

Forum: Economic and Social Council

Issue: The Question of Addressing the Gender Based Wage Gap

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Introduction

The gender wage gap is an ongoing battle built on the foundations of instilling gender parity across education, healthcare, politics and all forms of economic participation. Occupational segregation in gender groups around the world has a large but neglected impact on the global gender wage gap. Not only is the active negligence and de-prioritisation of equality and equity from employers, public bodies and governments exacerbating this ongoing battle, but also, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised new obstacles towards bridging this pre-existing gender gap. Despite most governments legislating to guarantee equality in remuneration for both men and women and despite fluctuations in the gap due to the industry profiles and economic sectors of different countries, the world economic forum's annual gender wage gap report of 2021 deduced that it would take 135.6 years to bridge the wage gap between the two and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) statistically estimated that on average, women are continued to be paid 20% less than men worldwide. Under-representation in leadership, differences in working hours, educational and occupational gender stereotypes are some of the underlying causes of this gap.

While the gap has narrowed in some countries, this alone is impossible to outnumber the persisting differences in wages between the two genders for most other countries. The gender wage gap is a prime example of systemic gender discrimination, one that goes beyond greater participation and higher education. As a result, this gap is in close

proximity with a number of legal, social and economic factors which go far beyond the single issue of equal pay for equal work.

Definition of Key Terms

Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap, often known as the wage gap, is the average difference in pay between men and women who work.

International Labour Organisation

Is the United Nations organization in charge of the world of work. It establishes worldwide labor standards, promotes workers' rights, and promotes decent employment possibilities, improved social protection, and increased debate on work-related topics.

Sexism

Prejudice or discrimination based on one's sex or gender is known as sexism. Sexism can harm everybody, but women and girls are the ones who are most affected.

World Economic Forum

The International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation is the World Economic Forum. The Forum brings together the world's most influential political, business, cultural, and other leaders to influence global, regional, and industry agendas.

Sex

Humans and most other living things are classified into one of two primary types (male or female) based on their reproductive functions.

Prejudice

Prejudice is an emotional reaction to someone based on their perceived group membership.

Occupational Segregation

People are distributed throughout and within vocations and employment depending on demographic factors, most commonly gender.

Legislate

To make or enact laws.

Domestic Work

Cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, the sick, and the elderly are all examples of common household tasks. Hospitality employees, cleaners, and care workers are just a few examples of people who conduct this type of labor professionally.

Labor Force

Viewed collectively, all members of a certain organization or country who are capable of working.

Minimum wage

A minimum wage is the lowest salary that businesses are legally permitted to pay their employees—the price floor below which employees are prohibited from selling their labor.

Employment

The state of holding a paid job—of being employed—is most commonly referred to as employment. Employing someone entails paying them to work. An employer is a person who hires people.

Economy

In terms of the production and consumption of goods and services, as well as the availability of money, the status of a country or region.

Key Issues

More Men in Senior Roles than Women

It is true that there are more senior males than women in the workplace as a whole, and because senior people are paid more than younger employees, the gender pay gap is exacerbated. That isn't to say that the disparity can't be addressed.

The assumption at the root of the problem is that senior positions by definition need lengthy hours and constant availability, and so cannot be done flexibly or part-time. This is largely due to the 1950s pattern of men going out to work and women staying at home to support them, allowing men to focus solely on work and nothing else. Globalisation and always-on technology have prolonged the working day to 10 or 12 hours in several areas, exacerbating the problem.

Employers who have a long-hours culture for senior positions are the most frequent violators. Long hours have been demonstrated to be gendered and to aggravate the pay difference between men and women. According to studies, the gender wage gap has not narrowed at all for the highest-educated women (those most likely to hold senior positions) in the last 25 years.

Women Choose to Work in Low-paid Roles and Sectors

We know that many of the lower-paid occupations are historically performed by women and require talents that are traditionally considered "feminine," such as people skills and care skills. As a result, women prefer to work as nurses, teachers, or shop assistants, whereas men opt to work as surgeons, construction workers, or engineers. The problem is that we continue to undervalue traditionally feminine skills, which will take time to change. These unconscious biases inevitably lead to women being more prevalent in domestic work.

However, there is a widespread belief that women pick low-paying jobs because they provide more flexibility or are more family-friendly. Again, the impression that prioritizing children over paid work is a choice, rather than a result of a lack of viable options, perpetuates the gender pay gap and absolves employers of responsibility for closing it.

Caring Responsibilities and Part-time Roles are Shared Unequally

The idea is that because women 'choose' to care for their children, they inevitably wind up in part-time occupations that are below their skill levels and offer less prospects for advancement. It's true that the pay difference between men and women widens after childbearing, and that by the time their first child is 20, women's hourly salaries are around a third lower than men's. And, notably among the highly educated, gender inequalities in rates of part-time and full-time paid work are thought to account for more than half of the discrepancy.

This, too, is predicated on a similar assumption as the first: that part-time occupations are 'naturally' lower-level, and hence are automatically devalued. And framing part-time

work as a woman's "option" not only implies that women are to blame for their lower pay, but it also relieves employers of the burden of action.

It's also true that societal norms are at work here, with males in the United Kingdom finding it more difficult to ask for part-time work. Change is significantly more rapid in the Nordic countries, where government programs have actively addressed gender roles expectations. We do know, however, that males in the UK desire to work part-time; research has revealed that more than half of younger fathers would take a wage sacrifice to work less and spend more time with their families.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States of America

Over the last 15 years or more, the pay difference between men and women in the United States has been rather steady. According to a Pew Research Center survey of median hourly wages of both full-time and part-time workers in 2020, women earned 84 percent of what men earned. Women will need an additional 42 days of labor to earn the same amount as men in 2020, according to this prediction.

The salary difference between workers aged 25 and 34 and all workers 16 and older was narrower in 2020, as it has been in prior decades. On average, women aged 25 to 34 earned 93 cents for every dollar earned by men in the same age range. Women aged 25 to 34 earned 33 cents less than men aged 25 to 34 in 1980, compared to 7 cents in 2020.

Despite the fact that women have expanded their participation in higher-paying jobs historically held by males, such as professional and management roles, women remain

overrepresented in lower-paying occupations in relation to their share of the workforce. This could have a role in pay disparities between men and women.

The salary disparity between men and women is a barometer of how far the country still has to go to ensure that women can participate fully and equitably in our economy – and it is especially large for many women of color. White, non-Hispanic women are paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men in full-time, year-round jobs in the United States, while Black women are paid 63 cents, Native American women 60 cents, Latinas just 55 cents, and Asian American and Pacific Islander women are paid as little as 52 cents, as are Burmese women, and only 85 cents overall for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

India

Despite the efforts of activists and legislators, gender equality remains a pipe dream in many ways. Gender discrimination is largely against women and in favor of males in numerous areas, including the workplace, according to research.

According to the 2018 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report, India is rated 108th out of 149 nations on the gender gap index. Iceland topped the global ranking for the tenth year in a row, having closed more than 85.8% of the overall gender gap. While India performed better in the salary equality for similar work indicators, where it ranked 72nd, it placed 142nd in the sub-index of economic opportunity and participation. In a country like India, the causes for the gender wage gap are a little more convoluted, and they can be traced back to socio-economic and structural factors. Girl children are frequently kept out of school or forced to quit early. Many women are not allowed to work by their families, even if they are educated. Women who do enter employment

frequently need to take extended absences for pregnancy and child care, as well as other family members' healthcare. All of these variables combine to cause women to lag well behind men in terms of earnings over time.

As a result, the income disparity between men and women in India remains significant. Women in the country earn 19 percent less than men, according to the Monster Salary Index (MSI) published in March 2019. According to the poll, the median gross hourly wage for males in India in 2018 was 242.49 rupees, compared to 196.3 rupees for women, implying that men earned 46.19 rupees more than women.

Impact on women's careers: Women's devaluation in the health-care system is influenced by gender-inequitable standards regarding status, remuneration, and prospects for promotion. In India, for example, a high proportion of competent and trained female health workers are currently unemployed. According to the Report of the Working Group on the National Rural Health Mission (2012-2017), the attrition rate of ASHAs is between 5% and 15%.

France

According to a new government assessment, France still has a long way to go to achieve gender parity in the workplace, with huge disparities between men and women on everything from salary to leadership roles.

According to the government's ranking, men continue to dominate senior company positions. Only 26% of organizations respected a "quasi"-gender parity when looked at the top ten highest-paid jobs.

Women hold 3.8 million (or 76%) of the 5 million part-time occupations; 29.3 percent of women work part-time, compared to 8.4 percent of men. This disparity in labor market distribution between men and women has a long-term impact on wage disparities: men earn 28.5 percent more than women, with a wage difference of 9%, for the same job and abilities. France is ranked 16th in the world overall, and 10th among 22 Western European and North American countries, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021.

Russia

In Russia, women are employed. Russia has one of the smallest gender employment gaps in the world, with a difference in labor force participation between men and women between the ages of 30 and 55 of less than 4 percentage points. The minimal employment difference between men and women is a relic of the Soviet era, when the equality credo applied to all sectors of society, including men and women. However, among high-income countries, Russia has one of the greatest salary disparities between men and women. The salary disparity is little over 30%, making it the second-largest in high-income countries behind South Korea.

Russia is rated 59th in the World Economic Forum's report on global gender gaps, which looks at the disparities between men and women in four important areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

In Russia, the feminist movement is still weak and unpopular, which helps to explain why gender disparities are rising. In the 1993 State Duma elections, the political party "Women of Russia" garnered 8% of the vote, but by the end of the decade, it had lost support and had never regained its seats.

UN Women

Women earn barely 77 cents for every dollar earned by males in the world. As a result, men and women have a lifetime income disparity, and more women are retiring into poverty.

Since women's labour is undervalued and women tend to be concentrated in different jobs than men, there is persistent discrepancy in average pay between men and women in all nations and across all sectors. Despite the fact that the work requires the same or more effort and abilities, it is valued and compensated less. The disparity widens for women of color, immigrants, and mothers. The so-called "motherhood penalty" pushes women into the informal sector, part-time labor, and casual work, and is more prevalent in developing countries than in industrialized countries.

Women are still paid 23% less than males over the world. Chidi King, Director of the International Trade Union Confederation's (ITUC) Equality Department and a member of UN Women and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Equal Pay Champions campaign, unpacks the issue.

Closing the income gap between men and women necessitates a bundle of policies, one of which is good work. Minimum living wages (or wage floors) and universal social insurance are two of the most effective and quickest approaches to close gender pay inequalities. All low-wage workers gain from minimum living wages. Because women are disproportionately overrepresented in low-wage jobs, it would normally benefit them more. Germany, for example, recently implemented a national minimum wage to address the country's intractable 22.4 percent income disparity between men and women.

Closing the pay gap between men and women will benefit women, as well as boost corporate performance and strengthen the global economy. Gender inequality is perpetuated through women's lower earnings, which reduce their independence and negotiating power. Evidence from a variety of nations suggests that improving women's control over household income and their ability to generate money on their own improves women's families, particularly their children, through raising investment in education, health, nutrition, and housing.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
10/06/1963	Equal Pay Act	Men and women in the same employment must be paid equally for equal work, according to the Equal Pay Act. The occupations do not have to be similar, but they must be comparable.
2/07/1964	Civil Right Act	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a historic civil rights and labor law that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and eventually sexual orientation and gender identity.

2/11/1996	Equal Pay Day	A group of women's and civil rights organizations, labor unions, professional associations, and individuals seeking to end wage discrimination based on gender and race to achieve pay equity.
29/05/2007	A 2007 Supreme Court case, Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.	Is a Supreme Court of the United States decision on employment discrimination. Employers cannot be sued under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for pay discrimination based on decisions made 180 days or more ago.
29/11/2009	The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act	This act “Not only allowed women to better fight back against gender based discrimination in the workplace, it put measures in place to help ensure that this discrimination does not take place at all.” This act gave people the right to sue if they believed they had been

		unfairly treated in the workplace because of their pay. This act was signed into law by Barack Obama.
2013	Time To Care	The Australian Council of Trade Unions has launched the 'Time To Care' campaign to help employees better manage work and family life. The government invests in the childcare industry to assist raise pay for early childhood educators and caregivers. United Voice brings a case for equitable compensation for childcare employees.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

State Policy Strategies for Narrowing the Gender Wage Gap in America

Despite a lengthy history of legislation intended at stopping companies from paying women less for the same work than men, the United States still has a gender wage gap. State policymakers have stepped up efforts to close the gender wage gap in recent years, concentrating on three approaches. Initially, Laws prohibiting employers from demanding salary confidentiality (CA, CO, IL, LA, ME, MI, MN, NH, NJ, VT). Secondly, Laws prohibiting employers from inquiring about previous earnings (CA, DE,

MA, OR; Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, and New York). Lastly, Laws requiring businesses to record wage disparities between men and women (AK, IL, MN, NH).

Legislators want to eliminate discriminatory hiring and pay practices by enhancing pay transparency and prohibiting employers from asking about previous salary. Despite evidence that such change will reduce pay disparities, initiatives at the federal level to enact equivalent worker rights have failed. There have been over 20 attempts to alter the Fair Labor Standards Act, all of which have stalled or been defeated in the legislature. Such legislation (such as the Paycheck Fairness Act) would have reinforced employee remedies and increased penalties for businesses who enforce pay secrecy. At the state level, more progress has been accomplished. California, Delaware, Maryland, and Connecticut all strengthened their pay secrecy rules in 2016. As of 2017, 18 states have passed legislation prohibiting companies from discriminating against or retaliating against employees who inquire about their pay.

Equal Pay Act

The Equal Pay Act is a labor law in the United States that forbids salary discrimination based on gender. The Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, signed by President John F. Kennedy in 1963 as an addition to the Fair Labor Standards Act, prohibits companies from paying men and women different wages or benefits for doing tasks that require the same abilities and responsibilities. The bill was one of the first in American history to address job discrimination based on gender.

The law also establishes standards for when unequal remuneration is permissible, including on the basis of merit, seniority, worker quality or quantity of output, and other non-gender-based characteristics.

The Equal Pay Act was one of the first federal legislation to address gender discrimination in American history. Kennedy praised it as a "major stride forward" when he signed it into law on June 10, 1963, but admitted that "much remained to be done" to attain full equality of economic opportunity for women.

Gender Pay Gap by the Government Equalities Office in the United Kingdom

Employers have asked us for recommendations on how to boost women's recruitment and advancement, as well as close the gender pay gap. This guidance summarizes tactics that have been proven to work as well as those that require more evidence before being suggested as common practices. Employers will be able to design more effective action plans as a result of this. Employers who use high-quality data to understand the factors that contribute to their gender pay gap will be able to better target their activities and achieve the best results.

1. Include a diverse group of women on recruiting and promotion shortlists. When compiling a shortlist of suitable candidates, make sure to include at least one woman. Only one woman on a shortlist does not boost the likelihood of a woman being chosen.
2. In the recruitment process, use skill-based assessment tests. Ask candidates to undertake tasks they would be expected to perform in the post they are seeking for rather than relying just on interviews. Assess their suitability for the post based on their performance on those tasks. To ensure fairness among candidates, standardize the tasks and how they are assessed.
3. For recruiting and promotion, use organized interviews. Both organized and unstructured interviews have advantages and disadvantages, but unstructured interviews

are more likely to introduce unfair bias and affect judgments. Use structured interviews in which all candidates are asked the same questions in the same order and manner, and the responses are graded using pre-specified, standardized criteria. As a result, the responses are more comparable, and unconscious bias is less of a factor.

4. Displaying wage ranges encourages salary negotiation. Women are less inclined to bargain for a higher salary. This is partly due to the fact that women are put off if they are unsure of what constitutes an acceptable offer. Employers should explicitly convey the salary range available for a position in order to encourage women to bargain for a better deal. This informs the candidate on what they can expect.

Possible Solutions

To Create a Minimum Living Wage

In comparison to men, women, particularly women from minority groups, make up a substantial proportion of low-wage workers. As seen in Brazil and Costa Rica, governments that set a minimum living wage—one that permits workers to fully cover living expenditures (including food, clothing, shelter, and other fundamental needs)—compress the earnings distribution and eliminate earnings disparities across demographic groups.

Women make up a disproportionate percentage of workers in the informal economy, from street sellers to domestic labor. Although minimum wage law is rarely enforced in this industry, evidence suggests that it raises wage levels by creating a "lighthouse effect" and providing a set of norms for unions to strive for when fighting for better circumstances for informal employees.

Invest in Policies and Programs that Address Occupational Sex Segregation

Gender wage discrepancies within the same jobs, which are exacerbated by the "motherhood penalty" women experience when returning to work after caring for children, as well as unconscious bias women face when negotiating salary, are significant. The largest salary disparities, however, do not exist between men and women working in the same occupations. Occupational sex segregation, or the fact that women and men are concentrated in separate industries and jobs, is a major driver of global gender pay inequalities. Nurses are more likely to be female, while doctors are more likely to be male. Domestic workers and childcare providers are more likely to be women, while teachers and professors for older pupils are more likely to be men.

Governments may consider setting goals or offering incentives for companies that hire more women in traditionally male-dominated fields, and vice versa. Parallel to this, government spending can be prioritized to break down these barriers, based on evidence that identifies effective measures, such as providing male mentors and employment training and placement, allowing women to “crossover” into male-dominated sectors.

It's also critical to reconsider how society perceives the job that women normally do. Individuals who desire to stay in professions that women now dominate, such as childcare and nursing, should take steps to guarantee that these forms of employment are appropriately compensated, including, as previously indicated, through legislation establishing a minimum living wage.

To Create and Direct Data Publication on Wages

When firms are obliged to report gender pay inequalities, research suggests that the disparity narrows. According to a recent analysis on pay transparency legislation in Denmark, the gender pay gap has narrowed by about two percentage points. At least ten nations have enacted laws requiring gender pay transparency. The UK government

legislated in 2017 that all firms with at least 250 employees provide detailed information on the wage gap between men and women, but this compulsion has sadly been put on hold due to COVID-19. Other countries around the world, such as Canada, Switzerland, France, and Sweden, have similar mandates.

These initiatives, as well as the research and evidence that supports them, have generally been centered in high-income settings. As these initiatives grow, it will be necessary to adopt a more intersectional strategy, one that recognizes and tackles pay disparities based on gender as well as intersecting demographic variables such as race, age, work type, and sector—and to determine the best mix of treatments.

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