Overviews of Women's Engagement in the Advancement of Social Development

Dr. M. Krishnamoorthi[1],Dr.Abdulraheem[2]

[1] Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, PG & Research Department of Economics, V.O. Chidambaram College, Tutocorin-628008

[2] Associate Professor and Research Supervisor, Department of Economics, The New College (Autonomous), Chennai-600014

promagesan99@gmail.com , abdulraheem1967@gmail.com

Abstract

Women now have more chances than ever to participate in a variety of public roles at all levels because to the growing tide of democratization. Women are organizing for change in both their private and public lives as members of organizations and political parties. The world is changed when women are included in development processes at all levels—thinking, planning, and implementation. However, in order to advance women's status, significant adjustments must be made to the socialization process that perpetuates gender relations as well as the thought and practice systems that have persisted for more than a century. Such adjustments require time. But it has become abundantly evident in recent decades that women are a huge social resource that no society can afford to underuse or undervalue. Women are asking to be regarded as partners and will no longer tolerate being used as the workhorses for development initiatives established by others. Planners have a big obligation to pay attention to women's perspectives and incorporate them into gender-responsive social policies and initiatives. As a result, this study discusses how women might help to further societal progress.

Keywords: Social Development, Social Change, Women Empowerment, Community development

1.1 Introduction

Women's engagement in development has been acknowledged as a critical factor in addressing the urgent needs of significant and frequently marginalized groups in society, as well as a matter of human rights and social justice. Women who are likely to be affected by the solutions must participate in order for them to be effective, durable, and address both the strategic and basic needs of women. Evidence also demonstrates that the benefits of women's involvement in social development efforts, policymaking, and development decisions benefit not only women and their communities but also society as a whole. Women are actively participating in and taking full leadership roles in the development process now more than ever. But numerous roadblocks and obstacles still make it difficult for women to participate. Large numbers of women around the world continue to be marginalized, disorganized, and poor in addition to being bound by sociocultural and legal systems that limit their access to and participation in the development process. The challenges and impediments that restrict women's ability to take part in all facets of communal life and social development are remarkably diverse.

Initiatives taken by governments to remove obstacles that prevent women from participating equally in economic, social, and political life have varied widely over time and across nations. Of course, the historical, cultural, social, and political conditions of each country and region must be examined in order

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to analyses and comprehend the role of women in development. The role of women, as well as their chances and experiences in the development process, have been influenced by history, tradition, technology, demography, and urbanization, among other aspects. In light of this, it is likely that there is much to be learned from examining the contexts in which women's involvement in social development has changed as well as from considering the various initiatives that have made it possible for women to participate in the political, social, and economic aspects of that development.

1.2 Female Development and Social Change

In a framework of justice and equality, "social development" refers to a multifaceted, dynamic process that results in long-lasting enhancements in the wellbeing of individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. It is a procedure that aims to lessen poverty and inequality, encourage all people to become mature, participating citizens, and deepen democracy. In a strategy driven by economic goals as well as moral obligations to past, present, and future generations, it is dependent on economic growth, increased competitiveness in the globalized economy, environmental sustainability, sustainable improvements in living conditions, and the development of human and social capital. Women are generally in a better position than they have been in the past to meet the challenge of increasing engagement in economic and political activities thanks to advancements in social development and gender equality. For development to be equitable and successful, women must participate fully. What we might interpret as "development" in a democratic and just society is full participation. As a result, we may base the entirety of our research on the idea that participation is a goal in and of itself. However, given that women not only influence social change but also contribute to its sustainability, it makes sense that when women are marginalized, efforts to advance national development goals are hampered. To put it another way, we might also see women's engagement as a catalyst for development, with the process of progress being constrained by barriers to that participation.

Although women have traditionally organized to address economic and social crises, it has only been in recent years that their involvement in social development has drawn particular attention. Because of the mobilization of women to advance the development of their communities, public policy is changing today. World leaders prioritized a set of principles, including freedom, equality, solidarity, toleration, respect for nature, and shared responsibility, during the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. Evidently, the call for equality supports the encouragement of women's participation in development processes. As citizens, activists, and decision-makers, we are encouraged by the call for solidarity and shared responsibility to create opportunities for all citizens to participate in the drive for fair and sustainable development. One way to make these opportunities possible is through the employment of strategies to inform, educate, and empower women.

1.3 Women's Engagement in the Advancement of Social Development

Women and women's organizations' involvement in social development in three distinct contexts, including community development, which includes meeting basic human needs, locating answers to women's basic and strategic needs, and looking for ways to generate income. Other contexts include public policy discussions and decision-making, as well as formal leadership positions in politics. In order to emphasize lessons that can be learnt by each region, women's contributions to community development as well as experiences that have sought to facilitate or deepen women's roles in the promotion of social development will be discussed. These experiences may provide some insight into different interventions that could be used to empower women and women's organizations to actively participate in development projects, policy discussions, and decision-making. The barriers to women's participation are made worse by cultural and religious acceptance of a subordinate role for women. Due to the fact that they handle all domestic duties, participate in a distinct economy (one that is "more private"), and are "relegated to a different socio-cultural status," women have evolved into being "inherently" different from men. As a result, there is still discrimination in the way that duties and responsibilities for promoting development are distributed between the sexes.

The disparities in women's engagement in the economic and political life of various nations may be explained by the specific characteristics of how tasks are assigned within families, communities, and

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countries as a result of various development strategies. The workshop attendees thought on the idea that female labour participation was crucial to an economic growth plan focused on labor-intensive "light" industries like textiles or garments. Government policy may have intentionally encouraged methods to foster a redistribution of responsibilities, such as child care, which had historically been the responsibility of women in the house, in nations that pursued growth based on certain businesses. Further investigation into this issue may reveal a potential link between public policy attempts to support the redistribution of family duties in order to facilitate women's participation in the labour force and growth strategies based on industries where female labour is predominate.

Women's organizations have taken on the role of fundamental social players, fostering more equitable participation in all aspects of society and serving as strong bridges between one another, governments, and other social actors. Both professional women who organize to support the organization and empowerment of low-income or marginalized women as well as poor women who organize grassroots organizations to meet their own needs have evolved as a result of the efforts of women themselves. They have also developed as a result of public policy, international feminist movements, development NGOs, and international development organizations. Governments in both regions have recently partnered with or funded women's organizations to help them become more sustainable. Governments usually address women in their capacity as mothers and place a significant emphasis on the advancement of children's development when working with women's organizations. In order to increase society awareness of women's issues that are distinct from those pertaining to their children and to encourage women's participation in public spaces, crises and societal concerns may present important opportunities. For instance, it has been argued that social services and social assistance should be restructured to better meet the requirements of low-wage workers with young children and an increase in poverty rates among households with a single female earner. Another illustration has surfaced as population loss concerns have grown in importance.

1.4 The Empowerment of Women for Community Development

Women from all across the world have banded together to advocate for responses to the needs of their communities. Women's organizations seem to be motivated and mobilized by shared needs. The workshop looked at five instances where women and women's organizations actively and purposefully worked to advance the growth and advancement of low-income areas. Such encounters enable us to investigate issues like: [i] under what circumstances do women band together to raise funds for the improvement of their neighborhood? [ii] Which tactics do they select, and why? [ii] In what ways has progress been improved? What circumstances give rise to the mobilization of women and women's organizations based on gender identity? What topics are covered in [v]? [vi] Does women's participation in community development empower and enable them to take an active role in the formulation of policies? [vii] How do women approach the problem of balancing their many responsibilities as moms, wives, community development leaders, business owners, etc.? [viii] How does this effect women's involvement in programmes for community development?

In reaction to pressing circumstances in their local communities, women frequently band together. This answer may indicate that women project their traditional caregiving obligations into the public realm. Indeed, these programmes have significantly improved nutrition, well-child care, registration and statistics on births, deaths, and marriage, as well as the provision of services to the disabled, the elderly, and violence victims in low-income communities. Additionally, their efforts produce by-products such as social capital, community identity or cohesion, women's empowerment, and their awareness of their rights, which may be equally beneficial or even more so. Other women's organization experiences that support community development have come from proactive actions performed by professional women in support of other women who have particular needs. Initiatives of this kind essentially involve women trying to educate and empower other women as well as to increase public awareness of the disparities that disproportionately affect low-income, rural, and women who identify as racial or ethnic minorities. The outcomes of these initiatives build on the transformations that empowered women (as individuals) go through. These women can then take on leadership roles in their communities and eventually have an impact on public policies and societal awareness.

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1.5 Conclusion

Finally, NGOs, feminist organizations, the church or other religious organizations, or governmental organizations have all encouraged women to get involved in community development. A community's women should continue to organize themselves for planning and action after an effective mobilization process has ended. However, women's organizations may start to rely on the support system provided by actors like government organizations, which restricts their ability to be autonomous, entrepreneurial, and self-sustaining. Women can become more empowered and integrated into public life when they take part in successful community responses to crises. Women's organizations may help to improve the welfare of the community as well as changes in women's motivation and empowerment. This is according to experiences with women's participation in the promotion of community development. The importance of these experiences must be evaluated according to how they improved the living situations of women, men, and children, as well as women's mental health, social capital in our communities, women's leadership, and grassroots women's organizations. They can also be examined in terms of how they affect the beliefs, customs, and attitudes that support gender inequality in society.

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