

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON STATUS OF
WOMEN (UNCSW)**



BACKGROUND GUIDE

AGENDA- Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women in the workforce and Labour Market

Letter From The Executive Board

Greetings Delegates!

On behalf of the Executive Board, we welcome you to the United Nation Commission On The Status Of Women (UNCSW) at Junior Amity Model United Nations (JAMUN). It is our privilege to meet in this committee and discuss the agenda ‘Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women in the Workforce and Labour Market’.

The UNCSW is just like any other committee, it isn’t influenced by any power, but by problems. Now, it’s your turn as delegates of nations to take charge, influence, establish authorities and raise a voice on concerns faced by women all over the world. Delegates come together on the platform of the Model United Nations and participate in eliminating international concerns.

Delegates who have just started their journey in the world of MUN can always reach out to the executive board members who will be present to help you 24X7. We will answer every question of yours whether it is about research, documentation, chits etc. Every country would have the chance to share their insights on the agenda, remember learning is the stepping stone to achieve excellence.

It is crucial to understand that all delegates are equal irrespective of their allotment, every country has their respective role to play ranging from questioning to taking decisions. Being a delegate is all about having fun, participating, learning and growing. Don’t be afraid to speak, our voice is a gift given to us.

Looking forward for an engaging and joyful session with all the delegates

Good Luck!

The Executive Board

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Committee Mandate

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), was established by ECOSOC resolution 11 of 21 June 1946.

In 1996, ECOSOC expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards, and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide. The annual session of the Commission is the largest congregation of women's rights advocates from all over the globe.

The Commission has played a key role in the advancement of women's social, economic, and political rights worldwide

Proofs and evidences accepted in the committee

Research can make your speeches stand out. It is one of the most vital factors that determines your success in the Model United Nations, in this case Junior Amity Model United Nations (JAMUN). Many beginners persevere with their research. That is why we are providing a background guide to help you research. The trickiest part here is that not every information available on the internet is reliable. You are free to look at all the resources available on the internet and to use them to make your speeches one of the best. However, it is advised that you verify your research from credible sources, some of them are listed below. Feel free to contact any Executive Board member if you face any problem.

1. Reuters– It is one of the world's most trusted providers of answers. It is an independent private news agency, which mostly covers international events of importance.

(<http://www.reuters.com/>)

2. State operated News Agencies– These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council.

For example-

a. RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/>

b. IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>

c. Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P .R. China) <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>

3. Government Reports: The EB recognises news from government reports as credible.

a. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America (<http://www.state.gov/index.htm>)

b. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>) People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>)

4. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations

The documents from individual country websites also serve as a source for finding official statements by that country on various agendas. The nature of websites vary a lot from country to country.

www.un.org/en/members/

5. Other Multilateral or Inter-Governmental Organisations

These are international organisations which are not a part of the United Nations. Usually one may find these organisations based around a specific region like South Asia, and with a specific purpose such as trade, security or cooperation. Documents from the same can be deemed credible; most certainly for the countries which are a part of that organisation. For example

a. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
Website: www.saarc-sec.org

b. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
Website: www.nato.int/cps/en

6. United Nations and Affiliated Bodies

All reports or documents from the United Nations, its organs or affiliated bodies may be considered as a credible source of information.

Website: www.un.org

a. Organs such as,

i. UN Security Council - www.un.org/Docs/sc/

ii. UNGA www.un.org/en/ga/

b. UN Affiliated bodies such as,

i. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) www.iaea.org

ii. The World Bank (WB) www.worldbank.org

Guide To Research

To start of your research, first get a basic understanding of what the agenda is all about and how it is affecting the world. After this, research about your country and their role in the committee and participation in the agenda. In this time's agenda you need to start of by understanding women's representation in workforce across various fields, your country's situation in problem, solutions which might be taken or have been taken.

You can also divide the agenda into subsections on your own basic understanding, this will in turn help you to streamline your research so that maximum utilization of your time can be done. Read and understand about the current affairs to get an understanding of the regional and international conflicts which are taking place in the world.

While you research keep in mind that the problems which you have researched on your country has taken some measures or proposed any solutions on the same.

Also, identify what all actions have been take by the UN committees as this can act as proof of source and introduce you to new ideas which you can refer to in your solutions. This is also going to tell you what all measures have already been taken and what all needs to be taken.

Read case studies on the countries which are given in the Background Guide itself,, but don't limit yourself only to them. Explore new case studies on either wars, situations or the countries as a whole themselves.

By the end of your research you should have the problems identified and the solutions ready and what new ideas you as a delegate would want to propose to the delegates of other nations present in the committee.

The main objective is to understand the agenda and have practical ways which you as a nation would be ready to tackle them

You can also refer to the Proofs and Evidence provided to you.

The Executive Board requests you not to use AI in research

Basic Introduction to the agenda

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Women and girls make up half of the world's

population, they account for half of its potential as well. Gender inequality continues to exist in every corner though, it holds back social progress in clear ways.

Around 40% of workers worldwide are women and many are paid less than men for doing the same jobs. Promoting equal opportunities means making sure women can get good jobs, earn fair pay, and have the chance to become leaders just like men.

In the past, women were often not allowed to go to school, work in many professions, or take part in important decisions. For example in the early 20th century women made up less than 20% of the workforce in most countries and very few held leadership positions. Over time women fought for their rights and gradually gained access to education and employment. By 2020 women made up about 39% of the global workforce, yet they still remain underrepresented in leadership roles and decision-making positions holding only around 29% of senior management jobs worldwide. Giving women equal opportunities allows them to use their skills fully in their careers and contribute to their communities and societies.

Supporting women in the workforce is not just about fairness, instead it is about making the most of everyone's talents. By giving women equal opportunities to work, lead, and earn, society benefits as a whole creating stronger companies, healthier communities, and a more prosperous world for all.

HISTORY

The challenge of advancing equal opportunities for women in the labour market and the workforce has a long history which has been influenced by social, economic, and political movements throughout the world.

The 18th and 19th century Industrial Revolution saw women entering factories in large numbers but performing low-skilled, low-paid work. The early 20th century saw the emergence of women's movements advocating for women's work, equal pay and education. The two World Wars sped up women's access into formal jobs to fill industrial and administrative jobs taken over by men during these times. However, many women were forced out of those jobs after the Wars ended.

After the emergence of the United Nations in 1945, gender equality developed into a world-wide issue of concern. In 1946 the Commission on the Status of Women was established to formally fulfill its mission to promote women's rights around the world. In more recent years, the Beijing Platform for Action recognised "Women and the Economy" as one of its twelve key areas of concern, to promote women's right to participate formally in economic life and to recommend measures to remove obstacles to women's participation.

The international agenda to promote women's economic empowerment was again achieved in the 21st Century, with the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely: Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). However, although there has been international progress, structural inequalities, for example, unequal

pay, occupational segregation, and unpaid care work, continue to constrain women's economic participation, particularly in lower-income countries.

Societal Stereotypes

A major obstacle to fostering equal access to employment for women is that built up cultural beliefs about gender roles are still robust and prevalent. Culturally, considering women to be the primary caregivers and men to be the primary wage earners has an enduring impact on how the labour market is constructed, how hiring takes place, and how workplaces operate.

For example, as early as school aged children, girls are being socially and culturally conditioned to pursue caregiving roles and careers, whereas boys are being oriented to pursue science, technology, and leadership roles. This leads to fewer women in higher wage roles, and in leadership roles, and contributes to occupational segregation.

Further still, women queuing up for employment into male dominated professions frequently face bias and discrimination for being perceived as less suitable candidates due to cultural expectations about marriage, motherhood, and caregiving.

Finally, in many cultures the expectation of women to take on the role of unpaid domestic labour further reinforces gender role stereotypes because women are expected to do both paid labour and unpaid domestic labour. The International Labour Organization has demonstrated that on average across the globe, women do an average of more than three times the amount of unpaid care work as men, limiting full time work or undertaking leadership roles.

These social expectations continue to sustain gender inequality and inhibit the overall economic growth of nations because they prevent the full use of women's abilities and potential. To combat these stereotypes, a multi faceted approach is needed, including gender sensitive education, awareness campaigns, and workplace adjustments to combat traditional notions and support women's participation as equal members of the economy

Job Opportunities

Women across the world still face many problems when it comes to getting fair job opportunities. Even today, men are often given preference for professional jobs, while women are pushed into lower-paying or informal work. On average, about 47% of working age women are employed globally, compared to 72% of working age men, showing a big gap that comes from social beliefs and outdated traditions. Many people still think women should only focus on their homes or children, and that the workplace belongs to men. These ideas limit women's growth and stop them from using their full potential. To promote equal opportunities for women in the workforce and labour market, it is important to ensure equal pay, fair hiring, access to education, and support systems like childcare and legal protection. Empowering women to work freely and equally will not only help them, but also make economies stronger and more balanced.

Pay gap

The gender pay gap is another one of the fuels which promotes underrepresentation of women in workforce globally. There is no country in the world who has actually obtained a 50-50 ratio in equality of women in workforce. Many valid sources have revealed that globally women only earn 80% of what men do and women are generally not given the wages which they are obliged to get for the work they have done. The UN women and The International Labour Organisation have taken many initiatives on the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’, this ideology quickly spread and even additions were made to this principle which stated that irrespective of the caste, creed, religion and gender everyone should be given the wages on an hourly basis instead of a “gender” basis. Women spend around 4 hours on unpaid work and this isn't a case of women doing inferior work but actually it is about the mindset of the people and how it has led to the decline in women representation.

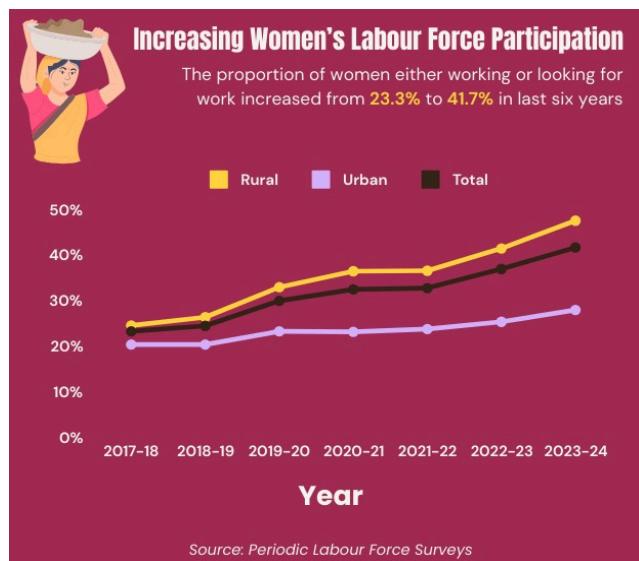
CASE STUDY

India

India's gender disparities have been enforced by cultural, traditional and economic challenges, which prevent girls from getting education and equal opportunities in India's workforce. This disparity has not only contributed to a persistent gender wage gap, but has historically also devalued women's education and societal roles. In 2017-18, the Worker Population ratio for women aged 15 years and above has risen from 22% in 2017-18 to 40.3% in 2023-24, while the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women have increased from 23.3% to 41.7% in the same period. In India, women mainly worked in agriculture, as self-employed or casual labour. In the present years, women have been able to improve household welfare, children's education and economic growth. Nevertheless, many female workers are not trained properly, and many work in the Service Sector, including domestic work, caregiving or small-scale trade for low income, or unpaid labour in majority of the cases. Overall, policy measures view women as supplementary earners, for example in the promotion of the entrepreneurship model of job creation, in gendered jobs in health and education (such as Anganwadi and ASHA workers). About 35% of STEM graduates in India are women (UNESCO), but only 13–15% of faculty members in engineering colleges are female. In India, balancing the traditional expectations with the women's aspirations remain a key struggle.

India has shifted decisively from women's development to women-led development, trying to further promote equal opportunities to women in the workforce and labour market. The Government has made efforts such as start-up India, PM Mudra Yojana, and PM SVANidhi. PM SVANidhi scheme has empowered street vendors across India, with around 44% beneficiaries are women under the scheme. The government has also tried to increase job opportunities through loans and start-ups, like Mudra loans. Women account for 68% of all Mudra beneficiaries, underscoring the scheme's pivotal role in advancing women-led

enterprises across the country. All of these initiatives aim to demonstrate women as active contributors, leaders and innovators in not one, but all the sectors of economy.

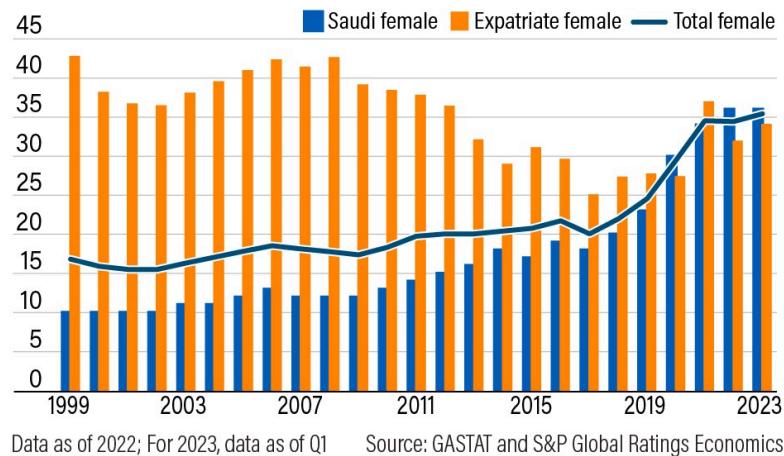


Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, women's employment is mainly in education and healthcare, limiting overall labour growth. The persistent gender discrimination, wage inequality, and societal stigma prevent career progression for women. Additionally, despite the rising education levels among women, most are not adequately trained for the emerging sectors, which restrict their employability. Despite all of the policy reforms Saudi Arabia has been able to achieve such as increasing female-led small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to 45%, Saudi Arabia's progress has improved statistics but not the social realities. The country also has one of the lowest female participation rates in the labor market, at less than 15 percent for females above 15 years in 2017. Geographical disparities also persist; women in small cities, despite awareness of empowerment policies, often face societal pressures limiting their choices.

Barriers to hiring women may have significant implications for female labor demand, and present a first-order constraint to increasing economic opportunity for women. Addressing these barriers is key to advancing gender equality in the labor market, where gaps in employment outcomes have been particularly persistent. There are many types of costs that firms may face when employing women for the first time. These include capital investments as well as organizational restructuring, learning by doing, and changes in corporate culture. Firms may face costs associated with learning to comply with gendered regulations around women's work.. Saudi Arabia has been trying to increase the participation of women in the workforce, especially under Vision 2030 through several reforms. These reforms have increased the participation of women from 20% in 2018 to 35% across the several economic sectors. Only through integrated efforts can women truly become equal contributors to Saudi Arabia's economic and social development.

SAUDI ARABIA'S FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (%)



Data as of 2022; For 2023, data as of Q1

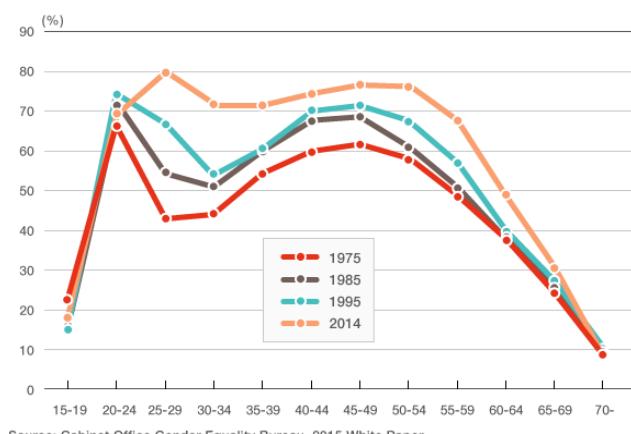
Source: GASTAT and S&P Global Ratings Economics

JAPAN

For many years, women's labour force participation patterns in Japan were distinct from those in other economies. Japan had a system which was widely known as the M-shaped age curve. This suggests that many women in Japan used to work in their 20s, leave their jobs in their 30s to get married or take care of children, and then return to work in their 40s once their children grew older. When shown on a graph this pattern looked like the letter "M". This has happened because of traditional beliefs that women should focus on family after marriage and because there were not enough childcare options or flexible jobs to help them continue working. While this pattern has persisted in Japan, it has undergone considerable change in Japan in the past 15 years. In 2006 just over 60% of Japanese women aged 30–34 were in the paid labour force. By 2023 this had increased to 80%.

This increase shows improved support systems for working women. The Japanese government's "Womenomics" strategy not only promotes work-life balance but also focuses on increasing women's participation in STEM and engineering sectors where female representation has traditionally been low. Programs encouraging girls to pursue science and education as well as initiatives to support women researchers are helping to close the gender gap in these fields. Moreover, workplaces are becoming more supportive through policies like extended maternity leaves and flexible working hours.

Figure 3 Women's Labor Participation by Age



Palestine

In Palestine, women have always played an important role in the society from leading protests and supporting families during the British Mandate and the Intifadas, to working in education, health and small businesses. However , even today women face many challenges in the workforce of any country. Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (2024) only about 18% of women are part of the labor force compared to over 70% of men. Most women work in low or informal jobs and many cannot work due to social restrictions, lack of childcare, and limited job opportunities. Laws exist to protect women at work, but they are not always enforced. Historically, wars and occupation have made things harder by restricting movement, destroying workplaces, and increasing unemployment. Still women's organisations and NGOs continue to train women and help them start small businesses.

Palestine's history shows that the women have always been a source of strength and hope. From the early 1900s, Palestinian women's unions and community groups worked to improve education, healthcare and the right for girls. Many women became teachers and social workers helping build the nation in difficult times. In villages and cities, women also supported farming, crafts and trade keeping families and local economics alive. These efforts built a strong foundation for women's participation in the workforce today. If the governments and international partners continue to support education, training and equal rights more women will be able to work, earn and lead helping Palestine grow stronger as a whole.

QATAR

Qatar has made significant progress in terms of women in education and employment. Currently, over 60% of the labor force in Qatar are women. However, women are still bound by normative expectations and traditional gender roles that often limit their decisions around careers and advancement into male dominated fields. There is a notable deficit of women leaders especially in STEM and engineering, as these roles are often seen culturally as male-oriented.

As a result of these deficits, Qatar has seen the initiation of several gender equality programs within the labor force. In particular, the National Development Strategy (NDS) and the Qatar National Vision 2030 contain women-centered programs aimed at economic empowerment for women, and support scholarships, vocational training, and mentorship programs. Further, an increasing number of colleges and universities in Qatar are near equal gender representation among students, and governmental strategy is encouraged for women's participation in the labor market with training programs, employment quotas, and incentives for women working in public sector

Qatar has made tangible advancements toward women's inclusion in the labor force. However, there are still barriers within cultural expectations and overlapping leadership roles. To ensure equality for women in STEM, engineering and specifically leadership roles, these social and structural constraints need to be addressed. Sustained policy support and opportunities for professional development with public awareness campaigns about barriers and gender equality to create a truly inclusive workforce will aid not only gender equality but also sustainable economic growth in the country.

Questions to consider

Q1) Gender Pay Gap is a problem which has been faced in many industries from the past decades and has now become an integrated part of every industry which is not good for women in representation in new upcoming industries such as STEM, AI etc. Analyse why this prevails and what can be done to prevent this.

Q2) Women often spend more time than men doing unpaid work at home like cooking, cleaning and taking care of children. How can families and communities encourage men to share these responsibilities so women have more time to pursue careers?

Q3) In workplaces around the world, women are sometimes paid less than men for doing the same job. How can companies ensure that everyone is paid fairly and how could this reduce inequalities between men and women ?

Q4) Many industries still have low representation of women in leadership roles and high paying technical positions. What strategies can governments implement to encourage women to enter and advance in these fields, like engineering or STEM?

Q5) How can resources, like access to mentorship, training and professional networks, be strengthened to open new pathways for women in male dominated industries?

