

SDG 5 *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 focuses on helping women and girls to reach their full potential so that they have equal opportunities to those of men and boys. This means eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against them, including violence by intimate partners, sexual violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Ensuring that women have better access to paid employment, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and real decision-making power in public and private spheres, will further ensure that development is equitable and sustainable.

'Our Way of Life' calls us to live in mutual love and unity; to listen together with compassionate hearts to the spirit of God in the cry of the earth and of people made poor; to stand with people in their struggles; to speak and act for justice and healing in the Church and world. C10 - Our Way of Life.

THE WORD OF GOD

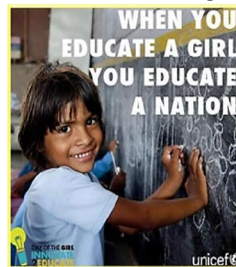
Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

In the Bible, there may be no better reference to equality than this one, because it includes gender, social position, and nationality. It is never about race but simply about grace and we are all one... and seen as equal in God's sight.

The Presentation Sisters in many parts of the world are in direct ministry with those made poor, being a prophetic presence and voice in the lives of women and girls in places where gender inequality exists.

Personally, having worked for many years with women and children in India, I see first-hand the huge developmental strides these girl children, young women and older women have made with our help, in breaking down the walls of inequality in the field of education, health and status in life.

It is heartening to see the positive change as more and more girl children are admitted to our coaching centers and vocational training centers, where girls have gone ahead to earn decent wages with the skills they have achieved with the help of Presentation Sisters.



A TRUE STORY

A woman who hailed from **Uttarpradesh, India**, came to Delhi with her husband in search of a job and for better prospects. She then came in touch with the Presentation Sisters in Janta Vihar, an urban slum, who were working with women and empowering them through vocational skill training. The Sisters and Animators encouraged her and motivated her husband to allow her to do Beauty Parlour training in our Centre.

Naseema was a quiet and shy lady who found it difficult to move forward, but her husband encouraged his wife and supported her all through the training period.

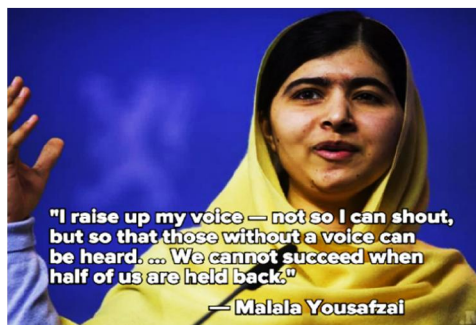
Naseema completed her training and now runs her own Beauty Parlour shop.

This lady who was once very timid, would not be recognizable now as she has become a very modern and free woman empowered to be herself and independent to move on in life.



GLOBAL FACTS...

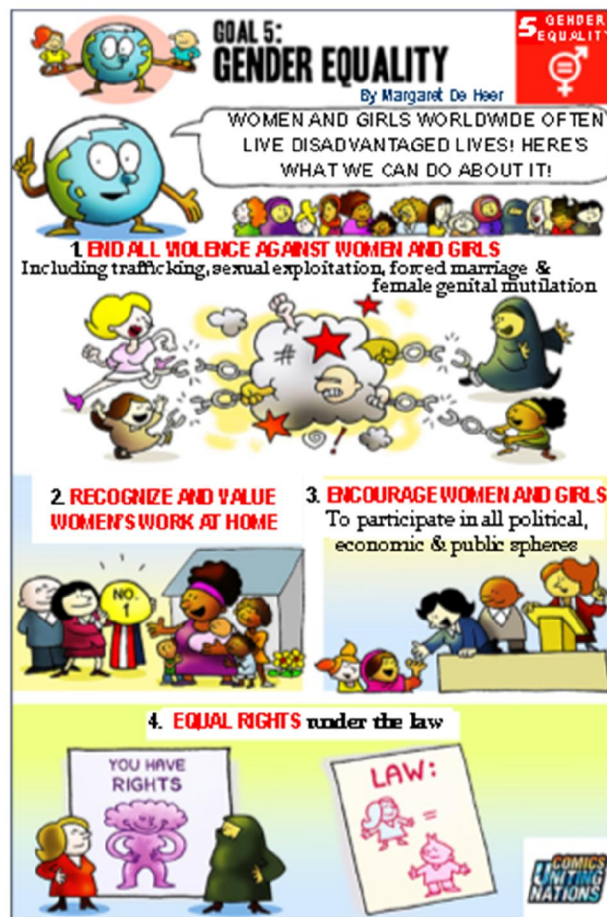
- In 2015 globally there were only 21 female heads of State versus 175 male leaders.
- In the USA, there is a 33% wage-gap between women and men.¹
- An estimated 15.5 million child domestic workers, mostly girls, face many hazards. ²
- 25,800 unaccompanied migrant children arrived in Italy by sea in 2016.
- 70% of all victims of Human Trafficking worldwide are women and girls.
- Only 13% of countries investigate gender discrepancy through a study of statistics.
- Gender equality is the most persistent form of human rights abuse.
- Globally 15 million girls are married every year.³
- 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.
- Worldwide there are 520 million women who are illiterate.



¹ <http://www.iwpr.org/>

² <https://www.unicef.org/protection>

³ www.globalcitizen.org



COLLECTIVE ACTION...

Actively campaign against 'honour-killing', female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and sexual harassment.

Advocate with others to end human trafficking and modern slavery in all its forms.

Redress the injustice that women have less access to education, training and recruitment.

Organize 'sensitization training' programmes on gender equality, the girl child, education and rights of women in every walk of life, in hospitals and other government sectors.

Join campaigns working towards equal pay for women and men, doing the same work.

PERSONAL ACTION....

Empowering women in the community ensures that you will also enhance girls' education. When mothers are educated and empowered to make choices in their lives, they enable their daughters to go to school.

Raise aspirations of girls and their parents by giving them images and role models in their locality in order to expand their dreams. I recall that in one of our *Children's Parliament* groups a girl child in a training programme expressed a desire to be a magistrate at the state level, and another wanted to be a doctor.

Treat all children as equals, helping them to value and respect their differences.

Work with community services to promote education and equality for women.

Promote women's leadership through trade unions, civil society and feminist organizations.

Take steps to be a more peace-full person by being welcoming, honest, non-judgmental and respecting difference.

Visit women and girls in their homes and offer ongoing support.



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