

Why Women's Leadership and Empowerment are Essential Today: Innovative Concepts from Practical Action

Bitar Zohra ¹, Boucif Zineb Asmaa ², Raffar Abdelkader El Amir ³

¹ Doctor, University of Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria

Email: zohra.bitar@uiniv-sba.dz

² Doctor, University of Saida, Algeria

Email: zinebasmaa.boucif@univ-saida.dz

³ Doctor University of Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria

Email: raffaramir85@yahoo.com

Abstract---The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between woman leadership, empowerment and the sustainable economic development, and presents a short review of the literature on the relevance and role of women's leadership and her economic empowerment. This article discusses: Why Especially Women's leadership and Empowerment Became Necessary for sustainable economic development? The study is primarily based upon the secondary data. For this extant literature related to the topic from different databases, websites and other available sources were collected. I searched relevant literature in Scopus, science direct, and Google Scholar using specific keywords, e.g., "woman leadership," "woman empowerment," "sustainable development," "economic growth". A systematic review of collected literature was done in detail.

Keywords---woman leadership, woman empowerment, sustainable development, economic growth.

Introduction

Empirical research has shown that employees who develop better relationships with their leader feel more empowered and in turn are more motivated to perform effectively and contribute to organization performance (Saleem et al. 2019). Particularly, in a longitudinal study, Alotaibi et al. (2020) found that if employees developed better relationships with their leaders, they would

How to Cite:

Zohra, B., Asmaa, B. Z., & El Amir, R. A. (2025). Why women's leadership and empowerment are essential today: Innovative concepts from practical action. *The International Tax Journal*, 52(5), 2397–2411. Retrieved from <https://internationaltaxjournal.online/index.php/itj/article/view/250>

The International tax journal ISSN: 0097-7314 E-ISSN: 3066-2370 © 2025

ITJ is open access and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Submitted: 25 January 2025 | Revised: 19 March 2025 | Accepted: 11 September 2025

subsequently perform better, as the relationships were mediated by empowerment. Besides, studies supported the causal influence of self-efficacy as captured by the competence dimension of empowerment of psychological and climate toward performance. At the organization level, García-Juan et al. (2019) proposed a model that generalizes empowerment from individuals to organization. The model proposes that psychological and climate empowerment is highly similar to individual performance in terms of its underlying dimensions, predictors, and outcomes. As such, empowerment has been conceptualized as a multilevel construct, or a construct that shares similar meaning and functions similarly across levels (Turnipseed and Waa 2020). Empirical studies have also provided initial support for the generalizability of empowerment across levels and demonstrated positive influence of leader performance on organization effectiveness (Bartram et al. 2020).

Referring to the condition of women in the economic field where access to existing economic resources is in fact still low and maintains the potential that can be developed, it is necessary to coordinate several things as follows: the need to provide opportunities for women who have potential both in groups and individuals in order to increase empowerment women through productive economic efforts. This will open opportunities for women to participate in planning, implementing, monitoring and sustaining productive economic activities.

1. Statement of problem:

Given that women face unique challenges in leadership, oftentimes unrecognized by others, it is imperative that leadership development strategies are advanced to meet their specific needs. Kanter's (1977) theory of tokenism holds that underrepresented individuals at the senior ranks of an organization require unique strategies for success and achievement because they often must respond to different expectations and have different resources than their mainstream peers. This is true of women who may have achieved parity with their male counterparts in position and compensation but have had very different experiences along the way (Lyness & Thompson, 1997), and from this perspective, the research problem can be formulated as follows:

- Why Especially Women's leadership and Empowerment Became Necessary for sustainable economic development?

2. Research questions:

This article focuses to answer the following questions:

- What is the Origin of the Term Empowerment?
- What is the empowerment perspective?
- What are the different types of empowerment measurement?
- what are the Women's leadership and Empowerment Strategies According to the Economic Perspective?

3. Research hypothesis:

- women's leadership and empowerment started to be considered as the key factor of modern economic development.

4. Research objectives:

This paper focus to:

- examine the relationship between women leadership and sustainable economic development.
- examine the relationship between women empowerment and sustainable economic development.

5. Methodology:

The study is primarily based upon the secondary data. For this extant literature related to the topic from different databases, websites and other available sources were collected. A systematic review of the collected literature was done in detail.

6. Previous studies:

Several studies have shed light on the status of women leadership and empowerment, and their impact on sustainable economic development.

Acharya and Bennet (1983), studied on Nepal women empowerment in different dimensions like role in farm management, domestic, and resource allocation by taking the independent variables as market labour and unpaid family labour. They came to a conclusion that, bringing women into the market economy positively affects their influence in resource allocation and domestic decision-making.

Ackerly, (1995), studied on Bangladesh women empowerment, dimensions of empowerment were accounting knowledge, ability to provide information on inputs cost, product field and profitability of the loan funded activity through studying the factors, the loan characteristics and women's involvement in market activities funded by loans. Their findings are women gain knowledge and empowerment through market access, but it rarely occurs.

Hashemi, (1996), studied on Bangladesh, the indicators of empowerment are empowerment in household and community spheres by taking the independent variable as microcredit participation and women contribution to household. Their findings are microcredit empowers women by giving them greater economic value to their life.

Mathura and Mather, (1997), studied on women empowerment in Sri Lanka and the indicators of empowerment were women's role in household decision making and control over money matters. The independent variables are women and husband's education, participation in waged work, family structure. The findings are, work for pay and education increase decision making input in financial, but not in the social and organizational matters in the household.

Manson, (1998), studied on probability samples of urban households in Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, regarding women empowerment. The dimensions of women empowerment they took are women's role in household expenditure and decision making. The study have taken independent variables as social context in terms of gender and family systems, women's land assets, participation in waged work and wife's rank relative to husband. They found out that social context has a direct and indirect effects on women's economic power.

Jejeebhoy, (2000), have made a study on India in three dimensions like, role of economic decision making, role of child related decision making and the freedom from threat. The independent variables used were, religion, education, participation in waged work, dowry size, marriage endogamy, spouse age difference and household economic status. He found out that some dimensions of empowerment are more closely related than others.

Frankenberg and Thomas, (2001), studied on women empowerment in Indonesia, the indicators of empowerment were the women role in household decision-making, Control over cash, spending and time use. They have taken independent variables as relative status of husbands and wife's at marriage, e.g., education, age, social status of family of origin. They found out that status influence financial arrangements and decision making power.

Mayoux (2001), studied on women empowerment in Cameroon. The dimensions of the study were control over income and development of collective social and economic activities. The independent variables were microcredit participation and social capital, i.e., kinship, neighborhood and market networks. They found out that use of existing forms of social capital to channel microcredit limits benefit to women, especially the poorest women.

Sridevi (2005) studied in post graduate women teachers (PGT) in Chennai, India. The study carries out the variables that affected the level of the empowerment of women which are family type, age, education dummy, time spend in household work, freedom of mobility, spouse age differences, educational difference with spouse, number of children, control over personal

salary and supporting natal home. The study aims to obtain a scientific measure of women empowerment in Chennai. She found out that as the age is higher the chance of empowerment is reduced and when the husbands are equally educated then the empowerment is increased. She recommends that the women should change their self-perception more than being economically independent. Also, the society should understand the capabilities and the contribution of the women in the development process.

Towfiqua et al., (2007) studied on Bangladeshi women in three dimensions of domestic empowerment like role of economic decision –making power, role of household decision making power and physical freedom of movement.

II. literature of review

1. Origin of the Term Empowerment

It is interesting to note that most of the dictionaries only shows a pre-twentieth century definition of the verb empower meaning 'to empower', and 'to give power to'. The word was first used in the 17th century and has meanings like 'authorize', 'delegate', or 'enable'. The term empowerment, as a result, is a complicated idea. However, it implies the transfer of power in a dynamic way over a period of time. Empowerment seems to be a modern idea that would not have been possible 200 years ago when the idea of democracy and 'government of the people, for the people, by the people' was something to fight and die for. In the 20th century we saw many examples of political empowerment in different countries in the world led by people such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela. From the perspective of the members of low-powered group, empowerment refers to efforts to expand their base of power. The issue of 'women empowerment' is now a global phenomenon. Since the origin of the United Nations Organization, the issue of women's development has attracted the attention from the scholars worldwide, and the concept has come in the political agenda of a large number of countries. At present, the term "empowerment" has replaced the erstwhile term "development". Though the term 'empowerment' had become a 'buzzword' in the sixties, it was not discussed so extensively in literature until the eighties. It took about twenty-five years for the United Nations to proclaim the year 2001 as the 'International Year for Women's Empowerment' after declaring the 'Women's Decade' in 1975. India also declared the year 2001 as the 'Women's Empowerment Year'.

1.1 The definition of the term Empowerment

Empowerment is about a set of practices in authority delegation and responsibility among employees, self-management in teamwork, and a flexible hierarchy (Qing et al. 2019). Empowerment climate focuses on addressing the school inscribed as having a friendly and welcoming work environment where the school community is open and honest through a two-way communication practice. The leaders share the information so that all can do the job well. They too value the culture of both positive feedback and constructive criticism. The school has no problem with conversing about work issues with leaders and working together across the school to solve the problems of students (Kasim and Zakaria 2019). Psychological empowerment refers to the leaders' ability to make a decision and feel the necessity to do the job effectively. Leaders are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things and give serious

Empirical research has shown that employees who develop better relationships with their leader feel more empowered and in turn are more motivated to perform effectively and contribute to organization performance (Saleem et al. 2019). Particularly, in a longitudinal study, Alotaibi et al. (2020) found that if employees developed better relationships with their leaders, they would subsequently perform better, as the relationships were mediated by empowerment. Besides, studies supported the causal influence of self-efficacy as captured by the competence dimension of empowerment of psychological and climate toward performance. At the organization level,

García-Juan et al. (2019) proposed a model that generalizes empowerment from individuals to organization. The model proposes that psychological and climate empowerment is highly similar to individual performance in terms of its underlying dimensions, predictors, and outcomes. As such, empowerment has been conceptualized as a multilevel construct, or a construct that shares similar meaning and functions similarly across levels (Turnipseed and Waa 2020). Empirical studies have also provided initial support for the generalizability of empowerment across levels and demonstrated positive influence of leader performance or organization effectiveness (Bartram et al. 2020).

1.2 Measuring empowerment

Empowerment has been measured in previous studies. For example, Scheyvens (1999) presented a four-dimensional framework to measure the empowerment of local communities through eco-tourism. This framework included four main constructs for measuring empowerment: (1) economic, (2) psychological, (3) social, and (4) political. Later, Cole (2006) looked at empowerment as an active psychological and political participation of the local community in sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, Boley et al. (2014) developed and validated a measure of residents' empowerment through tourism (RETS). The measure included three main dimensions: psychological, social, and political empowerment. Additionally, Boley et al. (2014) further developed their RETS by adding a tourism economic benefits dimension to investigate the impact of empowerment on residents' attitudes towards tourism in three counties in Virginia. To test RETS across cultures, Boley et al. (2015) also applied it in the Japanese context. Moreover, Ramos and Prideaux (2014) added an environmental protection dimension to the existing empowerment measures, referring to natural resources in destinations being conserved by the local community. Later, Movono and Dahles (2017) presented some case studies from businesses, showing that women could be empowered through entrepreneurship, not only economically, but also psychologically, socially, and politically. Likewise, Strzelecka et al. (2017) measured empowerment through three dimensions, psychological, social, and political, in addition to economic benefits through tourism, while Arroyo et al. (2019), based on Scheyvens's framework, measured the contribution of agritourism to women's psychological, social, political, and economic empowerment. The following sections deal with the four dimensions of empowerment: economic, psychological, social, and political.

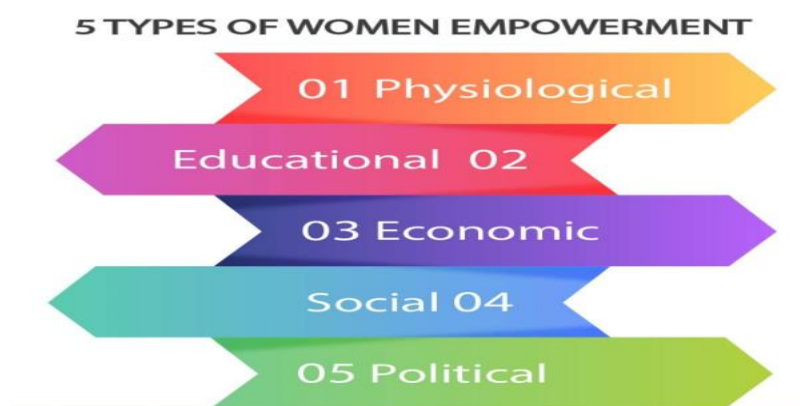


Figure 01: women empowerment types

1.3 Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment refers to the economic benefits and access to productive resources (providing regular income) arising from employment opportunities that are generated and the fair distribution of economic benefits (Scheyvens, 1999). Arroyo et al. (2019) pointed out that tourism empowers women by not only providing them with business opportunities but also

giving them control over the profits generated, making them independent and highlighting their role in supporting their families. Furthermore, Boley et al. (2014) revealed that community residents are significantly affected by the economic profits of tourism, even if they are not working in tourism, which explains their help for tourism development. Similarly, Scheyvens (2000) and Strzelecka et al. (2017) emphasized the role of economic empowerment as an important predictor of local communities' support for tourism development.

1.4 Empowering women

Women's empowerment means women gaining more power and control over their own lives. This entails the idea of women's continued disadvantage compared to men which is apparent in different economic, socio-cultural and political spheres. Therefore, women's empowerment can also be seen as an important process in reaching gender equality, which is understood to mean that the "rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female". According to the UN Population Fund, an empowered woman has a sense of self-worth. She can determine her own choices, and has access to opportunities and resources providing her with an array of options she can pursue. She has control over her own life, both within and outside the home and she has the ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, both nationally and internationally.

Gender role expectations are institutionalized through legislative, educational, political and economic systems. Women need to be "empowered" in order to narrow the "gender gap" and to create an equal playing field between women and men before gender equality can be reached and maintained. Empowerment should not be seen as a zero-sum game where gains for women automatically imply losses for men. In fact, according to UN World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2014, there are proven synergies between women's empowerment and economic, social and environmental sustainability. Women's active participation in decision-making facilitates the allocation of public resources to investments in human development priorities, including education, health, nutrition, employment and social protection. For example, as female education levels rise, infant and child mortality rates fall and family health improves. Education also increases women's participation in the labor force and their contributions to household and national income. Women's increased earning capacity, in turn, has a positive effect on children's nutrition, health and educational prospects.

1.5 Reasons for the empowerment of women

Today we have noticed different Acts and Schemes of the central government as well as state government to empower the women of India. But in India women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education, and also reproductive healthcare. Women are found to be economically very poor all over the India. A few women are engaged in services and other activities. So, they need economic power to stand on their own legs on par with men. Other hand, it has been observed that women are found to be less literate than men. According to 2001 census, rate of literacy among men in India is found to be 76% whereas it is only 54% among women. Thus, increasing education among women is of very important in empowering them. It has also noticed that some of women are too weak to work. They consume less food but work more. Therefore, from the health point of view, women folk who are to be weaker are to be made stronger. Another problem is that workplace harassment of women. There are so many cases of rape, kidnapping of girl, dowry harassment, and so on. For these reasons, they require empowerment of all kinds in order to protect themselves and to secure their purity and dignity. To sum up, women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves. There is a need to formulate

reducing feminized poverty, promoting education of women, and prevention and elimination of violence against women.

1.6 Global review of progress on women's empowerment

In December 2014, the UN Secretary-General issued a report entitled "Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly"¹⁶ which bundles national and regional reviews and discusses progress, challenges and opportunities at the global level. The main findings of the report are the following:

Over the past two decades, governments have increasingly removed discriminating laws and have adopted laws promoting gender equality and addressing violence against women. Significant gains are also noted in the enrolment of girls in primary and secondary education. In several regions, women's participation in the labor market has increased, while some regions have made progress in increasing access to birth control. Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriages have started to decline in some contexts. Furthermore, some countries have made major gains in women's representation in national parliaments.

Gender mainstreaming remains limited, and key institutions and mechanisms for promoting gender equality are often under-resourced and lack political support. In addition, monitoring progress is challenged by a severe lack of comparable data of high quality. Many countries are still not producing regular statistics that are of critical importance for gender equality such as time use, asset ownership, women's participation in decision-making at all levels, or data on gender-based violence and poverty.

1.7 Why Especially Women Empowerment Became Necessary?

Empowerment of women is not only necessary; it has become an imperative now. Over the last three decades, various women's organizations, N.G.Os, and liberal Governments are actively working towards empowerment of women. The status of women is overall deplorable, oppressive and discriminatory through the length and breadth of Indian states irrespective of the party and gender of political leader in power. Some illustrations of discriminations and nature of violence against women may not be out of place here to comprehend their status in the social, economic and political spheres in different countries including India. Only five per cent members of the United Nations have ratified the Convention of the International Labor Organization (1981 & 1982) protecting women with family responsibilities against unfair termination of employment. In the United States of America about 77 percent of poverty is borne by single, divorced, or widowed women. Though the Communist ideology constitutionally favors sexual equality, it is found that in Soviet Union nearly 88 percent women are ditch diggers while less than 1 percent of the Soviet Academy of Science is women. In Indonesia the discrimination is more pathetic. A 15 year old boy is considered to be the legal head of the family in his father's absence even if his mother is a lawyer or a teacher in high school (Eschel, 1989, p. ix). Though women comprise 50 percent of the world's total population, they hold less than 12 percent of the seats in the national legislatures. Out of 177 countries of the world only in 14 countries women hold more than thirty per cent seats in their national parliaments. The Sixth All India Educational Survey of NCERT (1995) found that women formed 23% of primary teachers in rural areas as compared to 60% in urban areas; at the upper primary, the corresponding figures are 25% and 59%. There is also discrimination in recruitment of women as primary teachers. There are lack of women's vocational training institutions in India. "Out of 2240 Industrial Training Institutions (ITIs), Industrial Training Centers (ITCs), there were 154 women ITIs/ ITCs and 129 women wings in General ITIs to specifically cater to vocational training needs of women"(The Yojana, August 2012, p.71.).

Women's position in parliament is also discouraging. "The current 15th Lok Sabha has the highest number of Women MPs. Women constitute 11 per cent of the 15th Lok Sabha" (The Yojana, August 2013, p. 18). Women's estimated earned income (PPP US\$) in 2007 was only \$1,304 but Men's estimated earned income was \$4,102. On the contrary, this rate for the United States' men is \$34,996 and women's earned income is \$5,536 (The World Bank, 2009). Rate of women's death during child birth is also depressible. "Maternal Mortality Rate per 1000 live births in India is 212 (2009)" (The Kurukshetra, August 2012, p. 16).

1.8 Understanding women's economic empowerment

Women's empowerment is a process of personal and social change, taking place over interlinked and mutually reinforcing psychological, political, social and economic domains, and through which women individually and collectively gain power, meaningful choices and control over their lives (O'Neil et al., 2014). It is not a linear, uncontested process but instead a journey characterized by negotiation and compromise, and uncertain outcomes (Cornwall and Edwards, 2016). Although it has attracted increased attention in recent years, there is no universally agreed definition of women's economic empowerment. Women's ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions is core to the understanding of a number of development institutions (Golla et al., 2011). Others emphasize the need to examine the terms on which poor women enter the labor market, the way women's contributions are valued and women's ability to negotiate a fairer deal for themselves, including in relation to the benefits of growth (Eyben et al., 2008 cited in OECD, 2012a; Eyben, 2011).² This paper takes a holistic approach, defining women's economic empowerment as 'a process whereby women's and girls' lives are transformed from a situation where they have limited power and access to economic assets to a situation where they experience economic advancement' (Taylor and Perezniето, 2014). Drawing on Rowlands' typology (1997), this process leads to women's increased power and agency in the following areas (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002 cited in *ibid*: iv):

- Power from within: the knowledge, individual capabilities, sense of entitlement, self-esteem and self belief to make changes in their lives, including learning skills for jobs or to start an enterprise
 - Power to: economic decision-making power within their household, community and local economy (including markets) not just in areas that are traditionally regarded as women's realm but extending to areas that are traditionally regarded as men's realm
 - Power over: access to and control over financial, physical and knowledge-based assets, including access to employment and income generation activities
 - Power with: the ability to organise with others to enhance economic activity and rights
- Crucially, this framework is concerned not just with increases in women's access to income and assets but also with control over them and how they use that control in other aspects of life (Taylor and Perezniето, 2014).

1.9 Women's Empowerment Strategies According to the Economic Perspective

Efforts to women empowerment can be said as an effort to increase women's ownership and control of economic and noneconomic resources. To realize the development program in the context of empowering women, the following can be done (Muhajir, 2005): (1) Priority in rural women's groups because of their potential that has not been utilized optimally. This strategy is expected to be a stimulant for acceleration and economic recovery, namely the provision of capital facilities for women who manage both small and medium-sized businesses, especially in rural and coastal areas. Circulation of money in all corners of the country in sufficient quantities is expected to increase the economic activities of women in the countryside and help women to enter the market through exchange activities that using money. (2) The provision of capital for women's groups and the amount of accessible capital facilities are expected to be sufficient, so that it does not rule out the use of technology that can increase the quantity and quality of products which is produced by women's business groups. (3) Improving rural

communication facilities and infrastructure that support the expansion of access to new information that is more accurate for women of small and medium entrepreneurs. Current accurate information will help rural communities to direct the use of resources owned by commodity production businesses that can provide adequate and profitable benefits. (4) Optimizing the role of all female human resources is expected to further accelerate economic recovery. The increase of women in the market is expected to increase the contribution of women in the family economy to improve household economic resilience and the level of community welfare in addition to improving the quality of life for women.

2. Women's Leadership Emergence

The landscape of women's leadership emergence has been steadily shifting since the 1970s. As women's educational achievements have increased, so have their job opportunities.⁵ In 2009, women in the U.S. accounted for 51% of all those employed in management and professional occupations.⁶ However, according to Catalyst, a U.S. organization promoting women in business and leadership, women hold only 14.4% of executive positions in Fortune 500 companies, while men hold 85.6%. Regarding executive earnings, women earn 7.6% of the top earnings compared to 92.4% for men.⁷ For those employed full-time in management and professional occupations, the average median weekly earnings are \$1,266 for men and \$939 for women.⁸

2.1 Benefits of Women in Leadership

Over the past four decades, the increase of female leaders, catalyzed by the women's liberation movement in the 1970s and globalization in the 1990s through today, has produced new approaches to the exercise of leadership. These approaches embrace a flatter leadership playing field with more collaboration, teamwork, and coaching, rather than hierarchical structures and authority.³⁸ Eagly and Carli addressed the increasing assertion that women have an advantage in exercising leadership because of alignment with contemporary culture. However, they warned that any advantages women have as leaders may be offset by gender prejudice and discrimination.³⁹

According to a national 2008 Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends survey, respondents rated "women superior to men" in honesty and intelligence, among other leadership qualities they value in political leaders.⁴¹ Survey results of 2,250 adults (1,060 men and 1,190 women) ranked women better than or equal to men in seven of eight primary leadership traits assessed in the survey.⁴² Half of survey participants ranked women as more honest than men, with just 20% saying that men are more honest than women. Regarding intelligence, 38% of respondents viewed women as smarter, with 14% indicating men are smarter, and the remaining 48% believing there is no difference between genders. Furthermore, women were ranked with larger leads over men for being compassionate (80% chose women, 5% chose men), outgoing (47% chose women, 38% chose men), and creative (62% chose women, 11% chose men).

2.2 Research on Women and Leadership Development

We conducted an illustrative overview of the literature to provide an understanding of the extent to which women's leadership development is emphasized. Academic research relevant to leadership development for women is scattered across a variety of fields, including management, business, and psychology. This diffusion of literature dilutes cumulative knowledge, making it difficult to derive an overarching framework. A literature search of the PsychInfo and Business Source Complete databases using the search terms women and leadership development, management development, and executive development was conducted. Abstracts of each article were reviewed for evidence of leadership, management, and executive development processes, practices, and frameworks relative to women in organizations. Business Source Complete yielded the most references: women and leadership development, 83; women and management

development, 340; women and executive development, 1. However, examination of the abstracts yielded very few relevant articles; just 26 of 424 or 6% of the total articles discussed leadership or management development practices and processes for women. The Psych Info database search yielded 19 references for women and leadership development, 14 for women and management development, and 1 for women and executive development. Applying the same search criteria to the abstracts of these articles, 29% (10 of 34) were found relevant to the topic of women's leadership development. This overview of the literature suggests that the topic of women's leadership development is underrepresented in the business and psychology literature.

2.3 Leadership Development Framework for Women

Given that women face unique challenges in leadership, oftentimes unrecognized by others, it is imperative that leadership development strategies are advanced to meet their specific needs. Kanter's (1977) theory of tokenism holds that underrepresented individuals at the senior ranks of an organization require unique strategies for success and achievement because they often must respond to different expectations and have different resources than their mainstream peers. This is true of women who may have achieved parity with their male counterparts in position and compensation but have had very different experiences along the way (Lyness & Thompson, 1997). The most effective developmental experiences incorporate a variety of assessments, challenges, and support mechanisms (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). We propose an organizing framework for the multiple methods of leadership development that consists of the following seven categories of formal and informal developmental practices: assessment, training and education, coaching, mentoring, networking, experiential learning (i.e., developmental job assignments and action learning projects), and career planning. We believe our framework of seven developmental practices features aspects of assessments, challenges, and supports. In the following sections, we explore women's leadership development within each of these seven categories of developmental practice and offer recommendations for consultants and human resources professionals working to maximize women's individual and organizational leadership contributions.

2.4 Women as Leaders

Alice Eagly recently completed two meta-analytic studies that have contributed greatly to what is known about gender and how it relates to leadership style. In 1990, Eagly and Blair Johnson performed a systematic and quantitative integration of the existing research on gender and leadership style. A divergence of opinion exists concerning gender differences and leadership style, and Eagly and Johnson performed a thorough investigation of past and current literature to identify what, if any, differences could be found. In conducting their meta-analysis, three types of studies were assessed: organizational, assessment of leader, and laboratory research. The organizational setting was chosen because the majority of leadership studies have been conducted in organizational work situations. Laboratory experiment Women, Leadership, and Empowerment 347 tal research that uses college students as subjects was selected because it is most frequently employed by social psychologists. Assessment studies were chosen to identify and investigate styles of those who were not selected as leaders. The analysis of both experimental and assessment studies produced results indicating that women employed a more interpersonal style than did men, who were found to be more task oriented. These results, however, were not valid in the real world; the results obtained from the organizational studies showed no differences by gender in either of these two leadership styles. Similar results were found, however, in all three investigations with regard to a democratic versus an authoritarian leadership style. Women were more democratic than men, employing a more participative work style. Male leaders were identified as being more autocratic and directive. Eagly went on to complete a second meta-analysis with Mona Makhijani and Bruce Klonksy (1992), this time investigating gender and the evaluation of leaders. Two types of studies were assessed in

investigating the evaluation of leaders; the written vignette and the confederate study. In the written vignette, participants were given descriptions of managerial behavior that were evaluated for leadership effectiveness.



Figure 02: women leadership representation.

Women's Representation Has Increased at Every Leadership Level:

In the last 5 years, women are a larger portion of the pie at every leadership level. This is good news for all employees since, according to McKinsey & Company's Women in the Workplace 2021 study, women managers are taking more action to support their teams. Including helping employees manage workloads and checking in on their overall wellbeing.



Figure 03: US women degrees until 2020

source: <https://www.latterly.org/stats-women-in-leadership/>

U.S. Women are Now Earning More Four Year Degrees Than Ever, and More Than U.S. Men: according to the U.S. Census Bureau, a full 38% of women over age 25 have a 4-year degree.

This is promising as we push for more female leadership at every level.

Women have made important gains in representation in many leadership areas. However, there is plenty still to work on. Only 6% of Fortune 500 CEO positions are held by women, and the pay gap continues to close at a frustratingly slow pace.

It is up to each of us to encourage each other and look for opportunities to mentor and help future female leaders find the courage and opportunities needed for career progress. Thank you to those currently leading the way.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN SELECTED MANAGEMENT ROLES

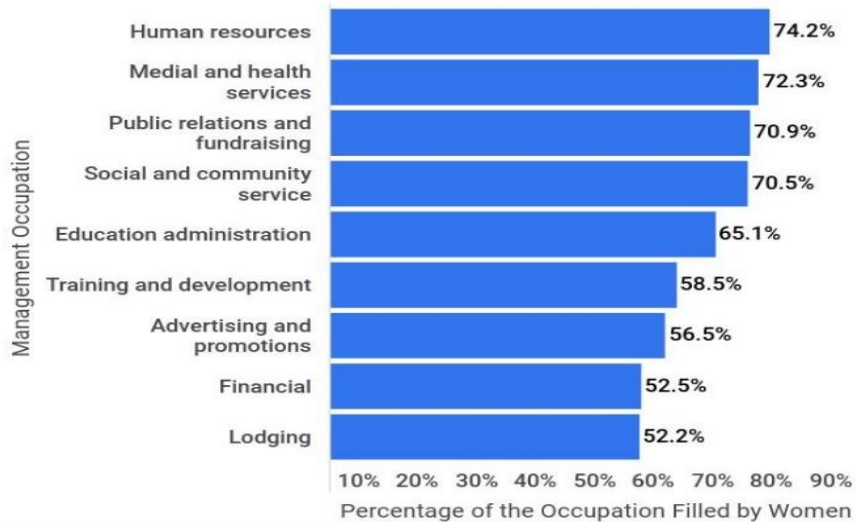


Figure 04: women's management roles

Source: https://www.zippia.com/advice/leadershipstatistics/#Leadership_and_Gender_Statistics

In 1972, only 18% of managerial positions were held by women. By 2016, nearly 40% of all managers were women. Women appear to be better represented in the workforce when it comes to holding leadership positions today than they were in the past.

Women account for only 20% of CEO positions.

While women account for nearly 40% of managers in companies, they only account for 20% of CEO positions, indicating there is a lower promotion rate for women when it comes to the highest leadership position in a company.

Only 8.2% of Fortune 500 companies are led by women.

Fortune Magazine reported in 2021 that 41 of their top 500 companies have women at the helm. That's a mere 8.2%. Two of those positions are held by black women, which is seen as a step forward for diversity in the workplace but still lags way behind male counterparts when it comes to leadership opportunities.

While women appear to be making strides in the workforce and showing greater representation when it comes to management positions, the evidence of a glass ceiling still exists, as few of them advance to the top positions within companies. There is forward momentum, but it is slow.

74.2% of human resources managers are women, the highest rate of any management occupation.

While women have access to fewer leadership roles in general, some industries tend to have higher rates of women in leadership roles. Medical services, public relations, social service, and education are prime examples.

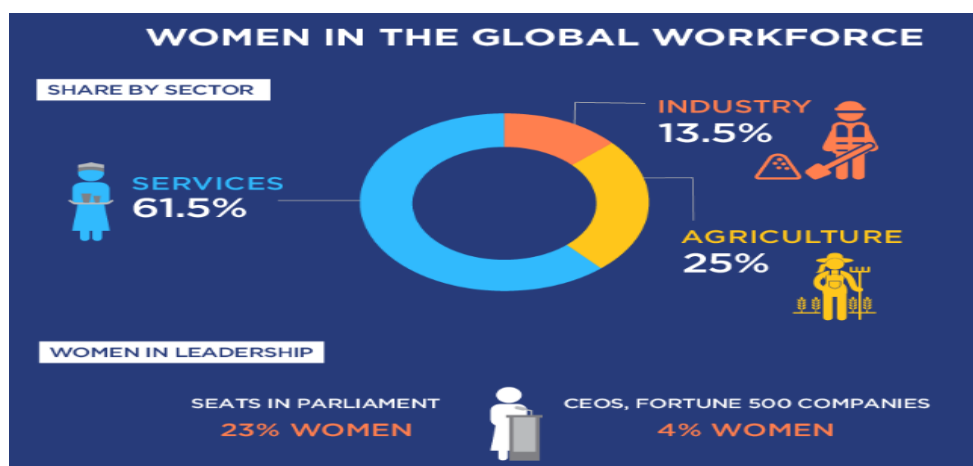


Figure 05: women's workplace

source: <https://scalingupnutrition.org/fr/news/61e-session-de-la-commission-de-la-condition-de-la-femme/>

The world of work is changing rapidly through innovation and increased mobility and informality. But it needs to evolve even faster to empower women whose work has already generated so many global results over the past few decades. Achieving women's economic empowerment requires profound change so that prosperity is shared equitably and no one is left behind.

The sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 13 to 24 March 2017. It brought together representatives of Member States, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations accredited by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from around the world.

The Commission focused on the issue of "women's economic empowerment in a changing world of work", its main theme, and assessed the progress, challenges encountered and achievements made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls (agreed conclusions of the fifty-eighth session in 2014).

III. Conclusions and Suggestions

It is now well-known fact that the issue of women's empowerment for the positive change and transformation of the existing unequal society is more crucial and more important. So far women's role as mothers, homemakers, wives and sisters are well known, but their role in shifting the entire power relations of a country is a modern concept. It was John Stuart Mill, a British Member of Parliament, whose essay *The Subjugation of Women*, probably written with his wife Harriet Taylor Mill, was the first attempt in favor of establishing equality between the males and the females. Further, with the work of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in the eighteenth century, the struggle for women's equality started to brew. But after the second half of the nineteenth century with the formation of world Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU- 1874, USA) and German Social Democratic Party (GSDP, Germany), under the leadership of Francis Williard and Clara Zetkin respectively, the fight for the women's causes including voting rights began to take a concrete shape. After more than two centuries since the beginning of struggle for women's empowerment and equality, still the majority of women are backward and little progress has taken place in their

overall status and position in society. It is not true that the western women enjoy far better status and equality in society, politics, education and economy than oriental women; rather it is a fact that the problems and sufferings of women are almost the same both in developed and underdeveloped countries - from Africa to Europe and from Asia to America. Women are still a minority in the society though they constitute fifty percent of the total population. These strong fifty per cent population need to be provided with equal opportunities in economic, social, political, educational, religious and legal spheres. It must be kept in mind that, "Gender equity is the realization of complete equality in all aspects of the social order regardless of gender" (Aspy & Sandhu, 1999, p. 9). For achieving complete equality in the society between two genders, it is necessary to eliminate all kinds of domination, oppression and discrimination against the fair sex by their male counterpart. It is hoped that India will prosper and achieve its Vision – 2020 with hand to hand co-operation and active participation of both men and women in all spheres of developmental activities.

V. References

1. Acharya, Bennett, (1983), —Women and the subsistence sectorl: Economic participation and Household decision making in Nepal. World Bank, Working paper, Number 526.Washington:
2. Ackerly, Brooke A. (1995), —Testing the tools of Development: Credit Programmes, Loan involvement, and Women Empowerment.IDS Bulletin26 (3):56-68.
3. Alotaibi SM, Amin M, Winterton J (2020) Does emotional intelligence and empowering leadership affect psychological empowerment and work engagement? Leadersh Org Dev J 41(8):971–991. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-07-2020-0313>
4. Arroyo, C., Barbieri, C., Sotomayor, S., & Knollenberg, W. (2019). Cultivating women's empowerment through agritourism: Evidence from Andean communities. Sustainability, 11(11), 1–14.
5. Bartram T, Cooper B, Cooke FL, Wang J (2020b) High-performance work systems and job performance: the mediating role of social identity, social climate and empowerment in Chinese banks. Pers Rev. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-08-2019-0425>
6. Boley, B., & McGehee, N. (2014). Measuring empowerment: Developing and validating the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS). Tourism Management, 45, 85–94.
7. Care International. 2018. Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy. Retrieved from https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE-Womens-Economic-Empowermentstrategy_2016.pdf
8. Cole, S. (2006). Information and empowerment: The keys to achieving sustainable tourism. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 14(6), 629–644. <https://doi.org/10.2167/jost607.0>
9. Eschel, M. R. (1989). Discrimination against women: A global survey of the economic, educational, social and political status of women. McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers Jefferson; North Carolina and London.
10. Frankenberg, Elizabeth, and Duncan Thomas. (2001), —Measuring Powerl. Food consumption and Nutrition Division Discussion Paper No.113. Washington: International Food Policy Research Institute.
11. García-Juan B, Escrig-Tena AB, Roca-Puig V (2019) The empowerment–organizational performance link in local governments. Pers Rev 48 (1)118–140. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-09-2017-0273>
12. Golla, A.M., Malhotra, A., Nanda, P. and Mehra, R. (2011) Understanding and measuring women's economic empowerment: Definition, framework and indicators. Washington, DC: ICRW.
13. Hashemi, Syed M., Sidney Ruth Schuler, and Ann P. Riley. (1996), —Rural Credit Programs and Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh.l World Development 24(4):635—653.

14. Jejeebhoy. Shireen J. (2000), —Women's Autonomy in Rural India: Its Dimensions. Determinants and the Influence of 'Context. In Women's Empowerment and Demographic Processes: Moving Beyond Cairo. Harriet Presser and Gita Sen. eds. New York: Oxford University Press.
15. Lyness, K. S., & Thompson, D. E. (1997). Above the glass ceiling? A comparison of matched samples of female and male executives. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 359–375.
16. McCauley, C. D., & Van Velsor, E. (Eds.). (2004). *The Center for Creative Leadership handbook of leadership development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
17. Movono, A., & Dahles, H. (2017). Female empowerment and tourism: A focus on businesses in a Fijian village. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(2), 681–692.
18. O'Neil, T., Domingo, P. and Valters, C. (2014) *Progress on women's empowerment: From technical fixes to political action*. London: ODI
19. Ramos, M., & Prideaux, B. (2014). Indigenous ecotourism in the Mayan rainforest of Palenque: Empowerment issues in sustainable development. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(3), 461–479.
20. Saleem MA, Bhutta ZM, Nauman M, Zahra S (2019) Enhancing performance and commitment through leadership and empowerment: an emerging economy perspective. *Int J Bank Mark* 37(1):303– 322. [https:// doi. org/ 10. 1108/ IJBM- 02- 2018- 0037](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-02-2018-0037)
21. Sridevi, Tandle Omprakash, June (2005), —Empowerment of Women: A Systematic Analysis, IDF Discussion Paper, www.idfresearch.org/pdf/0411.pdf.
22. Taylor, G. and Pereznieta, P. (2014) Review of evaluation approaches and methods used by interventions on women and girls' economic empowerment. London: ODI.
23. The World Bank. (2009). *World development indicators*. Washington DC: World Bank. LABORSTA database.
24. Turnipseed DL, Waa VEA (2020) The little engine that could: the impact of psychological empowerment on organizational citizenship behavior. *Int J Organ Theory Behav* 23(4):281–296. [https:// doi. org/ 10. 1108/ IJOTB- 06- 2019- 0077](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOTB-06-2019-0077).

Websites:

1. <https://scalingupnutrition.org/fr/news/61e-session-de-la-commission-de-la-condition-de-la-femme/>
2. https://www.zippia.com/advice/leadershipstatistics/#Leadership_and_Gender_Statistics
3. <https://www.latterly.org/stats-women-in-leadership>