexist regulations is not enough; it must be backed by adequate enforcement and meaningful inclusion.



GENDER INEQUALITY

If we want to get serious about achieving gender equality, girls and women need more resources and representation at all levels of decision making. For activists in particular, this includes protection from retribution and reprisals for their work, flexible and unrestricted funding, and collective pushback against the shrinking of civic space that we're seeing in many countries.

When it comes to emerging areas where gender discrimination is reinforced, amplified, or replicated — such as algorithmic bias and AI — we need public-private partnerships to find ethical, political, and technical solutions.

The planet's most influential companies can also lead the charge on gender equality by supporting equitable parental leave, employee pay, and board representation, as well as challenging social norms and gender bias in advertising.

The examples of discriminatory regulations, policies, and social norms are clear, and so is our message: It's time to rewrite how girls and women are treated under the law — and push harder for a gender-equal future.

