

Chapter 7

Empowering Her Voice: Women in Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

The chapter explores women's increasing involvement in decision-making across various domains. It highlights persistent obstacles like institutional weaknesses and cultural norms hindering women's advancement. Gender diversity in decision-making is shown to enhance organizational performance and innovation. The importance of tearing down institutional barriers and implementing policies to support women in leadership roles is emphasized. Success stories and initiatives promoting inclusivity are discussed, alongside the transformative power of diverse perspectives in decision-making. Organizational policies, education, and mentoring are identified as key factors in advancing women's roles. It stresses the need for ongoing activism, policy changes, and cultural shifts to secure fairer distribution of leadership roles. It concludes by emphasizing the necessity of women's participation in decision-making for inclusive and efficient governance, advocating for the recognition and support of women's involvement to improve societal outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The roles that women play in leadership have drastically changed over time. Women have always been capable of taking on leadership roles and have always wanted to do so, but they have been unable to do so because of social, political, and economic constraints. According to recent data, the conventional gender differences in competitiveness have significantly narrowed (Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005).

Women possess various traits, yet their abilities and qualities are not fully acknowledged. As a result, we observe that the proportion of female policymakers and leaders is rather low, and in certain countries, very minimal. Every woman has unique qualities and untapped potential. Women will eventually find themselves in leadership roles; sometimes by choice, but more often due to external factors. Women

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have always gone above and beyond the call of duty to succeed since, as we all know, most of the world still operates under a patriarchal paradigm. Male dominance is the norm in most situations. Whatever the case, if a woman wishes to achieve, she must always work extra hard in every environment. This is particularly true when male colleagues' standards are being used to judge achievement. In addition, women are occasionally disadvantaged by the socialization process that taught them to be subordinate to their husbands or other males. In most countries, gender construction confines women to the home. It embeds itself in a woman's consciousness, the focus on women's nurturing roles. It is crucial to alter one's mindset first and foremost. The onus of making these adjustments is on the person. One needs to think that it is their right to participate in the decision-making process in order to actively engage in policymaking. Because of their accomplishments or social standing, people cannot afford to remain complacent (Ramli, 2006).

One of the main objectives of democratic and participatory movements, as well as women's organizations worldwide, is the empowering of women through their increased engagement in all spheres of political, social, and economic life. This chapter explores the crucial relationship between women's empowerment, growing involvement, and decision-making. It also looks at the social, legal, and economic barriers that women encounter globally. It gives strong illustrations of how women have responded to those difficulties. This chapter aims to encourage women's engagement, whether at the local, state, or federal levels, in addition to providing an awareness of what empowerment and participation are and can be (Karl, 1995).

Slightly over half of the world's population is female. Because they play two roles in the reproductive and producing domains, women also contribute more than half as much to the social and economic development of civilizations as do males. However, their involvement in formal political institutions and procedures, where choices about the allocation of societal resources produced by men and women are made, is still minimal. It is believed that the solution to addressing gender inequality in societies lies in women's increased engagement in governing structures (Bari, 2005).

Women must play a variety of roles in order to contribute to the economy because they are an essential element of our society. Only when women participate in the development process on an equal footing with men can a nation thrive and develop harmoniously. However, women's socioeconomic standing is quite low in the majority of undeveloped nations. It compares the decision-making processes of working and non-working women in households. It is evident that a woman's ability to make judgments is influenced by the environment in which she lives. It has been noted that the decisions made by educated and employed women carry more weight than those made by uneducated and unemployed women. Urban and working women, however, are more aware of their rights than rural and uneducated women. According to earlier research, the majority of women lack access to decision-making, economic, and educational opportunities. Women's decision-making is perhaps as low as each sector's roles and responsibilities, but men's decision-making is comparatively higher. Additionally, we learn that electronic media is also a major factor in women's empowerment because it informs women about global issues, boosting their self-esteem and inspiring them to take an active role in domestic chores (Agnihotri, 2021).

Embracing Women's Voices

Embracing women's voices starts with valuing their distinct viewpoints, backgrounds, and skills. Different perspectives enhance conversations and result in more comprehensive solutions when women are actively involved in decision-making, whether it be in the political, economic, or social spheres.

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