

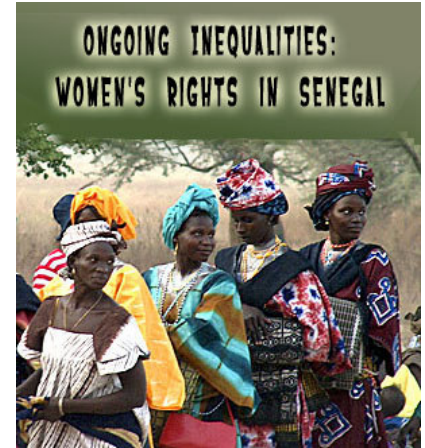
STUDENT'S HANDOUT



Background Information

In Senegal, women are under-represented in decision-making positions at both local and national levels. This phenomenon is above all linked to the socio-cultural context generated by a patriarchal system conferring control of power to men. Some Senegalese organizations, however, allow women to meet and organise, reinforcing their negotiating power in the face of local political and traditional institutions. Furthermore, mobilization campaigns and pressure on political representatives have led to the adoption of laws in favour of improving women's social status and the modification of laws that discriminate against women.

Source: CIDA, Network Siggil Jigéen, Non Governmental Organization (NGO) in Western Africa on Women's Rights and Development (FEDDAF)



Instructions

Write an opinion essay of 250 words on the importance of the existence of organizations like the ones presented below. Base your arguments on the information and comments that are presented.

1972 Adoption of the Family Code
Protection and recognition of women's rights. Articles 108 and 111 formally outlaw early or forced marriage.

1977 Decree #77-894

1982 Law #82-019

Women are allowed to hold the positions of civil aviation officers, police chiefs, police officers and inspectors. The Public Function Statute dictates that there should be no discrimination in the application of this statute. The 1977 decree and the 1982 law specifically protect women.

1999 Law modifying the penal code

Law which prescribes harsher punishment for violence against women. Defines and foresees the repression of new infractions denounced by women, such as incest, rape, sexual harassment, excision [or feminine genital mutilation], pedophilia and domestic violence.

2001 New Constitution

The preamble of the new Constitution stipulates that CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 2002) is an integral part of the New Constitution. The rights to land ownership are guaranteed to women as well as men. The traditional restrictions to access to land by women are forbidden. Women's rights to land (art 15) are thus seen as consecrated. A woman, like her spouse, has the right to her own heritage. She also has the right to personally administer her goods.

The practice of forced marriages persists in certain northern regions of Senegal.

In Senegal, activities traditionally completed by women are poorly valued. Men have access to more cutting-edge sectors such as banking, industries, and export. Women are most likely involved in minor retail trade, small-scale agriculture and the raising of animals.

Although officially forbidden and punishable by jail term, excision or feminine genital mutilation is rooted in traditions at the base of the cultural identity. Its practice remains very controversial and is the source of numerous debates at the heart of Senegalese society. Much work is required to enhance awareness of possible risks and to assist the mobilization of women to resist social pressure.

The Senegalese Constitution forbids all forms of discrimination based on sex and stipulates that all human beings are equal. However, despite laws and charters protecting women's rights, discriminatory behaviours towards women continue to be a reality in Senegal as in the rest of the world.

Although they have a major role in the agricultural sector, Senegalese women still have multiple difficulties owning fertile lands. Even though things are starting to change, rural women - often illiterate, misinformed and under-represented - do not always possess the necessary tools to ensure that their rights are respected.

The Siggil Jigéen Network

This organisation is composed of 18 Senegalese associations, each promoting and defending the rights of women.

Objectives:

- Improve and reinforce the status of Senegalese women.
- Promote and defend women's rights and integrity.
- Defend access and participation of women and young girls in decision-making spheres.
- Contribute to the establishment of egalitarian and fair relations between men and women.

Successes to which the network greatly contributed:

- 1999: Laws condemning violence against women
- 2001: Nomination of the first female minister in Senegal

Source: Siggil Jigéen Network



Wolof

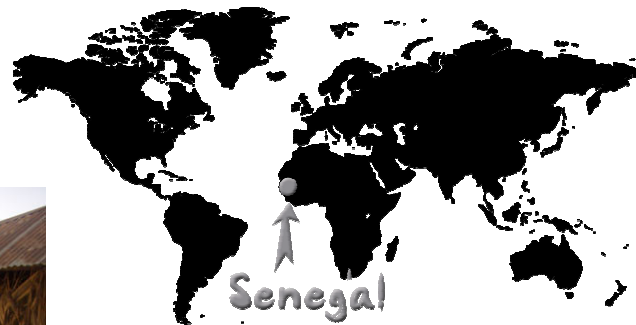
Jigeen

Siggil

English

Woman

*promote, defend,
empower*



AN INITIATIVE OF THE
In-Terre-Actif Network of the Comité de Solidarité/Trois-Rivières



PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
THROUGH THE



Canadian
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