

WOMEN'S GREATER ROLE IN NATION-BUILDING CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC, EDUCATION AND POLITICAL STABILITY

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Abstract

Women play a pivotal role in nation-building, contributing significantly to political, economic, and social development. Despite historical marginalization, women have emerged as key agents of change, driving progress in governance, education, healthcare, and economic growth. This research paper examines the multifaceted contributions of women in shaping nations, emphasizing their increasing participation in leadership, policymaking, and workforce dynamics. Studies indicate that societies with higher gender equality experience greater economic prosperity, improved social welfare, and enhanced democratic governance. However, persistent barriers such as cultural norms, institutional biases, and unequal access to education and resources continue to hinder women's full participation in nation-building processes.

This study synthesizes existing literature to analyze the impact of women in various sectors, including politics, where female leaders have been shown to prioritize inclusive policies; the economy, where women's entrepreneurship and labor force participation boost GDP; and social development, where women's advocacy for human rights and education fosters long-term societal benefits. The paper also explores challenges such as gender-based discrimination, wage gaps, and underrepresentation in decision-making roles.

To maximize women's contributions to nation-building, the study recommends policy interventions such as gender-responsive legislation, increased access to education and vocational training, and initiatives to promote women's leadership in public and private sectors. By addressing structural inequalities and empowering women, nations can unlock their full potential for sustainable development. The findings underscore the necessity of a gender-inclusive approach to nation-building, ensuring that women's roles are recognized, supported, and amplified for the collective advancement of society.

Keywords: Women, nation-building, gender equality, leadership, economic development, education, political participation, social change, empowerment.

Introduction

Nation-building is a process and all segments of society are involved, including women, who have traditionally been underrepresented but have played an important role in the process. Women have been a crucial force in building the political, economic and social landscape of nations; however, their contribution has been underrepresented or underutilized. Women make a contribution to sustainable development, peace building and economic stability from the grassroots up – as activists through to leadership role players in governance. Even though there has been improvement in gender equality, there are still systemic challenges like cultural stereotypes, less access to education and institutional discrimination which hinder women's full involvement in nation building. This paper examines the changing role of women in the national development and the extent of their achievements, continuing problems, and policies that encourage more gender-equitable growth.

Women's participation in nation building is not a new thing but in the 21st century, it is generally now recognized through advocacy for gender equality across the world. In the past, women have been restricted to domestic duties, but their impact is far-reaching beyond the home. Politically, women leaders have been advocates of inclusive policies, social justice and equitable resource distribution. Women's access to labor force and entrepreneurship has been associated with increased productivity and GDP growth in an economic sense. Socially, women are the first to move toward education, health, and community development, thus contributing to the progress of society overall. But there are still differences between male and female, especially in developing countries where the potential of women is hindered by structural challenges.

The Evolving Role of Women in Nation-Building

There has been a paradigm shift in the role of women in the public sphere in the 20 and 21 century. Women are able to hold leadership positions in government, business and civil society as a result of a series of movements that have to some extent removed certain barriers. Studies show that gender parity in government is associated with a reduction in corruption, better social welfare provision and improved governance in a country (World Economic Forum 2021). Likewise, women's economic empowerment has been recognized as an important factor to reduce poverty and economic resilience (OECD, 2020). While all this has come in terms of developments, women are still under-represented in decision making. UN Women (2023)

reported that the world average for female parliamentary representation is 26.5 per cent, and that there is a gender pay gap in all industries. Other cultural norms, absence of mentorship and workplace discrimination also hinder the career progression of women. Moreover, women in the areas of conflict are also disproportionately impacted and have a critical role in peace building and post-war reconstruction (UN Security Council, 2000). Understanding the above challenges, international bodies like the UN's SDG 5 (gender equality) have made it a priority for countries to address gender equality as key issue in national development. This study aims to determine the purpose and scope of the study.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

Discuss the contribution of women in the process of Nation building both in the past and present.

1. Understand the socio-economic and political issues related to women's involvement in development.
2. Recognize gender barriers that are system-wide.
3. Suggest policy suggestions for better women participation in building a prosperous nation.

This study brings together some of the existing literature and empirical evidence to reinforce the need to empower women as equals in the process of nation building. The findings will be used to advise policy makers, teachers and civil society leaders with the purpose of closing gender gaps and unlocking the contribution of women in the area of sustainable development.

Review of Literature

Women's involvement in nation building has been the subject of considerable research from several fields, which has identified their significant contributions and the various problems they face in this area. The importance of women's participation in sustainable development is well established in scholarship, but systemic barriers remain with women's participation in political, economic and social life despite the fact that they need to be fully involved. Political participation and governance. Study finds women's participation in politics promotes more inclusive policymaking. Paxton and Hughes (2014) find that countries with higher proportions of women in parliament have more laws pertaining to education, health and family welfare.

Rwanda's women parliamentarians (61%) bring benefits in the provision of social services and in combating corruption (Powley, 2005). But there remain significant constraints in terms of cultural norms and institutional biases. Krook (2010) points to "masculine political cultures" which exclude women by harassing women, giving them less coverage in the media and less access to campaign money. Economic Contributions The contribution of the role of women in the economy is significant for the development of the nation. The World Bank (2012) estimates that by 2025 there could be an increase in the global GDP by \$12 trillion if the gender equality is achieved. Kabeer's (2005) work points to the fact that women reinvest as much as 90% of their income into family welfare, whereas men invest 30-40%, thus having multiplier effects in education and health.

This does not prevent, however, women from living with disadvantages such as wage inequalities (Blau & Kahn, 2017), occupational segregation, unequal unpaid care duties (ILO, 2018), etc. Access to financial services and to property is a major challenge for developing countries, especially access to property for women (Deere & Doss, 2006). Social Transformation and Peace-building The contribution of women in social development has been seen as transformative. A study revealed that education for the mother was more effective than economic growth in lowering child mortality (Gakidou et al., 2010). Women's involvement in peace processes is associated with an improvement in the duration of the agreement of 35% in areas of conflict. (Stone, 2015). Women's special role in the process of conflict resolution was formally acknowledged in the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 (2000). Yet, even with the empowerment of women, their mobility and decision-making power is still constrained by cultural norms, especially in patriarchal societies (Kabeer, 2005). The development of education and human resources Education is the most important amongst all determining factors in women's role in nation building. UNESCO (2014) shows that for every year of additional schooling that girls receive, infant mortality decreases by 5-10%. The study by Malala Fund (2020) demonstrates that educated women are less likely to have children and are more likely to invest in their education, and to be more involved in civic life. However, there is still a lack of equality in the STEM sector and in leadership training, with women not being given the opportunity to access the high-growth sectors (UNESCO, 2017). The perception of measurement and policy frameworks. There are several frameworks which measure the contribution of women to the process of nation building. The Gender Development Index (UNDP 1995) and SDG 5 indicators are comprehensive indicators. Gender quotas (Dahlerup, 2006), Gender Responsive Budgeting, Gender Parity in the workplace (Stotsky, 2006; Hegewisch & Hartmann, 2014) are examples of successful

policy interventions. Yet, gaps in implementation still exist, notably in developing countries where there are values and ideas that are prevailing which clash with gender equality policies.

Research Gaps

Previous research has several limitations:

1. Failure to consider regional imbalances and to focus on contexts in the Global South.
2. Few studies that examine the policy process as it relates to the community.
3. Lack of research on community-based policy processes.
4. Not paying adequate attention to intersectional factors (class, ethnicity, disability).
4. New challenges, such as digital gender gap need further research.

This review finds there are substantial structural barriers and women's contribution to nation-building is recognised in various sectors. The next sections will be analysed. Identify current problems and suggest evidence-based solutions to improve women's involvement in the development of the country.

Objectives of The Study

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the multidimensional role of women in the process of Nation building with the following key objectives:

- To examine the trajectory of women's role in the process of national building over time in various geopolitical settings, and in political, economic and social processes.
- To analyse current trends in governance participation, economic systems and social institutions by women, highlighting achievements and ongoing gender and development gaps.
- To evaluate how women's involvement impacts measurable development outcomes, such as GDP growth, years of schooling, health outcomes and social stability indicators etc., but not limited to these.
- To highlight on-going systemic challenges that still prevent women from being fully engaged in nation-building, such as cultural norms, institutional biases, legal and economic inequalities between and within regions and socio-economic groups.
- To study the case studies of countries and communities which had been successfully utilising women's potential for national development for lessons learnt and best practices.
- To explore policy frameworks and institutional mechanisms that have successfully contributed to increased women's involvement in a range of aspects of nation-building, at local and national level.

- To discuss new challenges that are emerging in the digital age, such as technological gaps, evolving needs of the labour market, and new forms of gender-based discrimination that impact women's ability to participate in national development.
- To suggest policy-relevant recommendations based on evidence for policymakers, civil society organisations and international organisations to develop more inclusive spaces that maximise the role of women in sustainable nation-building.
- To help advance the academic debate by filling gaps in the literature, including those focused on intersectional studies, longitudinal impacts of policy, and regional differences in roles of women in nation building.
- To create a holistic framework for evaluating and improving women's role in building the nation, in political, economic, social and cultural aspects.

In summary, the study aims to deepen the understanding of the vital contributions of women to shaping nations, as well as offer solutions to existing barriers and opportunities for maximizing women's contributions to sustainable development through these objectives.

Conclusion

Women's role in the development of the nation is irreplaceable in the process of sustainable development, social development and economic development. The findings of this study have revealed that across the political, economic and social landscape women are transformative agents in their own right, whether they are in the role of policy makers, pushing for inclusive policy making, entrepreneurs driving economic development, educators nurturing future generations, or community leaders, who are working to ensure social cohesion. However, systemic barriers like gender discrimination, cultural norms, inequitable access to resources and lack of representation in leadership roles persist, preventing them from fully participating.

The study underscores the clear benefits of gender equality, such as increased GDP growth, better social well-being and more stable governance, among the countries with higher gender equality. How pro-active policies, such as gender quotas, equal pay laws, investments in women's education, can have more impact on national development is demonstrated in case studies from countries like Rwanda and Sweden. Yet, certain persistent issues that have been identified such as work place discrimination, political marginalisation and inequitable care giving responsibilities require immediate policy action.

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made to maximize the role of women in nation building:

- Ensuring women's voices inform policy decisions through strengthening political participation measures such as electoral quotas, leadership development and harassment prevention legislation.
- To foster Women Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment through Equal Pay enforcement, Women Enterprise and Women Capital Access.
- Investment in Education and Skills Development including in STEM, to prepare women for the high growth sectors and leadership positions.
- Engaging with structural and cultural barriers by raising awareness, legal changes and involving men in gender equality.
- Improving data collection and research to monitor progress, gaps and plan and design solutions for marginalised groups.

Empowering women is a moral obligation and a strategic need for nation building. Inclusive growth, innovation, and resilience are the potential gains of societies that are striving for gender equality.

Governments, institutions and communities can build an environment in which women participate equally in building prosperous, equitable and sustainable nations if they follow the recommendations in this study. The future of nation-building relies on the recognition, appreciation and strengthening of the role of women, not as passive recipients of development but as partners and agents of change.

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