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Lecture- 29



LECTURE 29:

Gender equality Gender equality, also known as sexual equality or equality of the sexes, is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender. Gender equality is the goal, while gender neutrality and gender equity are practices and ways of thinking that help in achieving the goal. Gender parity, which is used to measure gender balance in a given situation, can aid in achieving gender equality but is not the goal in and of itself. Gender equality is more than equal representation, it is strongly tied to women's rights, and often requires policy changes. As of 2017, the global movement for gender equality has not incorporated the proposition of genders besides women and men, or gender identities outside of the gender binary. UNICEF says gender equality "means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike." [1][a] On a global scale, achieving gender equality also requires eliminating harmful practices against women and girls, including sex trafficking, femicide, wartime sexual violence, and other oppression tactics. UNFPA stated that, "despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor and illiterate. They have less access to property ownership, credit, training and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence." [2] As of 2017, gender equality is the fifth of seventeen sustainable development goals of the United Nations. Gender inequality is measured annually by the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Reports. History Christine de Pizan, an early advocate for gender equality, states in her 1405 book *The Book of the City of Ladies* that the oppression of women is founded on irrational prejudice, pointing out numerous advances in society probably created by women. [3] Shakers The Shakers harvesting their famous herbs The Shakers, an evangelical group, which practiced segregation of the sexes and strict celibacy, were early practitioners of gender equality. They branched off from a Quaker community in the north-west of England before emigrating to America in 1774. In America, the head of the Shakers' central ministry in 1788, Joseph Meacham, had a revelation that the sexes should be equal. He then brought Lucy Wright into the ministry as his female counterpart, and together they restructured the society to balance the rights of the sexes. Meacham and Wright established leadership teams where each elder, who dealt with the men's spiritual welfare, was partnered with an eldress, who did the same for women. Each deacon was partnered with a deaconess. Men had oversight of men; women had oversight of women. Women lived with women; men lived with men. In Shaker society, a woman did not have to be controlled or owned by any man. After Meacham's death in 1796, Wright became the head of the Shaker ministry until her death in 1821. Shakers maintained the same pattern of gender-balanced leadership for more than 200 years. They also promoted equality by working together with other women's rights advocates. In 1859, Shaker Elder Frederick Evans stated their beliefs forcefully, writing that Shakers were "the first to disenthral woman from the condition of vassalage to which all other religious systems (more or less) consign her, and to secure to her those just and equal rights with man that, by her similarity to him in organization and faculties, both God and nature would seem to demand". [4] Evans and his counterpart, Eldress Antoinette Doolittle, joined women's rights advocates on speakers' platforms throughout the northeastern U.S. in the 1870s. A visitor to the Shakers wrote in 1875: Each sex works in its own appropriate sphere of action, there being a proper subordination, deference and respect of the female to the male in his order, and of the male to the female in her order [emphasis added], so that in any of these communities the zealous advocates of "women's rights" may here find a practical realization of their ideal. [5] The Shakers were more than a radical religious sect on the fringes of American society; they put equality of the sexes into practice. It has been argued that they demonstrated that gender equality was achievable and how to achieve it. [6] In wider society, the movement towards gender equality began with the suffrage movement in Western cultures in the late-

19th century, which sought to allow women to vote and hold elected office. This period also witnessed significant changes to women's property rights, particularly in relation to their marital status. (See for example, Married Women's Property Act 1882.) Post-war era Further information: Anti-discrimination laws Further information: Timeline of women's legal rights (other than voting) Since World War II, the women's liberation movement and feminism have created a general movement towards recognition of women's rights. The United Nations and other international agencies have adopted several conventions which promote gender equality. These conventions have not been uniformly adopted by all countries, and include: The Convention against Discrimination in Education was adopted in 1960, and came into force in 1962 and 1968. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. It has been described as an international bill of rights for women, which came into force on 3 September 1981. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, a human rights declaration adopted by consensus at the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993 in Vienna, Austria. Women's rights are addressed at para 18.[7] The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993. In 1994, the twenty-year Cairo Programme of Action was adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. This non binding programme-of-action asserted that governments have a responsibility to meet individuals' reproductive needs, rather than demographic targets. As such, it called for family planning, reproductive rights services, and strategies to promote gender equality and stop violence against women. Also in 1994, in the Americas, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as the Belém do Pará Convention, called for the end of violence and discrimination against women.[8] At the end of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the UN adopted the Beijing Declaration on 15 September 1995 - a resolution adopted to promulgate a set of principles concerning gender equality. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which was adopted on 31 October 2000, deals with the rights and protection of women and girls during and after armed conflicts. The Maputo Protocol guarantees comprehensive rights to women, including the right to take part in the political process, to social and political equality with men, to control their reproductive health, and an end to female genital mutilation. It was adopted by the African Union in the form of a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and came into force in 2005. The EU directive Directive 2002/73/EC - equal treatment of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions states that: "Harassment and sexual harassment within the meaning of this Directive shall be deemed to be discrimination on the grounds of sex and therefore prohibited." [9] The Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the first legally binding instrument in Europe in the field of violence against women, [10] came into force in 2014. The Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, which has five strategic objectives: [11] Combating gender stereotypes and sexism Preventing and combating violence against women Guaranteeing Equal Access of Women to Justice Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decisionmaking Achieving Gender Mainstreaming in all policies and measures Such legislation and affirmative action policies have been critical to bringing changes in societal attitudes. A 2015 Pew Research Center survey of citizens in 38 countries found that majorities in 37 of those 38 countries said that gender equality is at least "somewhat important," and a global median of 65% believe it is "very important" that women have the same rights as men. [12] Most occupations are now equally available to men and women, in many countries. [i] Similarly, men are increasingly working in occupations which in previous generations had been considered women's work, such as nursing, cleaning and child care. In domestic situations, the role of Parenting or child rearing is more commonly shared or not as widely considered to be an exclusively female role, so that women may be free to pursue a career after childbirth. For further information, see Shared earning/shared parenting marriage. Another manifestation of the change in social attitudes is the non-automatic

taking by a woman of her husband's surname on marriage.[13] A highly contentious issue relating to gender equality is the role of women in religiously orientated societies.[ii][iii] Some Christians or Muslims believe in Complementarianism, a view that holds that men and women have different but complementing roles. This view may be in opposition to the views and goals of gender equality. In addition, there are also non-Western countries of low religiosity where the contention surrounding gender equality remains. In China, a cultural preference for a male child has resulted in a shortfall of women in the population. The feminist movement in Japan has made many strides which resulted in the Gender Equality Bureau, but Japan still remains low in gender equality compared to other industrialized nations. The notion of gender equality, and of its degree of achievement in a certain country, is very complex because there are countries that have a history of a high level of gender equality in certain areas of life but not in other areas.[iv][v] Indeed, there is a need for caution when categorizing countries by the level of gender equality that they have achieved.[14] According to Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon "gender policy is not one issue but many" and:[15] When Costa Rica has a better maternity leave than the United States, and Latin American countries are quicker to adopt policies addressing violence against women than the Nordic countries, one at least ought to consider the possibility that fresh ways of grouping states would further the study of gender politics. Not all beliefs relating to gender equality have been popularly adopted. For example, topfreedom, the right to be bare breasted in public, frequently applies only to males and has remained a marginal issue. Breastfeeding in public is now more commonly tolerated, especially in semiprivate places such as restaurants.[16] United Nations Main article: Special measures for gender equality in the United Nations It is the vision that men and women should be treated equally in social, economic and all other aspects of society, and to not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender.[vi] Gender equality is one of the objectives of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[17] World bodies have defined gender equality in terms of human rights, especially women's rights, and economic development.[18][19] The United Nation's Millennium Development Goals Report states that their goal is to "achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women".Despite economic struggles in developing countries, the United Nations is still trying to promote gender equality, as well as help create a sustainable living environment in all its nations.Their goals also include giving women who work certain full-time jobs equal pay to the men with the same job. Gender biases There has been criticism from some feminists towards the political discourse and policies employed in order to achieve the above items of "progress" in gender equality, with critics arguing that these gender equality strategies are superficial, in that they do not seek to challenge social structures of male domination, and only aim at improving the situation of women within the societal framework of subordination of women to men,[20] and that official public policies (such as state policies or international bodies policies) are questionable, as they are applied in a patriarchal context, and are directly or indirectly controlled by agents of a system which is for the most part male.[21] One of the criticisms of the gender equality policies, in particular, those of the European Union, is that they disproportionately focus on policies integrating women in public life, but do not seek to genuinely address the deep private sphere oppression.[22] There is controversy with regard to ideologies according to which Western culture and Western feminism should be considered the international standard to be followed by the developing world.[23] A further criticism is that a focus on the situation of women in non-Western countries, while often ignoring the issues that exist in the West, is a form of imperialism and of reinforcing Western moral superiority; and a way of "othering" of domestic violence, by presenting it as something specific to outsiders - the "violent others" - and not to the allegedly progressive Western cultures.[24] These critics point out that women in Western countries often face similar problems, such as domestic violence and rape, as in other parts of the world.[25] They also cite the fact that women faced de jure legal discrimination until just a few decades ago; for instance, in some Western countries such as Switzerland, Greece, Spain, and France, women obtained equal rights in family law in the 1980s.[vii][viii][ix][x] Another criticism is that there is a selective public discourse with regard to different types of oppression of women, with some forms of violence such as honor killings (most common in certain geographic regions such as parts of Asia and North Africa) being frequently the object of public debate, while other forms of violence, such as the lenient punishment for crimes of passion across Latin America, do not receive the same

attention in the West.[27][xi] It is also argued that the criticism of particular laws of many developing countries ignores the influence of colonialism on those legal systems.[xii] There has been controversy surrounding the concepts of Westernization and Europeanisation, due to their reminder of past colonialism,[28] and also due to the fact that some Western countries, such as Switzerland, have been themselves very slow to give women legal rights.[29][30] There have also been objections to the way Western media presents women from various cultures creating stereotypes, such as that of 'submissive' Asian or Eastern European women, a stereotype closely connected to the mail order brides industry.[31] Such stereotypes are often blatantly untrue: for instance women in many Eastern European countries occupy a high professional status.[32][33] Feminists in many developing countries have been strongly opposed to the idea that women in those countries need to be 'saved' by the West.[34] There are questions on how exactly should gender equality be measured, and whether the West is indeed "best" at it: a study in 2010 found that among the top 20 countries on female graduates in the science fields at university level most countries were countries that were considered internationally to score very low on the position of women's rights, with the top 3 being Iran, Saudi Arabia and Oman, and only 5 European countries made it to that top: Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Georgia and Greece.[35] Controversy regarding Western cultural influence in the world is not new; in the late 1940s, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was being drafted, the American Anthropological Association warned that the document would be defining universal rights from a Western perspective which could be detrimental to non-Western countries, and further argued that the West's history of colonialism and forceful interference with other societies made them a problematic moral representative for universal global standards.[36] There has been criticism that international law, international courts, and universal gender neutral concepts of human rights are at best silent on many of the issues important to women and at worst male centered; considering the male person to be the default.[37] Excessive gender neutrality can worsen the situation of women, because the law assumes women are in the same position as men, ignoring the biological fact that in the process of reproduction and pregnancy there is no 'equality', and that apart from physical differences there are socially constructed limitations which assign a socially and culturally inferior position to women - a situation which requires a specific approach to women's rights, not merely a gender neutral one.[38] In a 1975 interview, Simone de Beauvoir talked about the negative reactions towards women's rights from the left that was supposed to be progressive and support social change, and also expressed skepticism about mainstream international organizations.[39] Efforts to fight inequality See also: Gender inequality In 2010, the European Union opened the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in Vilnius, Lithuania to promote gender equality and to fight sex discrimination. In 2015 the EU published the Gender Action Plan 2016–2020.[40] Gender equality is part of the national curriculum in Great Britain and many other European countries. By presidential decree, the Republic of Kazakhstan created a Strategy for Gender Equality 2006–2016 to chart the subsequent decade of gender equality efforts.[41] Personal, Social and Health Education, religious studies and Language acquisition curricula tend to address gender equality issues as a very serious topic for discussion and analysis of its effect in society. A large and growing body of research has shown how gender inequality undermines health and development. To overcome gender inequality the United Nations Population Fund states that, "Women's empowerment and gender equality requires strategic interventions at all levels of programming and policy-making. These levels include reproductive health, economic empowerment, educational empowerment and political empowerment." [42] UNFPA says that "research has also demonstrated how working with men and boys as well as women and girls to promote gender equality contributes to achieving health and development outcomes." [42] Health and safety The effect of gender inequality on health Social constructs of gender (that is, cultural ideals of socially acceptable masculinity and femininity) often have a negative effect on health. The World Health Organization cites the example of women not being allowed to travel alone outside the home (to go to the hospital), and women being prevented by cultural norms to ask their husbands to use a condom, in cultures which simultaneously encourage male promiscuity, as social norms that harm women's health. Teenage boys suffering accidents due to social expectations of impressing their peers through risk taking, and men dying at much higher rate from lung cancer due to smoking, in cultures which link smoking to masculinity, are cited by the WHO as examples of

gender norms negatively affecting men's health.[43] The World Health Organization has also stated that there is a strong connection between gender socialization and transmission and lack of adequate management of HIV/AIDS.[44] Map of countries and territories by fertility rate as of 2018 Certain cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), negatively affect women's health.[45] Female genital mutilation is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia. It is rooted in inequality between the sexes, and constitutes a form of discrimination against women.[45] The practice is found in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and among immigrant communities from countries in which FGM is common. UNICEF estimated in 2016 that 200 million women have undergone the procedure.[46] According to the World Health Organization, gender equality can improve men's health. The study shows that traditional notions of masculinity have a big impact on men's health. Among European men, non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory illnesses, and diabetes, account for the vast majority of deaths of men aged 30–59 in Europe which are often linked to unhealthy diets, stress, substance abuse, and other habits, which the report connects to behaviors often stereotypically seen as masculine behaviors like heavy drinking and smoking. Traditional gender stereotypes that keep men in the role of breadwinner and systematic discrimination preventing women from equally contributing to their households and participating in the workforce can put additional stress on men, increasing their risk of health issues and men bolstered by cultural norms, tend to take more risks and engage in interpersonal violence more often than women, which could result in fatal injuries.[47][48][49][50]

Violence against women Violence against women is a technical term used to collectively refer to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women.[xiii] This type of violence is gender-based, meaning that the acts of violence are committed against women expressly because they are women, or as a result of patriarchal gender constructs.[xiv] Violence and mistreatment of women in marriage has come to international attention during the past decades. This includes both violence committed inside marriage (domestic violence) as well as violence related to marriage customs and traditions (such as dowry, bride price, forced marriage and child marriage). According to some theories, violence against women is often caused by the acceptance of violence by various cultural groups as a means of conflict resolution within intimate relationships. Studies on Intimate partner violence victimization among ethnic minorities in the United States have consistently revealed that immigrants are a high-risk group for intimate violence.[51][52] In countries where gang murders, armed kidnappings, civil unrest, and other similar acts are rare, the vast majority of murdered women are killed by partners/ex-partners.[xv] By contrast, in countries with a high level of organized criminal activity and gang violence, murders of women are more likely to occur in a public sphere, often in a general climate of indifference and impunity.[53] In addition, many countries do not have adequate comprehensive data collection on such murders, aggravating the problem.[53] In some parts of the world, various forms of violence against women are tolerated and accepted as parts of everyday life.[xvi] In most countries, it is only in more recent decades that domestic violence against women has received significant legal attention. The Istanbul Convention acknowledges the long tradition of European countries of ignoring this form of violence.[xvii][xviii] In some cultures, acts of violence against women are seen as crimes against the male 'owners' of the woman, such as husband, father or male relatives, rather the woman herself. This leads to practices where men inflict violence upon women in order to get revenge on male members of the women's family.[54] Such practices include payback rape, a form of rape specific to certain cultures, particularly the Pacific Islands, which consists of the rape of a female, usually by a group of several males, as revenge for acts committed by members of her family, such as her father or brothers, with the rape being meant to humiliate the father or brothers, as punishment for their prior behavior towards the perpetrators.[55] Richard A. Posner writes that "Traditionally, rape was the offense of depriving a father or husband of a valuable asset — his wife's chastity or his daughter's virginity".[56] Historically, rape was seen in many cultures (and is still seen today in some societies) as a crime against the honor of the family, rather than against the self-determination of the woman. As a result, victims of rape may face violence, in extreme cases even honor killings, at the hands of their family members.[57][58] Catharine MacKinnon argues that in male dominated societies, sexual intercourse is imposed on women in a coercive and unequal way, creating a continuum of victimization, where women have

few positive sexual experiences.[xix] Socialization within rigid gender constructs often creates an environment where sexual violence is common.[xx] One of the challenges of dealing with sexual violence is that in many societies women are perceived as being readily available for sex, and men are seen as entitled to their bodies, until and unless women object.[59][60][xxi] Violence against trans women In 2009, United States data showed that transgender people are likely to experience a broad range of violence in the entirety of their lifetime. Violence against trans women in Puerto Rico started to make headlines after being treated as "An Invisible Problem" decades before. It was reported at the 58th Convention of the Puerto Rican Association that many transgender women face institutional, emotional, and structural obstacles. Most trans women don't have access to health care for STD prevention and are not educated on violence prevention, mental health, and social services that could benefit them.[61] Trans women in the United States have encountered the subject of anti-trans stigma, which includes criminalization, dehumanization, and violence against those who identify as transgender. From a societal stand point, a trans person can be victim to the stigma due to lack of family support, issues with health care and social services, police brutality, discrimination in the work place, cultural marginalisation, poverty, sexual assault, assault, bullying, and mental trauma. The Human Rights Campaign tracked over 128 cases[clarification needed] that ended in fatality against transgender people in the US from 2013–2018, of which eighty percent included a trans woman of color. In the US, high rates of Intimate Partner violence impact trans women differently because they are facing discrimination from police and health providers, and alienation from family. In 2018, it was reported that 77 percent of transgender people who were linked to sex work and 72 percent of transgender people who were homeless, were victims of intimate partner violence.[62]

Reproductive and sexual health and rights In 2010, Sierra Leone launched free healthcare for pregnant and breastfeeding women A wall along a residential lane in Guangzhou, China with family planning posters stressing the importance of balanced sex-ratios, in order to prevent sex-selective abortion The importance of women having the right and possibility to have control over their body, reproduction decisions, and sexuality, and the need for gender equality in order to achieve these goals are recognized as crucial by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the UN International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action. The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that promotion of gender equality is crucial in the fight against HIV/AIDS.[44] Maternal mortality is a major problem in many parts of the world. UNFPA states that countries have an obligation to protect women's right to health, but many countries do not do that. [64] Maternal mortality is considered today not just an issue of development but also an issue of human rights.[xxii] The right to reproductive and sexual autonomy is denied to women in many parts of the world, through practices such as forced sterilization, forced/coerced sexual partnering (e.g. forced marriage, child marriage), criminalization of consensual sexual acts (such as sex outside marriage), lack of criminalization of marital rape, violence in regard to the choice of partner (honor killings as punishment for 'inappropriate' relations).[xxiii] The sexual health of women is often poor in societies where a woman's right to control her sexuality is not recognized.[xxiv] Adolescent girls have the highest risk of sexual coercion, sexual ill health, and negative reproductive outcomes. The risks they face are higher than those of boys and men; this increased risk is partly due to gender inequity (different socialization of boys and girls, gender based violence, child marriage) and partly due to biological factors.[xxv] Family planning and abortion Family planning is the practice of freely deciding the number of children one has and the intervals between their births, particularly by means of contraception or voluntary sterilization. Abortion is the induced termination of pregnancy. Abortion laws vary significantly by country. The availability of contraception, sterilization and abortion is dependent on laws, as well as social, cultural and religious norms. Some countries have liberal laws regarding these issues, but in practice it is very difficult to access such services due to doctors, pharmacists and other social and medical workers being conscientious objectors.[65][66] Family planning is particularly important from a women's rights perspective, as having very many pregnancies, especially in areas where malnutrition is present, can seriously endanger women's health. UNFA writes that "Family planning is central to gender equality and women's empowerment, and it is a key factor in reducing poverty".[67] Family planning is often opposed by governments who have strong natalist policies. During the 20th century, such examples have included the aggressive

natalist policies from communist Romania and communist Albania. State mandated forced marriage was also practiced by some authoritarian governments as a way to meet population targets: the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia systematically forced people into marriages, in order to increase the population and continue the revolution.[68] By contrast, the one child policy of China (1979–2015) included punishments for families with more than one child and forced abortions. Some governments have sought to prevent certain ethnic or social groups from reproduction. Such policies were carried out against ethnic minorities in Europe and North America in the 20th century, and more recently in Latin America against the Indigenous population in the 1990s; in Peru, President Alberto Fujimori (in office from 1990 to 2000) has been accused of genocide and crimes against humanity as a result of a sterilization program put in place by his administration targeting indigenous people (mainly the Quechuas and the Aymaras).[69] Investigation and prosecution of crimes against women and girls Human rights organizations have expressed concern about the legal impunity of perpetrators of crimes against women, with such crimes being often ignored by authorities.[70] This is especially the case with murders of women in Latin America.[71][72][73] In particular, there is impunity in regard to domestic violence.[xxvi] Women are often, in law or in practice, unable to access legal institutions. UN Women has said that: "Too often, justice institutions, including the police and the courts, deny women justice".[74] Often, women are denied legal recourse because the state institutions themselves are structured and operate in ways incompatible with genuine justice for women who experience violence.[xxvii] Harmful traditional practices "Harmful traditional practices" refer to forms of violence which are committed in certain communities often enough to become cultural practice, and accepted for that reason. Young women are the main victims of such acts, although men can be affected.[76] They occur in an environment where women and girls have unequal rights and opportunities.[77] These practices include, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:[77] female genital mutilation (FGM); forced feeding of women; early marriage; the various taboos or practices which prevent women from controlling their own fertility; nutritional taboos and traditional birth practices; son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; and dowry price Son preference refers to a cultural preference for sons over daughters, and manifests itself through practices such as sex selective abortion; female infanticide; or abandonment, neglect or abuse of girl-children.[77] Abuses regarding nutrition are taboos in regard to certain foods, which result in poor nutrition of women, and may endanger their health, especially if pregnant.[77] The caste system in India which leads to untouchability (the practice of ostracizing a group by segregating them from the mainstream society) often interacts with gender discrimination, leading to a double discrimination faced by Dalit women. [78] In a 2014 survey, 27% of Indians admitted to practicing untouchability. [79] Traditional customs regarding birth sometimes endanger the mothers. Births in parts of Africa are often attended by traditional birth attendants (TBAs), who sometimes perform rituals that are dangerous to the health of the mother. In many societies, a difficult labour is believed to be a divine punishment for marital infidelity, and such women face abuse and are pressured to "confess" to the infidelity.[77] Tribal traditions can be harmful to males; for instance, the Satere-Mawe tribe use bullet ants as an initiation rite. Men must wear gloves with hundreds of bullet ants woven in for ten minutes: the ants' stings cause severe pain and paralysis. This experience must be completed twenty times for boys to be considered "warriors".[80] Other harmful traditional practices include marriage by abduction, ritualized sexual slavery (Devadasi, Trokosi), breast ironing and widow inheritance. [81][82][83][84] Female genital mutilation UNFPA and UNICEF regard the practice of female genital mutilation as "a manifestation of deeply entrenched gender inequality. It persists for many reasons. In some societies, for example, it is considered a rite of passage. In others, it is seen as a prerequisite for marriage. In some communities – whether Christian, Jewish, Muslim – the practice may even be attributed to religious beliefs." [85] An estimated 125 million women and girls living today have undergone FGM in the 29 countries where data exist. Of these, about half live in Egypt and Ethiopia.[86] It is most commonly carried out on girls between infancy and 15 years old.