

# The Beijing Declaration

The Beijing Declaration of 1995 is a blueprint for action for the empowerment of women at its core. To date, it remains the most comprehensive global policy framework of gender equality still in place.

This article will give further details about the Beijing declaration within the context of the IAS Exam

## Background of the Beijing Declaration

The Beijing Declaration was made during the Fourth World Conference on Women convened by the United Nations during 4 -1 5 September 1995 in Beijing, China.

It was at this conference that the world agreed on a comprehensive plan to achieve legal equality on a global scale. The plan was known as the Beijing Platform for Action.

The Beijing Platform for Action covers 12 critical areas of concern. They are as follows:

1. Poverty
2. Education and Training
3. Health
4. Violence
5. Armed Conflict
6. Economy
7. Power and decision-making
8. Institutional mechanisms
9. Human rights
10. Media
11. Environment
12. Girl Child

## What was the impact of the Beijing Declaration?

The Beijing declaration led to renewed activism of women's movement on a global scale with an increase in political will and worldwide visibility. Above all, it provided greater clarity on how to achieve equality and empowerment

Since the conference, civil society, governments and the general public have carried out the Platform Action's objectives, bringing about major changes in individual countries. These have ushered in enormous improvements in women's lives. More women and girls than at any previous point in time serve in political offices, are protected by laws against gender-based

violence, and live under constitutions guaranteeing gender equality. Regular five-year reviews of progress on fulfilling Beijing commitments have sustained momentum.

But despite such positive changes, there are still miles to go regarding advancements in the field of gender equality. This became evident when on the 25th anniversary of the Beijing declaration a new report was published to ascertain the progress made.

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## Beijing Declaration +25

Following 25 years of since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, a United Nations report was published in early 2020 which stated that progress towards gender equality is slowly faltering and hard-won rights of women are gradually being reversed.

As per the report, Women currently hold just one-quarter of the seats at the tables of power across the board while men are still 75 per cent of parliamentarians, hold 73 per cent of managerial positions, are 70 per cent of climate negotiators and almost all of the peacemakers.

Thus, it can be safely said that the gender gap is still prevailing at a nominal level after 25 years. The problem is compounded by the Wuhan Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Research shows that pre-existing inequalities are exacerbating and even threatening to reverse the gains made by collective effort. The data from this research shows that the pandemic will push 47 million more girls and women below the poverty line, with an increase in violence against women during the lockdown phase, loss of livelihood at a faster phase because they are exposed to hard-hit economic sectors.

The best solution to mitigate these reverse would be set up national machinery for the advancement of women and promotion of gender equality which requires political commitment at the highest level and all necessary human and financial resources made accessible.

While much works remain in fulfilling the promises of the Beijing Declaration, it continues to be a global framework and a powerful source of mobilization, civil society activism, guidance and inspiration 25 years later.