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Topic: Innovation and Technological Change, and Education in the Digital Age for Achieving Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls

“No country can truly develop if half its population is left behind”

Education plays an important role in achieving gender equality and empowering women by challenging age-old stereotypes, providing new opportunities, and paving the way for economic empowerment. Innovation and technological change have revolutionized the sphere of education. Despite achieving significant progress in recent years, women still face many challenges in achieving gender equality. It is estimated that 63% of women across the world were using the Internet in 2022 and this rate further reduced to 30% in many developing nations. Oman faces the challenge of school leaders in the country not being appropriately qualified to lead the integration of technology into teaching and learning or adapting the school curriculum to such changes. The United Nations provides technical assistance to governments in implementing gender-responsive budgeting and policies. Campaigns such as the HeForShe campaign launched in 2014 by the UN call on men and boys to stand up against gender inequality and promote women’s rights.

Oman is committed to achieving gender equality and believes that by taking advantage of innovation and technology, a more inclusive world can be created for all. Oman introduced the Standard Universal Educational system, built schools in rural areas, and provided scholarships for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds due to which compared to the 0% attendance rate in 1970, Oman achieved 99.68% youth female (age group 15-24) literacy rate by 2022. In 2021, a national program was implemented for all teachers in Oman which aimed at enhancing their skills in employing technology in education. The Ministry of Education in Oman also implemented the first virtual educational forum "Towards Sustainable Blended Education: Reality, Empowerment, and Ambition" which reviewed 22 initiatives in the use of information and communication technologies. Oman has ratified the 2004 Arab Charter on Human Rights, and launched Vision 2040 in 2020, to enhance gender equality through increased women's participation across all sectors.

Collaborating with various UN agencies, schools, institutions, and NGOs helps to promote increased access to information and technology. National scholarships and online training programs can help in the promotion of women in the field of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). Establishing financial literacy programs targeted at girls and women to increase their financial independence will reduce vulnerability to exploitation. Creating awareness among young boys and actively involving boys and men to advocate for gender equality through campaigns and programs will bring down gender discrimination in communities.

Oman remains dedicated to achieving an inclusive world in which all girls and women can play a significant role as well as contribute to society and its development through collaborations, partnerships, and international cooperation.

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