



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

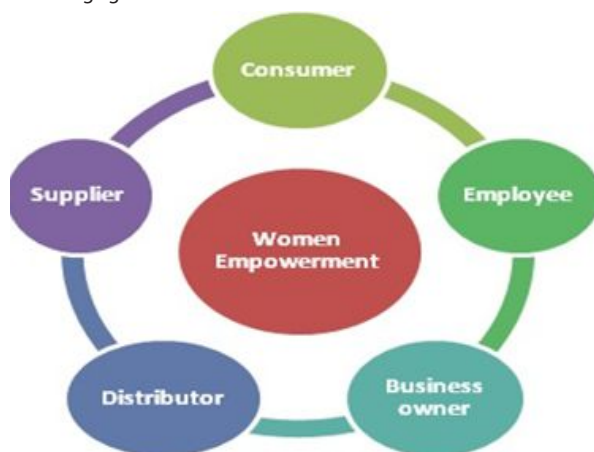
Women's empowerment means women gaining more power and control over their own lives. This entails the idea of women's continued disadvantage compared to men which is apparent in different economic, socio-cultural and political spheres. Therefore, women's empowerment can also be seen as an important process in reaching gender equality, which is understood to mean that the 'rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female'. This paper reveals that Educating and investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and economic growth. But economically strengthening women is not only a means by which to spur and sustain inclusive industrial development. It is also a matter of advancing women's human rights.

KEYWORDS : Women empowerment, gender equality, strategic objectives, productive activities, economic development.

INTRODUCTION:

The issue of women's empowerment and gender equality is at the top of agendas across the world, as gender inequality is widespread in all cultures. In developing countries, gender disparity is highly rampant compared to the developed countries. For example most importantly, in Ethiopia, gender-based discrimination and inequalities are very much apparent, although the government is working aggressively towards alleviating such problems. As a result, low empowerment of women and high gender gap still impede the development process of the country. Even though the country is on the path of development in various respects, the likelihood of its sustainability is in question, given such a large gender disparity. Hence, this study reveals the need to empower women and achieve gender equality for the sustainable development of the country.

THE CONCEPT OF EMPOWERMENT: Empowerment can be defined as a 'multi dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power i.e., the capacity to implement in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. Women empowerment involved with the following figure.



MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This is a theoretical research paper, where secondary information produced by different authors and researchers has been used. For obtaining necessary information, various books, journals as well as websites have been explored by the researcher which has been mentioned in the reference section.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote economic empowerment to enable rural & urban women and men to have equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, profitable economic activities. To engage in

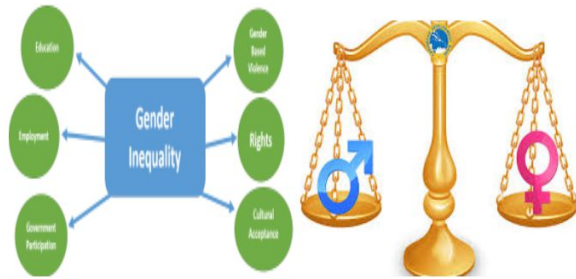
productive activities effectively and efficiently, women and men require; access to and control over assets – inputs, technologies and finance. More secure land tenure rights within both statutory and customary systems. And stronger links to profitable markets. They also need access to economic services, such as extension, training and business development and the opportunity to participate in decent work. Most importantly, to maintain their interest and motivation in participating in economic activities, they need to have access to and control over the benefits arising from their Endeavour's, in particular, income and equitable remuneration for work performed.

2. Enable women and men to have equal voice and influence in rural institutions and organizations. For rural development outcomes to be effective and sustainable, rural women need to have greater voice and influence over the decisions that affect their lives. Women and men often have different roles in the economy and in society, and consequently their priorities, needs and interests may differ. Women's voices need to be heard for policies to be appropriate, and strong women's representation is necessary to that end. Women's groups and rural and urban producer organizations need to be supported to allow networking for experience-sharing and advocacy. Women's contributions to decision-making at household and community levels need to be valued alongside men's.
3. Achieve a more equitable balance in workloads and in the sharing of economic and social benefits between women and men. To reduce the drudgery and daily workload of rural living especially among women with their double role of domestic and productive work. rural populations need improved access to basic infrastructure and services, such as water supply, energy, roads and transport. Rural and urban people improve their well-being and gain the opportunity to engage in economic activities. It is also important to strive for greater gender equity in the distribution of work among household members and in the share of related economic and social benefits.

BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

1. When more women work, economies grow, If women's paid employment rates were raised to the same level as men's, the USA gross domestic product would be approximately 9 % higher, the Euro zone's would climb by 13 %, and Japan's would be boosted by 16 %. In 15 major developing economies, per capita income would rise by 14 % by 2020, and by 20 % by 2030.
2. Evidence from a range of countries shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, changes spending in ways that benefit children.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:



Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. The importance of gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly women's economic empowerment, is at the core of UNIDO's mandate. Enhancing the role of women as drivers of poverty reduction, promoting female investors and entrepreneurs, and recognizing the link between gender equality and safeguarding the environment all promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and directly contribute to SDG 9 (sustainable development goal) on industry, innovation and infrastructure, and to SDG 5 on gender equality.

While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals, including equal access to primary education between girls and boys. Women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

GENDER EQUALITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT- ICT:

The information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play in improving gender equality, so as to enhance long-term economic growth. Education among the general population is important for improving gender equality. The results provide evidence indicating that gender equality in education is an important contributor to gender equality in employment. Lastly, the results show that economic development tends to lead to some improvements in gender equality in the labor market. Hence, the use of ICTs to improve gender equality in education and employment may initiate a continuous cycle of positive reinforcing feedback effects between gender equality in employment and economic development, leading to further improvements in both.

REVIEW ON GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

- About two thirds of countries in the developing regions have achieved gender parity in primary education. In Southern Asia, only 74 girls were enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys in 1990. By 2012, the enrolment ratios were the same for girls as for boys.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania and Western Asia, girls still face barriers to entering both primary and secondary school.
- Women in Northern Africa hold less than one in five paid jobs in the non-agricultural sector. The proportion of women in paid employment outside the agriculture sector has increased from 35 per cent in 1990 to 41 per cent in 2015
- In 46 countries, women now hold more than 30 per cent of seats in national parliament in at least one chamber.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN:

Discriminatory laws or provisions should be repealed and legal and policy reforms continued to ensure full compliance with States international obligations, in particular those under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Steps should be taken to ensure that provisions of multiple legal systems comply with international human rights standards, including the principle of non-discrimination.

Greater efforts are needed to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of non-discriminatory legal frameworks by public officials and other agents of the State and to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise. Efforts to strengthen the capacity of State and non-State actors to comply with such laws must be sustained. Measures to guarantee access to justice must be enhanced. Effective, affordable and accessible means of recourse and redress for violations of women's rights must be made available to all women, including through gender responsive courts, tribunals. Steps are needed to strengthen women's knowledge of their rights and legal literacy, as well as measures to empower women to effectively claim their rights, and targeted measures are necessary for women affected by multiple grounds of discrimination. Men and boys should be actively involved in legal literacy programmes focusing on human rights and women's rights. Greater use must be made of temporary special measures as a necessary element in strategies to accelerate the practical realization of the principle of equality of women and men.

CONCLUSION:

Analysis of the findings in this exploratory concept shows that female household heads did not differ significantly in terms of expressing agency in terms of management and control over assets compared to married women who were primary and joint decision makers. However it is interesting to note that these women interpreted the perception of empowerment and being able to exercise control and actively participating in the management of assets differently. Most of the female heads and joint decision makers in male headed households positively evaluated the change resulting from being part of the program me. On the other hand, most of the primary decision makers expressed reluctant agency in terms of management of the asset and being responsible for both major and minor household decisions. The quality of relationship though important in determining women's choice in exercising agency, is not as important as social security or the social norms governing village life that plays the main role in deciding women's position in the household. This analysis suggests that within world the gender poverty gap is larger in countries, especially in eastern countries which are currently undergoing fast-paced, foreign capital –led economic growth, and where, perhaps most important and closely related to this, welfare spending is lower and especially spending on pensions and family policies is meager

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