

## “Individual and Society”: A Manual for Secondary School Teachers

*Name of organization:*

Association of History Teachers of Estonia (Eesti Ajaloõpetajate Selts)

# 12

## Gender equality

### Purposes

The student will:

- 1) understand the essence of gender equality;
- 2) understand that equality cannot be absolute;
- 3) have an idea about distinctions in gender equality in different states and cultures;
- 4) know that gender equality is many sided and concerns many aspects of life; and
- 5) understand that real equality depends on particular persons, their views, and religious-cultural environment.

### Keywords

human rights, gender equality, state and private person

### Terms

feminism – movement for equal rights of men and women

feminine – a quality that is incident to women

masculine – a quality that is incident to men

psychology – a science about behaviour and mentality of people and animals

empathy – knowledge of a person by accustoming to his or her inner world

### Necessary knowledge

human rights, legal instruments, commitments and exclusive rights of the state, traditional roles of genders (historical sources), different customs in different regions of the world and influence of religion on them (historical sources), observance/non-observance of human rights in different regions of the world

### Used texts

- 1) The constitution of the Estonian Republic
- 2) Sources

Auxiliary means: broadsheets and markers for teamwork

## Subject guide

Time: 3 lessons

### **First lesson: “What is gender equality? Is it necessary in daily life?”**

The teacher can use the following methods:

- 1) work in pairs;
- 2) teamwork (4 – 5 persons);
- 3) preliminary individual homework; and
- 4) suggesting that students write a disclosure.

By the end of the lesson, students will be prepared as follows:

- 1) the worksheet of concepts on the subject “What spheres of life does gender equality concern?”;
- 2) list the spheres of life, and which of those gender equality concerns; and
- 3) conclusions made on spheres of life, and which of those gender equality concerns are noted in the table.

Example: GENDER EQUALITY:

- by operation of law
- relations in everyday life
- marriage, including property and children
- labour relations: salary, possibility to obtain a desirable work, benefits for women (pregnancy, small children)
- possibilities of self-realisation and self-development
- possibilities to obtain education
- laws and the customs regulating gender equality

Different points of view:

- importance of gender equality: before the law, in everyday life, in terms of equal opportunities etc.;
- gender equality is impossible and there is no need for it in all spheres, it is impossible to regulate everything by laws (dialogue, politeness);
- gender equality is influenced by cultural and religious background, which cannot be eliminated and there is no need for elimination, etc.

Students work with texts (sources). Students search for examples in support of various points of view and for refutation thereof.

### **Second lesson: Teamwork**

Students will become familiar with the point of view/situation stated in article, and their own points of view are presented. For some subjects, it is possible to ask the question: whether it is possible in Estonia and what is set forth hereon in laws of Estonia. It is possible also to have a discussion on subjects and to suggest that students search for additional information in support of their points of view.

Keywords:

- 1) gender roles
- 2) gender behaviour
- 3) laws of Estonia regarding gender equality
- 4) men and women in labour markets of Estonia; the army
- 5) feminism
- 6) customs in Estonia and in other countries around the world
- 7) possibilities of obtaining education

### **Homework**

Students will:

- 1) write an abstract;
- 2) search for additional material; and
- 3) interviewing: in class, at school, in village, in a block of flats.

### **Third lesson: Conclusions**

- 1) Conclusions are drawn by the teacher.
- 2) Each group states its opinion on work materials during lessons.
- 3) The student writes a discourse (as homework if possible).
- 4) Discussion of the subject "Is there gender equality in the Estonian Republic?": list five examples where gender equality exists and five examples where gender equality does not exist. At the end of discussion, draw conclusions as to the subject "Is there gender equality in the Estonian Republic?" If possible, determine what points of view were the most popular in class.

### **Source A**

In Norway, firms are forced to employ women-managers.

Businesspeople in Norway face a choice: either to employ the demanded number of women-managers in their firms or to close their firms, that is, if the government decides to establish gender quota for management of the companies in the kingdom. The draft law on gender quotas provides that no less than 40 percent of women should be in management of each company, the BBC relates.

The requirement of 40 percent is only fulfilled by one-fifth of the 590 firms currently operating in Norway.

### **Idea of predecessors**

According to the minister of children and family affairs in the Stoltenberg's government, Karita Bekkemellem, enterprises do not recommend women fast enough to the top executive posts.

### **Woman in management or end of the firm**

"I do not want to wait another 20 or 30 years for men with enough intelligence to finally appoint women to the boardrooms," declared Bekkemellem. "From January 1 2006, I want to put in place a system of sanctions that will allow the closure of firms."

The closure of a company is a punishment out of all proportion to the offence, the head of Norway's employers' association Sigrun Vaageng considers. "The government can break up a company because it is missing a single woman," noted Vaageng.

Source: Postimees, 15.11.2005

### **Questions**

1. Do you support plans of the government of Norway in the matter of gender equality? Substantiate the answer.
2. Do you consider that measures taken in Norway will help to provide gender equality? Substantiate.

### **Source B**

#### **Anti Einpaul: "About gender roles"**

Much is defined by traditions. The majority of beliefs our visions are based on, our relations, and our guidelines of what is convenient for us and for the opposite sex, are defined by traditions and our beliefs in that has been already considered in our society peculiar to men and women. And though vehement changes have taken place in visions about traditional values in the last several decades, visions of the typical, "preferred" model of family have remained invariable throughout centuries: husband as the head of the family, who goes to business and maintains the family and the wife as the householder and children minder. Such family relations are considered preferable both in the majority of modern and historically known cultures.

Men are attributed traditionally in the society with the role of leader and active figure, the women with a role of the careful and subordinated helpmate. Researchers see historical reasons of formation of traditional gender roles in biological peculiarities of the man and woman: men, due to composition, had always the advantage in physical strength and activity, women, inevitably, most of the time, have taken care of future generations and consequently have been compelled to spend more time at home, having remained outside of the circle of active social communication and taking of important decisions.

There are many psychological distinctions between men and women. Research of various human abilities shows that women find themselves more capable when fulfilling tasks that require verbal abilities, men when fulfilling tasks that require mathematical and visual-spatial abilities. The fact that women will show readiness for rendering assistance is more probable, as they are more subjected to social influences and more group-obedient, while men are more likely to be independent and more aggressive. Gender distinctions exist in ways of overcoming stresses and solving problems in general, in preferences of gender behaviour, in nonverbal behaviour, and in preference of posts and hobbies.

It is easy to continue the list. Display of all these physical and psychological distinctions makes emergence of stereotypes and beliefs widespread in the society unsurprising. They live their own life and, in their turn, lead people to show certain behaviours and preference types, and to positions and roles, which, in turn, are considered recommended, proper, or correct.

#### **Persons and roles of masculine and feminine type**

According to one of meaning of the notion of “gender roles,” there are such social roles in which men and women are met with different frequency. In our society, women more often, than men are connected with spheres of life supposing social dialogue, they mainly work in education and service sectors, thus roles of child-minder, housewife, and saleswoman are typical gender roles. For men, it is more common to be engaged in production and agency business, as well as in management of formal organizations, and typical roles for them are, for example, builder, driver, or director.

On another level, the concept of “gender roles” is used in psychological distinctions of people and their designation. The estimation of qualities incident to men has revealed that such features as self-confidence, independence, bravery, and management of others are more often in men’s character. Such features are named male or masculine, and people possessing such features are carriers of a masculine gender role. Women are more often gentle, sensitive, impressionable, ready to help, and cooperate more often. Thus, these qualities are female or feminine, and gender roles with corresponding qualities are feminine ones.

The names “masculine” and “feminine” in such meaning are conditional and cannot be connected at all with the gender of a person, but are connected more likely with independently shown character features.

Source: <<http://tnk.tartu.ee/0soorollidest.html>>

### **Questions**

- 1) Describe traditional gender roles.
- 2) What is your opinion on traditional gender roles?
- 3) Are there distinctions between men and women, how strong are they, and what do they consist of?
- 4) How much, in your opinion, is absolute equality of men and women possible? Substantiate.
- 5) Why are persons of masculine type considered more successful and tend to be more highly appreciated?
- 6) Analyse yourself: are you related more likely to masculine or to feminine type?

### **Source C**

#### **The court in Norway has sentenced a rapist to prison**

The court in Norway has sentenced the woman, who was on trial for rape of a man, to a nine-month restraint. It is the first case of condemnation of the female rapist in the country. The 31-year-old man, in January last year, had fallen asleep at a party in Bergen and woke up because a 23-year-old woman was engaged with him in oral sex, CNN reported.

According to Norwegian laws, the sexual act with a person in a state of insensibility or unable to oppose to the act by any other reason is considered a rape.

The court has sentenced the defendant on Wednesday to a payment penalty of 40,000 Norwegian kroner (76,000 Estonian kroner) and to a nine-month restraint. On her part, the woman asserted that the man did not sleep and was wide-awake.

Source: <<http://ajaviide.delfi.ee/news/seks/article.php?id=10275343>>  
Postimees, 29.04.2005

### Question

1) Is this case related to the subject of gender equality? Substantiate your answer.

### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

#### Gender equality act

Passed on April 4, 2004

- 1) Direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of gender is prohibited.
- 2) The following are not deemed to be direct or indirect discrimination based on sex:
  - a. provisions concerning the special protection of women in connection with pregnancy and childbirth;
  - b. establishment of compulsory military service only for men;
  - c. acceptance of only women or only men into the membership of a non-profit association if this arises from the articles of association of the association;
  - d. as regards to access to employment including the training leading thereto, a difference of treatment which is based on a characteristic related to sex, where by reason of the nature of the particular occupational activities concerned or of the context in which they are carried out, such characteristic constitutes a genuine and determining occupational requirement, provided that the objective is legitimate and the requirement is proportionate;
  - e. application of special measures which promote gender equality and grant advantages for the less-represented gender or reduce gender inequality.

#### Article 6. Discrimination in professional life

(1) In professional life, cases in which an employer selects for employment or a position, hires or admits to practical training, promotes, selects for training or performance of a task or sends for training a person of one sex and overlooks a person with higher qualifications and of the opposite sex shall be deemed to be discriminating, unless there are strong reasons for the decision of the employer or such decision arises from circumstances not related to gender.

[...]

4) directs work, distributes work assignments or establishes working conditions such that persons of one sex are put at a particular disadvantage compared with persons of the other sex;

5) harasses sexually or fails to perform the obligation provided for in clause 11 (1) 4) of this Act. An employer is responsible for failure to perform the duty of care if the employer is aware or should reasonably be aware that sexual harassment has occurred and fails to apply the necessary measures to terminate such harassment;

6) downgrades the working conditions of an employee or terminates an employment relationship with him or her due to the fact that the employee has made reference to the rights and obligations provided for in this Act;

7) punishes an employee under disciplinary procedure, transfers an employee to another position, terminates an employment relationship or promotes the termination thereof due to reasons connected with gender.

[...]

#### Article 15. Gender Equality Commissioner

(1) The Gender Equality Commissioner (hereinafter Commissioner) is an independent and impartial expert who acts independently, monitors compliance with the requirements of this Act and performs other functions imposed by law.

[...]

(3) The Commissioner shall be appointed to office by the Minister of Social Affairs for five years.

[...]

#### Article 16. Competence of Commissioner

The Commissioner shall:

- 1) monitor compliance with the requirements of this Act;
- 2) accept applications from persons and provide opinions concerning possible cases of discrimination;
- 3) analyse the effect of Acts on the situation of men and women in society;
- 4) make proposals to the Government of the Republic, government agencies, local governments, and their agencies for amendments to legislation;
- 5) advise and inform the Government of the Republic, government agencies and local government agencies on issues relating to the implementation of this Act;
- 6) take measures to promote gender equality.

See opinions concerning gender equality:

EPL Online, U. M. Papp, 15.10.2002

[http://www.epl.ee/artikkel\\_217404](http://www.epl.ee/artikkel_217404)

Trip.ee avaldatud reisiinfo ja juhised turistidele (Trip.ee &I-Systems-1998-2005)

## PAKISTAN

Interdictions and instructions:

To take intoxicants and drugs, to eat pork, and to gamble is prohibited.

The 5 Pillars of Islam:

- Pray five times a day facing Mecca;
- To bear witness to faith at least once in a life-time;
- To give to the poor 2.5 % of income regularly;
- To fast during the month of Ramadan; and
- To make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a life-time.

Actually, interdictions are not observed so strictly (except for pork) - Allah will forgive.

### **Islam and customs**

- Muslims never say “no”; the basic expression is “no problem”;
- hospitality – practically unknown persons invite, the treatment is imperial;
- Muslims do not steal, to bargain and to deceive is admitted;
- to attend mosques, except time of prayers, to sleep; basically, women should have the entire body, from head, covered, men have upper body and feet covered only.
- the only thing that drives the masses – a call “For the sake of Islam.”

### **Islam and women**

- women, as a rule, do not go downtown – only to the market;

- from the age of nine years, all girls should cover their faces; the farther to the West or North, the more the woman's body is covered;
- the Muslim man can have up to four wives provided that he is able to maintain them;
- women can marry from 14 years (in mountains from 12 years); an 18-year-old woman is already considered an old maid;
- until marriage, the girl's father takes all decisions for her; after marriage, the wife becomes the husband's property – she has no right to divorce, she obeys her husband at all times;
- the most common cause of women's death: kitchen accidents;
- the poorer the woman is, the more difficult her life is; rich women enjoy no big difference (women are literate, work, etc.)
- rich women wear European clothes, conduct in a comparatively free way of life.