

Chapter 12

The Role of National Women Policy to Encourage Women to Participate in Economic Development in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The involvement and contribution of women in the development of the country is undeniable. Women are beginning to take steps to overcome challenges to ensure that their presence and talents are recognized. The purpose of this study was to analyse the roles of National Women Policy to encourage women participation and involvement in economic development in Malaysia. The method used in this study was documentary research by secondary sources and was presented by descriptive analysis. The government's determination to encourage women's participation in economic development in a more effective, systematic, and meaningful manner can be seen through several efforts. Many opportunities and assistance have been provided by the government either in the form of finance or skills upgrading courses. At the same time, some strategies have been developed to ensure that the gender, family, and community perspectives are integrated in policy formulation. Through this policy, the role of women in economic development has shown huge impact and is expected to increase the country's GDP.

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INTRODUCTION

Women are now more prevalent in the economy than ever before. One of the main objectives of human rights and development is to increase the empowerment of women (Gates, 2014). As a result of this excellent development for the nation's economy, the government is offering a variety of support and aid. Increasing the resources and abilities of underprivileged people to engage with, negotiate with, direct, and hold responsible institutions that have an impact on their lives is referred to as empowerment (Narayan 2002). According to Moser (1989), empowerment is the capacity of a woman to increase her level of independence and inner tenacity. People can become completely conscious of their capacities as well as of their identity, strength, and potential and skills regarding their rights and opportunities for growth in all facets of life through the multifaceted process of empowerment. Agency (the capacity to create and carry out goals), awareness of gendered power dynamics, and self-assurance have been recognised as the essential elements of empowerment (Kabeer, 1999).

Women's empowerment is a difficult issue for developing nations where gender disparities still exist and where women are restricted to their homes, in charge of all domestic duties, and prohibited from taking part in the national economy. Women still generally do not have full equality of basic rights in terms of control and ownership of resources, nor do they have access to the same privileges and benefits as men, despite significant development in the area of women's empowerment. The distribution of domestic labour between men and women is still unequal, women still have less social mobility, and most crucially, access, control, and ownership of resources are still restricted. According to scholars like Scott, Plagnol & Nolan (2010) and Ridgeway (2011), gender inequality refers to the disparity between men and women in terms of rights, opportunities, position, authority, responsibility, access, control, and ownership of resources. The culture of a society and the degree to which the patriarchal system is upheld in that society have an impact on all of those factors.

According to Siba (2019), women make up 50% of the population in the majority of countries, and 50% of them are potentially employable. The number of women in Malaysia increased from 14.4 million in 2013 to 15.9 million in 2020. (National Statistics Department, 2020). They play an important part in the growth of the country and the nation. They are significant economic resources in addition to having a big impact on how the next generation is formed. In manufacturing and agriculture, particularly in the textile and electronics industries, there has been a substantial growth in the employment of women. In the community, politics, social life, private sector, and public sector, women also actively participate.

Women's contributions to the nation's progress have long been acknowledged. As a result, the government constantly promotes citizens' involvement in the nation's

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