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## Divides in Gender

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The concept of gender divide encompasses the persistent inequalities between men and women in social, economic, political, and cultural spheres. Rooted in patriarchal traditions, gender divides have historically restricted women's access to education, employment, leadership, and healthcare. Despite advancements in gender equality movements, modern societies continue to face disparities in pay, representation, and technological access. These inequalities are reinforced by cultural norms, gender-based discrimination, and systemic barriers. The impact of gender divides extends beyond individual disadvantage, influencing global economic productivity and social development. Bridging this divide requires comprehensive strategies involving education, policy reform, and awareness to promote inclusivity and equality across all sectors. The recognition that gender roles are socially constructed underlines the possibility for transformation toward a more equitable society.

## Introduction

The concept of gender divide refers to the social, economic, and cultural inequalities that exist between men and women. As Jensen (2003) explains, this divide is not simply based on biological differences but is deeply rooted in social structures and traditions that assign different roles, responsibilities, and values to each gender. Historically, patriarchal systems have placed men in positions of power and authority, while women have often been confined to domestic and subordinate roles. These unequal patterns have shaped family life, labor divisions, and political participation, reinforcing stereotypes about what men and women "should" do. In modern society, gender divides remain visible in wage disparities, limited female representation in leadership, and persistent gender-based discrimination. Through processes such as gender socialization and cultural conditioning, traditional norms continue to influence perceptions of gender roles. However, the rise of feminist movements and global advocacy for equality has challenged these inequalities, emphasizing that gender divisions are socially constructed and can be transformed. Bridging the gender divide requires social awareness, policy reform, and equitable opportunities for all, ensuring that gender no longer determines one's access to power or privilege.

## Term related to Divides in gender

### 1. Gender Divide

The social, economic, political, and cultural differences that create unequal opportunities for individuals based on their gender.

Example: The gap between men and women in access to education, employment, or political participation.

### 2. Gender Inequality

The unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on their gender.

Example: Wage differences where women earn less than men for the same work.

### 3. Gender Roles

Culturally defined expectations of behavior, attitudes, and responsibilities considered appropriate for men and women.

Example: Women are expected to care for families, while men are expected to be breadwinners.

### 4. Patriarchy

A social system in which men hold primary power and dominate in roles of leadership, moral authority, and control of property.

- Example: Male dominance in politics or family decision-making.

### 5. Feminism

A movement and ideology advocating for the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes.

Example: The feminist movement advocating for women's suffrage or reproductive rights.

### 6. Gender Discrimination

Unfair or unequal treatment of individuals because of their gender.

Example: Denying women promotions due to pregnancy.

### 7. Socialization

The process through which individuals learn and internalize societal norms, values, and roles associated with gender.

Example: Teaching boys to play with cars and girls with dolls.

## Overview of the issue of Divides in gender

The gender divide remains a persistent global issue reflected in unequal access to education, employment, healthcare, and political participation between men and women. Despite progress in gender equality, women continue to earn less and hold fewer leadership positions. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2024), the world has closed only 68.5% of the gender gap, and it will take over 130 years to achieve full parity if current trends continue. Women make up nearly 39% of the global labor force, yet they often face wage disparities and occupational segregation (ILO, 2023). In politics, only 26.5% of parliamentary seats worldwide are occupied by women (UN Women, 2024), highlighting ongoing underrepresentation in decision-making roles. Gender divides are further reinforced by social norms, stereotypes, and patriarchal systems that limit women's access to opportunities and power. These disparities intersect with factors like class, race, and geography, deepening inequality across societies (Jensen, 2003; UNDP, 2023). Overall, addressing the gender divide requires systemic transformation through education, policy reform, and empowerment initiatives aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all genders.

## Impact of divides in gender

The impact of gender divides is profound, influencing economic, social, and personal spheres. Economically, it limits women's participation and leads to income inequality, costing the world trillions in potential GDP. Socially, it restricts access to education, healthcare, and political representation, reinforcing poverty and dependence. Culturally, stereotypes about gender roles sustain discrimination and hinder equality. Technologically, the digital divide excludes many women from digital access and innovation. Overall, gender divides slow sustainable development and weaken global progress (World Economic Forum, 2024; UN Women, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

## Problem faced in divides in gender

### 1. Educational Barriers

In many developing and underdeveloped regions, girls face limited access to quality education due to poverty, early marriage, cultural restrictions, and gender bias. According to UNESCO (2023), over 118 million girls worldwide remain out of school, which restricts their

literacy, job prospects, and independence. Lack of education perpetuates cycles of poverty and dependence, making it harder for women to gain economic and social equality.

## 2. Economic Inequality

Women often experience unequal pay, restricted access to formal employment, and fewer opportunities for advancement compared to men. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2024) found that women earn on average 23% less than men globally. Many women are employed in informal or unpaid labor, limiting their financial independence and reducing national economic productivity.

## 3. Health Disparities

Gender divides also affect access to healthcare. In several regions, women face limited reproductive health services, malnutrition, and maternal mortality risks due to social and economic discrimination. Gender-based violence further harms physical and mental health. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) reports that one in three women globally experience physical or sexual violence, highlighting a severe gender-related health crisis.

## 4. Political Underrepresentation

Women are underrepresented in leadership and political decision-making roles. According to UN Women (2024), women hold only 26% of parliamentary seats worldwide. This lack of representation prevents women from influencing laws and policies that directly affect their lives, such as family welfare, labor rights, and gender-based violence prevention.

## 5. Cultural and Social Discrimination

Traditional norms and patriarchal systems often limit women to domestic roles, discouraging them from pursuing careers or leadership positions. Such discrimination leads to unequal treatment in families, workplaces, and communities, reinforcing stereotypes that men are superior or more capable. This cultural bias slows progress toward equality and social justice.

## 6. Violence and Exploitation

Gender-based violence including domestic abuse, sexual harassment, trafficking, and early marriage is a major global issue. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2023) reports that around 30% of women worldwide have suffered from physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Such violence not only violates human rights but also causes long-term psychological and economic harm.

## 7. Technological Divide

In today's digital era, unequal access to technology worsens gender inequality. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2023) reports that women are 18% less likely than men to use mobile internet. This limits their access to online education, job opportunities, and participation in the digital economy, further marginalizing women in modern development.

## Importance of bridging the divides in gender

The importance of bridging the gender divide lies in promoting equality, justice, and sustainable development. When gender gaps are reduced, societies benefit from inclusive growth, innovation, and social harmony. Equal access to education and employment empowers women, boosts family income, and strengthens national economies. Bridging the divide also ensures fair political representation, leading to more balanced policies and governance. Moreover, it improves health, education, and human rights outcomes, helping to eliminate poverty and discrimination. In essence, gender equality is not only a moral imperative but also a key driver of economic progress and social stability (UN Women, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2024).

## Discrimination against women

Discrimination against women is a central issue in the gender divide, as it restricts women's access to equal rights, resources, and opportunities. It appears in many forms — economic, social, political, and cultural. Women often face unequal pay, limited job opportunities, and exclusion from leadership positions. In education, girls may be denied schooling due to traditional norms or poverty. Socially, women experience gender-based violence, early

marriage, and unequal healthcare access, which hinder their development and autonomy. Politically, underrepresentation in decision-making limits women's voices in shaping laws and policies. Such discrimination reinforces dependency, reduces self-determination, and slows national progress. Ending discrimination against women is essential to achieve true gender equality and inclusive development (UN Women, 2024; UNESCO, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2024).

## Conclusion

Gender divides remain a significant barrier to achieving social justice and sustainable development. The persistence of gender-based inequalities in education, employment, politics, and technology highlights the need for systemic reform and cultural change. Addressing these divides involves empowering women through equal access to resources, dismantling patriarchal norms, and ensuring representation in decision-making roles. Bridging the gender divide not only benefits individuals but also strengthens economies, enhances governance, and fosters social cohesion. Ultimately, achieving gender equality is both a moral responsibility and a prerequisite for inclusive progress. To close the global gender gap, societies must commit to sustained action in education, empowerment, and equal opportunity initiatives.

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