

**WOMEN ADVANCEMENT FORUM: INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES,  
RESEARCH & ACADEMIA (WAFIRA)**

**Gender Equality in leadership Skills Development; International Best  
Practices of Higher Education Policies for Women Advancement**

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# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

*-Introduction*

*-Gender Inequality in Leadership*

*-Addressing Gender Inequalities*

*-The Need For Gender Equality in Leadership Skills*

*-Leadership skills to be developed*

*- International Best Practices to Improve the Status of Women in Higher Education*

# Introduction

A nation's ability to develop will depend on the quality of leadership demonstrated at all levels of society.

No one is a born leader – everyone can develop leadership skills and everyone can benefit from using them

Women have same invaluable right to leadership skills. They are entrusted with the vital responsibilities of society. They

- bear
- raise and
- educate human beings

A broadly inclusive understanding of skills development is therefore a valuable way to enable women access and use skills development

# *Gender Inequality in Leadership Skills Development*

Although progress on gender equality has been made in some areas, the potential of women to hold leadership positions in higher educational institutions has not been encouraging.

Their contribution to and benefit from sustainable development as leaders, participants and agents of change has not been fully realized

This is due to persistent

- ❖ Social
- ❖ economic and
- ❖ political inequalities.

Access to skills development opportunities remains unequal and the situation is not different in higher educational institutions.

# Causes of Gender Inequalities in Leadership Skills Development

❖ **The Patriarchal and Cultural System**

❖ **Social Cost of Leadership**

❖ **Conflict Among Women**

# Gender Equality in Skills Development

Women having the same opportunities in life as men is key to sustainable development

Gender equality in skills development is key to:

- ❖ *sustainable development*
- ❖ *the creation of a free and fair society*
- ❖ *bridging gaps in gender roles*

# Gender Equality in Skills Development

Finding a more effective means for developing the leadership skills of women in higher Education requires that

- ❖ new methods for teaching critical leadership skills are devised
- ❖ the notion of leadership itself be broadened
- ❖ leadership be thought of as a collaborative process for effective, positive social change.

Gender equality and the effective participation of women are important for effective action on all aspects of sustainable development.

# Gender Equality in Skills Development

No human society in its march onwards and upwards is therefore expected to choke the intellectual and leadership skills of women.

Prioritizing measures to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of our societies, implies

- ❖ the removal of barriers to their full and equal participation in decision-making and management at all level
- ❖ Developing policies to ensure gender equality in skills development
- ❖ Setting targets to achieve parity

# Leadership Skills to be Developed

**Leadership skills** are the tools, behaviours and capabilities that a person needs in order to successfully motivate and direct others. It also includes steering the affairs of an organisation.

❖ Communication

❖ Motivation

❖ Delegating

❖ Positivity

❖ Trustworthiness

❖ Creativity

# Leadership Skills to be Developed

- ❖ Feedback
- ❖ Commitment to Vision and Mission
- ❖ Integrity
- ❖ The desire to lead.
- ❖ Responsibility

# **The Need For Gender Equality in Leadership**

- **Diversity of Thought**

Men and women have different ways of seeing things and appreciating issues; viewpoints, ideas, insights, which enables better problem solving, ultimately leading to superior performance at any level.

- **Leveraging human capital**

Women are increasingly out-numbering men in educational achievements (Ministry for Women, New Zealand, 2017). To get the very best leaders there is the need to select candidates from the widest possible talent pool.

# The Need For Gender Equality in Leadership

- **Access to Resources**

Gender equality in Leadership provides easier access to resources, such as donor support, multiple sources of information, and wider knowledge.

# International Best Practices of Higher Education Policies for Women's Advancement

- Women's access to education is critical at all levels of the educational system.
- Poor access to higher education is accompanied by under-representation of women in science and technology.
- In many countries, women's enrolment also decreases as they move up in the higher education system.
- It is to be noted that a better gender balance in the higher education sector may be achieved through measures to overcome the shortage of women postgraduate students.

# Legislation and infrastructural support

- *United Nations (1979) Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women:*

Calls for equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status, in all fields

- *The National Policy of Education, India (1986)*

Guarantees women equality and liberty to overcome prolonged deprivation women. Women are also accorded the privileges of free education and reservation in educational institutions.

- *The 1984 Sex Discrimination Act in Australia*

The removal of discrimination in educational institutions and other areas of public activities, based on sex, marital status or pregnancy, sexual harassment, and family responsibilities.

# Strategies to Improve the Quantity and Quality of Women in Higher Education

## **Scholarships and fellowships for women**

- Agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities which manage the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) have taken steps to ensure that their award schemes are structured to increase the proportion of women postgraduates.

- **Improving conditions for postgraduate studies**

Measures which improve the conditions for postgraduate studies help women achieve a greater rate of success and completion.

# Strategies to Improve the Quantity and Quality of Women in Higher Education

## **Academic women's networks and fora**

- Many women's networks now encourage women to access the most senior academic and administrative positions in the universities and assist them to acquire the skills and knowledge required to perform them effectively. They are committed to achieving gender equity, share good practice, identify role models and plan programmes that help to enhance women's careers. Women's networks undertake a range of initiatives to help promote their members.
- Mentor connections have been created to orient new employees, foster executive development, assist in career advancement, improve job performance, lower employee turnover, enhance creativity and increase leadership potential.

# Strategies to Improve the Quantity and Quality of Women in Higher Education

- **Improve supply of women into higher education:**

The numbers of women postgraduate students should be increased by taking positive steps such as increasing the quota of scholarships and awards for women postgraduate students.

- **Establishment of women's universities and colleges**

As a step towards enabling more female students to obtain the benefits of higher education, several countries have encouraged the establishment of all women's colleges and universities.

# Strategies to Improve the Quantity and Quality of Women in Higher Education

- **Gender management systems (GMS)**
- The gender management systems (GMS) in the higher education sector determine how persistent inequalities between men and women are demonstrated in the higher education sector.
- **International development agencies**
- International agencies and organizations have a broad agenda to assist women improve their status in higher education. This may include any of several approaches: advocacy at the highest levels with governments and international agencies such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth,

# **Strategies to Improve the Quantity and Quality of Women in Higher Education**

## **Women's studies**

Women's studies should also play an important role as a catalyst in enhancing the participation of girls and women at all levels of the education system. Women's Studies Programme may be developed as a vehicle for the achievement of change in higher education institutions through activities required to promote the advancement of women, both within and outside higher education institutions

# QUESTIONS

- Is the problem of low participation/involvement of women in higher education a problem of lack of skills?
- Is the improvement in conditions of entry and employment for women in the higher educational sector a good way of addressing gender inequalities in that sector?
- Is the development of skills for women at higher educational level a form of discrimination against men?
- Why should women be trained in leadership skills



## **Scholarships and Fellowships for women**

Canadian International Development Agency and the Association of Commonwealth Universities have taken steps to ensure that their award schemes are structured to increase the proportion of women postgraduates.

## **Academic women's networks and fora**

Women can overcome problems of isolation and lack of support from fellow colleagues by being a part of networks which are specifically designed to enable women easy access to vital information and to the critical support, counselling and advice.

## **Mentoring**

Mentor connections have been created to orient new female students to climb the ladder of education higher.

# CONCLUSION

There is the need for equality in Leadership training as men and women have different viewpoints, ideas, insights, which enables better problem solving, ultimately leading to superior performance at any level.

Any barrier to women in leadership roles represents a failure to exploit the available talent pool.

**THANK YOU**