

# Escalating Social Changes as seen in Women Empowerment: With Special Reference to Saudi Arabia Women

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## ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment is the process of empowering women. Empowerment can be defined in many ways, however, when talking about women's empowerment, empowerment means accepting and including people (women) who are on the outside of the decision-making process into it. Women's empowerment is the most crucial point to be noted for the overall development of a country. Healthy, educated, empowered women are better able to contribute to economic • productivity and the socio-economic development of the next generation. Women's empowerment can also underpin pro-poor demographic transitions. Men and women's, girls' and boys' experiences of poverty differ in important ways. Understanding this is important for tackling the greater levels of deprivation and vulnerability that girls and women routinely face, and for tackling poverty more broadly. Social movements can challenge exploitative relations that hold back livelihoods, and contest the stereotyping that reinforces chronic poverty. The development community must do everything it can to facilitate an enabling environment for gender-aware social movements. Promoting and protecting human and civil rights, and a strong and autonomous legal system, are key first steps.

## Keywords

Women Empowerment, Social Equality, Gender Equality and Civil Rights

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## Introduction

**“The empowered woman is powerful beyond measure and beautiful beyond description.”**

Constant neediness is a key strategy challenge of the 21st century. A huge number of individuals suffer states of outrageous hardship all through much or the entirety of their lives. The Chronic Poverty Report 2008-09 features five snares which forestall individuals getting away from neediness: frailty – of occupations and from struggle; restricted citizenship – absence of political voice; spatial drawback – in detached country territories or metropolitan ghettos; social separation; and helpless work openings – manipulative business, or no work by any stretch of the imagination.

Here we center around the social segregation trap, which features the manners by which men and women's, young ladies' and young men's encounters of neediness contrast significantly. We examine how understanding the sex measurements of persistent destitution is significant not just for handling the more noteworthy degrees of hardship and weakness that young ladies and ladies regularly face in numerous nation settings, yet additionally for handling neediness all the more extensively. Given ladies' focal part in creating,

keeping up and replicating the populace (kid bearing and raising, care of the family, wiped out and older), approach measures to help ladies' strengthening can have different positive overflow impacts on ladies' prosperity just as youth neediness and family destitution when all is said in done.

We feature three key arrangement zones empowering positive social change:

- equitable admittance to fundamental administrations, including regenerative wellbeing administrations;
- equitable admittance to training at all levels;
- enabling climate for sex mindful social developments.

## Getting Gender and Chronic Poverty

Throughout the most recent decade, neediness examination has moved from an attention on ladies and destitution to sexual orientation mindful enemy of neediness programming. As opposed to zeroing in on female-headed families just, ongoing reasoning is educated by a more all-encompassing comprehension of the linkages between sexual orientation, neediness and weakness. Quantitative cash based pointers of neediness may not generally uncover critical contrasts among people. Yet, strategy creators and

professionals should know about the various channels through which ladies may get ruined and sabotaged.

On account of female-headed families, it is essential to comprehend the interaction by which families became 'female-kept up'. For instance, ladies who were at that point the essential providers in the family, and approach stable pay producing openings or have rights to resources, might have the option to oversee family stuns and not need help. Paradoxically, the individuals who lost a male (pay procuring) accomplice or parent because of medical affliction, inadvertent demise, separation or departure, may have fallen into destitution and battle to get away. This can be found in the biographies of Maymana, Txab, and Vuyiswa. They are regularly kept down by different sex imbalances, like absence of admittance to profitable data sources and credit, no order over property or acquired pay, sexual orientation predispositions in the work market, versatility limitations and more extensive sex based social prohibition from financial and political foundations.

Just zeroing in on family level destitution, nonetheless, masks different linkages among sexual orientation and neediness and has significant strategy suggestions. Ladies and young ladies may encounter destitution in non-helpless families, or uplifted neediness in effectively helpless families, because of the inconsistent dissemination of assets and dynamic force among guys and females in the family. Such destitution may then be showed in various manners outside the family. Forswearing of equivalent admittance to essential administrations is one basic marker. Forswearing of equivalent admittance to fundamental administrations is one basic marker. Inconsistent family relations can likewise deny ladies of a feeling of respect (regularly because of sex based savagery in the family), and of independence and voice (to settle on choices about one's life, for example at what age to wed and so on) Likewise, time destitution because of ladies' essential part as neglected parental figures for youngsters, the older, the wiped out and individuals with inabilities, regularly joined with family work and pay age exercises will in general build up ladies' more restricted life decisions.

These disparities – in occupation openings, admittance to and command over resources, admittance to fundamental administrations, political voice and in more extensive accepted practices sabotage ladies severally. Helpless ladies may need "capacity to" – the chance of settling on significant life decisions like decision of work, or when to have youngsters; "power with" – the capacity to partake in the informal communities, "power – over" the ability to stand up to and beat others and not least "power inside" – the sense of pride and certainty to defeat absence of expectation, and disguised acknowledgment of frailty and destitution.

### 10 Amazing moments in History for Women

In the words of Gloria Steinem, "the story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization, but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights."

Keeping the above lines in mind here the best 10 movements

- 1- **1851: Sojourner Truth delivers 'Ain't I A Woman?' speech**
- 2- **1911: The first ever International Women's Day**
- 3- **1912: The suffragette movement gathers steam**
- 4- **1913: Marie Curie awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry**
- 5- **1961: The contraceptive pill makes its way to Australia**
- 6- **1973: Billie Jean King wins the Battle of the Sexes**
- 7- **1975: International Women's Year**
- 8- **1995: Hilary Clinton delivers historic speech**
- 9- **2014: Emma Watson spearheads the HeForShe movement**
- 10- **2017: Women's Marches around the world**

### Women and Development

Women of the world want and deserve an equal future free from stigma, stereotypes and violence; a future that's sustainable, peaceful, with equal rights and opportunities for all. To get us there, the world needs women at every table where decisions are being made.

This year, the theme for International Women's Day (8 March)," Women in Leadership:

Achieving an equal future in COVID-19 World” celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and highlights the gaps that remain.

Women are also at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19, as front-line and health sector workers, as scientists, doctors and caregivers, yet they get paid 11 percent less globally than their male counterparts. An analysis of COVID-19 task teams from 87 countries found only 3.5 per cent of them had gender parity.

When women lead, we see positive results. Some of the most efficient and exemplary responses to the COVID-19 pandemic were led by women. And women, especially young women, are at the forefront of diverse and inclusive movements online and on the streets for social justice, climate change and equality in all parts of the world. Yet, women under 30 are less than 1 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide.

Indian scholar, economist and philosopher Amartya Sen sees development as a gradual process of expanding freedoms equally for all people. Gender equality, from this perspective, is a core objective of development in itself implying that:

**“Just as development means less income poverty or better access to justice, it should also mean fewer gaps in well-being between males and females.”**

**-World Development Report 2012**

Yet, today’s development realities beg the question as to whether we are achieving this objective sufficiently and in a reasonable timeframe. Although there has been considerable and important progress in terms of women’s well-being (in rights, education, health and access to jobs etc), what of their ‘ill-being’? It is still the case that NO country treats it women the same as its men.

In this module we have chosen to focus specifically on women per se, and not gender in general for a number of reasons and to highlight a number of important issues.

- The role of women in developing countries, as explored throughout this module, has been recognized as the single most important factor when it comes to bringing about and sustaining long term social change. Women are farmers

and food providers (contributing to agricultural output, general environmental maintenance and food security); they are business people and traders (40% of the world’s labour force are women, not including informal work in the home, on the land, in the market place etc); they are heads of households (most of whom are likely to also have a full time job, as well as caring for children, elderly or sick relatives); they are mothers, carers and support workers (more often than not, in developing countries, this is voluntary); and they are community leaders, activists and role models (stemming from their roles in society as mothers, carers and support workers).

- Development affects men and women differently, often with a more negative impact on women. This can undermine women’s role, status and position within society and therefore perpetuates their inequality.
- Women’s equality is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all. Equality for women is vital economically, politically, socially, culturally and environmentally – it is also crucially a matter of basic human rights.

### Chart which shows the ratio of Gender Equality



### A Changing Future: the economic role of women in Saudi Arabia

Among the many bold ambitions outlined in Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia’s blueprint for

developing its economy over the next decade and beyond is a determination to strengthen the contribution of women to society and to the economy:

“Our economy will provide opportunities for everyone – men and women, young and old – so they may contribute to the best of their abilities...

Saudi Women are yet another great asset. With over 50 percent of our University graduates being female, we will continue to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strength their future and contribute to their development of our society and economy.”

### **-Saudi Arabia Vision 2030**

In a country where women have historically played a restricted public role, relatively little attention was paid to these inspiring aspirations when Vision 2030 was first published. But that is now rapidly changing.

In September 2017, the Government announced that, from July 2018, women will be allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia for the first time. It was followed, a month later, by the announcement that women will also be allowed to watch live sport at the three main national stadiums in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam.

Although seemingly relatively small changes in themselves, the ambition reflected in these two decisions to embrace the potential of Saudi Arabia’s women has been seen as a powerful indication that the country’s commitment to strengthening the economic involvement and contribution of women is much more than just warm words.

### **A Continuing Progress**

The recent announcements regarding women being allowed to drive and to enter the three main national stadia reflect an on-going transformation in the role and contribution of women in societies across the MENAT region over the past few years. Traditional societal boundaries are changing in line with the belief that a more inclusive attitude will benefit overall economic progress.

The gap between girls and boys in terms of access to education and healthcare, for example, has been all but eradicated. According to a World Bank report, almost all young girls in the region attend school and more women than men are enrolled in

university. Over the past 20 years, maternal mortality in the MENA region has declined 60%, the largest decrease in the world.

In a society known for its conservative values, there is emerging evidence of attitudinal shifts among working women, too. Saudi Arabia still operates a male guardianship system in which females must gain permission to travel or speak with members of the opposite sex. However, when asked about their comfort in working in mixed-sex environments, 73% of employed women said they were either “extremely comfortable” or “comfortable to some extent”. Only a combined 9% reported being “uncomfortable to some extent” or “not at all comfortable”.

### **Driving Economic Growth**

By providing women with more freedom and more opportunity to contribute economically, Saudi Arabia is taking strategic and proactive action to deliver two of its major goals outlined in Vision 2030: first, to lower the country’s unemployment rate from 11.6% to 7%, and second, to increase women’s participation in the workforce to 30% by 2030, with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development working towards an interim target of 28% by 2020.

Allowing women to drive is predicted to have a sizable impact on Saudi Arabia’s economy. Indeed, some estimates put the value of the economic impact at US\$ 90 billion by 2030 – suggesting a potential rise in the country’s GDP by 0.4%-0.9% each year until then.

“One good news coming from Saudi Arabia is the increased number of women engaging in the technology sectors, for example, versus drop we see worldwide. Elsewhere women are moving away from these fields, whereas in the Kingdom, the number is going up constantly.”

“At the same time diversity in workforce is increasing overall productivity, profitability and sustainability.”

### **Conclusion**

To limit gender inequality over time, reaching adolescents and young adults is key. Decisions made during this stage of life determine skills, health, economic opportunities, and aspirations in adulthood. To ensure that gender gaps do not persist over time, policies must emphasize



building human and social capital, easing the transition from school to work.

And while so much remains to be done, in many ways the world has already changed by finally recognizing that gender equality is good for both women and men. More and more, we are all realizing that there are many benefits—economic and others—that will result from closing gender gaps. A man from Hanoi, Vietnam, one of thousands of people surveyed for the *World Development Report*, observed, “I think women nowadays increasingly enjoy more equality with men. They can do whatever job they like. They are very strong. In some families the wife is the most powerful person. In general, men still dominate, but women’s situation has greatly improved.”

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