Empowering Women: Advancing Leadership And Gender Mainstreaming In The Contemporary World

Gitangshu Deva Sarma

Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Science and Technology Meghalaya

Abstract:

Gender equality and the empowerment of women in leadership roles are multifaceted and complex endeavours that require a comprehensive and inclusive approach. This critical and timely topic addresses the need for gender equality and women's empowerment in various spheres of life, encompassing issues such as Impostor Syndrome, which can significantly impact an individual's life. The Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of gender equality in workplaces, particularly in regions like India, where deeply ingrained social biases and the pervasive cultural belief in traditional gender roles persist. Mentorship and sponsorship programs are essential for nurturing aspiring women leaders, providing them with guidance, support, and opportunities for professional growth. Embracing gender diversity brings potential benefits to organizations, communities, and nations, promoting innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth, highlighting the value of investing in these areas. This paper aims to provide an overview of the current state of gender equality in the workplace and to underscore the challenges faced by women leaders in leadership.

Keywords: Gender equality, Women's empowerment, Impostor Syndrome, Mentorship programs, Gender diversity

Introduction:

The issue of women empowerment is very urgent and topical as it addresses one of the major problems we are facing today – the inequality between men and women in different spheres of our life. This topic is made up of the promotion of women for leadership positions in politics, business, education, and other sectors and gender perspectives being injected into policies, programs, and decision-making.

Women empowerment encompasses the creation of an environment which equally offers women opportunities, resources and the ability to participate fully in economic, social and political activities. This deals with measures that involve tackling factors such as discrimination, gender wage gap, and disparities in education and health services.

While a more focused issue approach, gender focused programming addresses gender-related issues through a gender perspective, incorporating the same into the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs. It brings to the table the different needs and issues specific to women and men, thereby resulting in gender-specific and all-embracing outcomes.

Nowadays the women's empowerment and the mainstreaming of gender in the world are essential for the sustainable development, social fairness and the advancement in general. Through promoting leadership development and gender mainstreaming, societies can be fortunate enough to leverage the diverse skills and expertise of women, which in turn creates fair and dynamic communities.

To sum up, the discussion of empowering women is an important issue that strives to achieve gender equality, dismantle the existing strict sex roles, and ultimately give birth to a more flexible and just society for everyone.

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement intersectional awareness training programs to ensure understanding of the complexities of intersecting identities and the unique challenges they present within organizations.
2. Establish a framework for creating and advocating for inclusive policies that consider the diverse experiences and needs of individuals from various backgrounds, ensuring equitable access to opportunities and fair representation in leadership roles.
3. Design and implement mentorship and support programs tailored to the specific needs of women from marginalized communities, providing equal access to leadership positions and amplifying diverse voices.
4. Formulate and empower diversity and inclusion committees within organizations to actively listen to and advocate for the diverse experiences of individuals, and to recommend and oversee policies and practices that address the specific needs of marginalized groups.
5. Create leadership development initiatives that embrace an intersectional approach, recognizing and celebrating the richness of diversity, and providing resources and opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to thrive and lead within their respective fields.

Methodologies:

The methodologies applied in this analysis involved a comprehensive review of secondary sources to gather relevant data and insights. Secondary sources, including scholarly articles, reports, and publications from reputable organizations, were meticulously examined to ascertain existing literature and research findings related to intersectionality, women's leadership, and diversity in organizational settings. The data collection process encompassed a systematic approach to identifying and synthesizing pertinent information from a wide range of secondary sources, enabling a thorough understanding of the complexities surrounding intersectionality, disparities in leadership opportunities, and strategies for promoting inclusivity. By leveraging secondary sources, this analysis benefited from a broad scope of perspectives and established knowledge, contributing to a robust foundation for formulating actionable objectives and solutions to advance diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Breaking Barriers: Overcoming Challenges Faced by Women Leaders:

Gender norms as a social construct set out an indication for us to behave, to speak, to dress, to groom and to conduct ourselves according to our sex. Young women and women in general are supposed to be gentle, gracious and compassionate, while men are braced for strength, active and fearless. Such standards of appearance are not consistent across different societies, ethnic groups, and cultures and are prone to change. Stereotypes are widely spread ideas about people or groups, and can lead to discrimination and unfair treatment because of the fact, they are a man or a woman.

There are four basic types of gender stereotypes: some personality traits (for ex. being understanding and nurturing), domestic behaviours (for instance, women caring for their children and men going to work), occupations (for example, women being teachers and nurses and men being pilots, doctors and engineers), and physical appearance (for example, women being small and charming and men being tall and muscular).

Hyperfemininity is an emphasis on stereotypical traits that are considered to be female, such as passivity, naiveness, sexual inexperience, being gentle, flirty, graceful, nurturing and accepting. Hypermasculinity which is the extreme behaviour of what is supposed to be manly like being dominant, worldly, having some sex experience, being insensitive, physically imposing, aiming your ambition and being demanding.

The overinflated gender stereotypes can render relationship more complicated since the ones with such extreme feminine behaviours are more likely to be abused even physically and emotionally by their partners. Extreme gender stereotypes are destructive since they prohibit people from being true to themselves and expressing all the different emotions they are made of. For example, being discourage from displaying or feeling sensitive emotions that are associated with being masculine is as harmful as being discourage from being independent, smart or assertive, which is considered to be a trait for being feminine. Dismantling gender stereotypes gives people liberty to prove themselves at best.

Gender identity and sexism in the world are common, so it is highly important to change stereotypes and ensure equal and valued experiences. To carry it out, people can criticize a sexist stereotype in mass media and show the harmful consequences of it and this way both sexes can understand how sexism and gender stereotypes hurt.

I am being a living example, showing respect and creating a secure area for expressing themselves, as a core factor. Challenge jokes and comments that perpetuate sexism, whether online or off, and make an effort to do something the opposite of what people associate with your gender.

If you are grappling with gender or gender identity, seeking out a person who will listen to you such as a trusted friend, family member, teacher, or counselor might be helpful. Through this, you not only show others what can be done but also form a community where everyone is treated equally.

After my childhood I often heard people advising women to dream big and make their goals their own but in reality, women were being pushed by society to settle down at a certain age. The average age for marriage is 27 for women and 30 for men, because, in general, men are biologically mature later on and the biological clock factors into the time of getting married. Moreover, women are forced to wed early, as fertility declines from the age of 35, and it continues to decrease when they reach the age of 40.

This pressure, though, neither absolves the society from the opinion of women. Significant professions in business and engineering are male dominated making it hard for ladies acquire leadership roles. Society is not forcing women to be in workforce by putting this at risk because women would prefer staying at home and take care of the household and kids. Currently it is estimated that 30% of women serve all the way as stay-at-home mothers to at least one child under 18. This count has been declining over the course of recent years, even half of the women have been stay-at-home moms in 1970.

A woman was usually expected to stay home helping the housework and the children and usually had no chance to obtain higher education. Meanwhile, the man would head the family and provide for their needs. This makes them to further educate their kids while boys are inclined to go to school or sports. Therefore, boys are taught how to cook and clean while girls go to school or play sports. Despite this shift in views, some of their parents whose old way of thinking are still used to judge them.

The societal expectations of early marriage have made it challenging for women to have careers in work areas where there are men's dominance. In addition, female should be considered equal to male in fields that are male-defined and the society needs to ensure it has a mentality of 'women in the house and men in the workplace.' A man's goals and hopes are the same in ordinary daily life, and it doesn't matter whether he is male or not.

Over the latest decades, women have succeeded in advancing their place in the professional and personal life. Nevertheless, lots of these people encounter difficulties in reconciling their internal lives, such as facing various social, cultural and economic obstacles.

Women often have to contend with a number of hurdles when it comes to giving enough attention to their careers and their personal lives. The hiring and promotion processes in the workplace are frequently being tainted by gender bias and stereotyping which result in women being less valued, getting lower salaries and having to do more to be taken seriously. The 9-to-5 work-day and five-day workweek, traditional work patterns, are a barrier to women who need to be able to be with their families and adjust their work schedules accordingly. Most bosses are not willing to allow these flex schemes of work, so he or she is obstructing the women's professional growth.

One of the other challenges is that women are overloaded with workload compared to men because they need to work longer hours before they start being considered as worthy employees. It is likely to add stress and even burnout. A diverse, inclusive, and balanced workplace culture that allows women to feel connected and motivated in their work can enable them to perform better and more energetically. In terms of that, the issue is about women, who are expected to be the primary caregivers of their families, can have difficulties in balancing their work and personal commitments. Women could be well-nigh ashamed of putting their career ahead of household duties, which could lead to stress and work related fatigue.

Employers can help women balance work and home life by providing flexible work arrangements, creating a proper corporate culture, assisting in improving time management skills, advocating self-care, and designing a support system. Flexible work structures, for example, telecommuting, flexible working hours, and job sharing can help women have time for their families while having the same job efficiency. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are some of the key aspects of a supportive workplace that can also elevate female engagement and involvement. An additional support can be provided to women's career development through mentorship, training, and leading-role opportunities.

The acquisition of time management skills, including the setting of priorities, the building of schedules, and the distribution of tasks, can enable women to establish priorities and freed-off time for more essential tasks. Self-care, such as taking breaks, exercising, eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and practising a kind of mindful or meditative technique, will reduce stress and burnout. Creating a support system, citing examples like family, friends, colleagues and professional connections, which bring about emotional support, practical counsel and solutions on childcare or other personal needs.

Facebook COO, Sheryl Sandberg, and 'Lean In' writer also has demonstrated how difficult it is to reconcile her work and life responsibilities. She has made a case for better working mothers' support and has become a champion of workplace diversity, equality and inclusion. Indra Nooyi, the former CEO of PepsiCo has also talked candidly about the difficulty to strike a work-life balance between the professional and personal spheres. Oprah Winfrey, one of the media moguls and philanthropists, has millions of admirers who appreciate her proficiency in both the professional and personal spheres and therefore the value of self-care and self-awareness. Likewise, Mary Barra, CEO of General Motors, has not hesitate to share her experiences about the work life balance tension and urged for more facilities for working mothers.

A thing that cannot be underrated is networking, the ability to use it is essential in many areas, inclusive of traditionally male industries. Having to do so allows for a professional development, mentorship, and access to resources. On the other hand, women sharing their experiences and skills with others across different professional networks can gain access to knowledge from skilled professionals, thus broadening their thinking space and opening more opportunities for them. Women benefit from attending networking events, conferences, and online forums where they can display their abilities and gain knowledge that eventually leads them to become brand owners and leaders who drive the change in their respective fields.

Networking is beneficial in terms of building confidence and self-belief in women. The women can compare notes with other women who have gone through similar situations. This way, they feel empowered and reaffirmed that their objectives are reachable. The impact networks give to women on their confidence and resilience makes them empowered to come up with solutions for the obstacles and continue chasing their ambitions.

Social networking is a powerful tool that can be used to eliminate gender barriers and to bring equality in the workplace. Forging powerful relationships with their peers gives them the leverage to speak up about the need for programs that help to advance the cause of diversity and inclusion. This network turns into a powerful tool to cooperate, share information and take cooperative actions leading to systemic changes and the distribution of power on an equal basis among women.

To successfully use networking, woman need to be forward and deliberate in their efforts. This entails meeting industry events, participating in online communities, joining professional associations, and initiating mentorship activities. Building authentic relationships founded upon mutual respect, reciprocity and shared objectives is a basic condition to reap the maximum of networking.

Imposter syndrome is the intrinsic knowledge of unworthiness and lack of capability to achieve success, in spite of accomplishments. It is frequently connected to expectations that are very high including those from parents, companions, or some situations like being new at the work, getting a promotion or results-oriented environment. Unlike fleeting self-doubt, Imposter syndrome is the case more often than not. If you always feel inadequate, that may be the symptom of Impostor Syndrome, rather than self-doubt. It could come from these different sources, including family, friends, or promotion at your workplace. Although Impostor Syndrome may present some difficulties, it can be used as a powerful obstacle-overcome medium and push the individual to succeed.

According to Dr. Valerie Young, an expert Impostor Syndrome, there are 5 main categories of impostor types that a typical individual with the condition would fit best in. They are an example in the form of the Perfectionist, who focuses on "how" things are done, but ends up in shame and humiliation when a flaw appears in what is otherwise an excellent work. The specialist is coming, anticipating everything; therefore, a gap in knowledge can make him a loser. The "Soloist" takes the job as if it is done by hands and therefore, they are not sure if they can ask for help because such act stands for sign of failure. And the Natural Genius, that individual who thinks everybody will measure their cleverness in terms of ease and speed also experiences shame if they can't master a subject or skill in less than no time. However, the Superhuman who identifies success by how many roles he/she is able to execute in fails to perform in a single one will discover that the shame is inevitable.

The impostor syndrome is a talented and intelligent individual who does not deserve his position. Self-doubt about intelligence and ability perpetuates this phenomenon. Symptoms involve sensing feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, being critical perfectionists, evading responsibilities, fearing being judged, and having problem with acknowledging their triumphs. Identifying Impostor Syndrome is typically the most difficult thing to do, but it is also the first step to make towards getting over it. Overcoming Impostor Syndrome involves recognizing feelings, sharing with others and having a quick response plan, identifying personal strengths and recognizing weaknesses, disregarding perfectionism and embracing achievements.

If you think you are a fraud, note that many successful individuals find themselves in such a position. They don't bother about stuff like this, and real frauds usually associate with the most successful people in society. Giving own feelings a voice, discussing problems with others, and building positive habits will assist you in your fight against the Impostor Syndrome.

Impostor Syndrome, a frequent issue among the outstanding scholars, by acknowledging and combating the feelings, will help overcome Impostor Syndrome and will make your career better.

Impostor Syndrome is a feeling that makes individuals think that they haven't deserved what they have, which seems as if they believe they are less intelligent, creative, and talented than they seem. They might wonder whether they have the skills, determined to be less capable, or even afraid of being found out as someone who is not up to the task. Such psychological state is often accompanied by other self-doubt issues like fear of success, failure and/or self-sabotage. As it includes a perpetual dread of disclosure, isolation, and rejection. Impostor Syndrome is often present in situations that come with the success, for instance, beginning a new job, being awarded or promoted, or taking additional responsibilities. It maybe produce the effect of being a bigger fake and thus destroying the credibility or success for the feeling. On the other hand, the poor perception of skills often lead to a phenomenon of "downshifting," in which contradictory but feasible objectives are selected without really fulfilling ambitions. The result can be self-doubt and a feeling the need to improve themselves.

The newest research has confirmed that the phenomenon of Impostor Syndrome doesn't seem to affect men more than women, but both genders equally. Highlighting the symptoms that present among ethnic minority groups furthermore the applicants who also exhibit signs of depression and anxiety make up the article "The Impostor Phenomenon" by Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes.

Impostor syndrome is a psychical disease that involves mental breakdown, and mostly manifest as extreme lack of confidence, usually with feelings of incompetence and doubts of one's own abilities. Sometime this sensation is constant and very heavy, and it can be really tough to get over it for the women of colour.

The perfectionist behavioural pattern is typical for the sufferer from Impostor Syndrome. He has unrealistic goals and there is a feeling of shame or other negative emotions after each failure. This approach usually leads to an obsession with defeats as well as flaws, depriving one of the joy which could be derived from success. Even the most superior students, like Katarina Johnson-Thompson and Michelle Obama, have faced relentless self-doubt.

There are cases where some individuals with Impostor Syndrome react by refusing to take up responsibility. They try to avoid tasks like accepting new positions, working for a promotion, or even expressing themselves in meetings without first getting advice from others. This fear of failure can make the students hesitate and give up or ignore the tasks which are meant to be done by them due to the fear of getting poor feedback.

Students with Impostor Syndrome often experience great anxiety and apprehension because of the prospect of judgment and exposure. This misconception may be carried to the point of the overexerting to the breaking point while keeping one's value rejections. This eventually leads to a circular process of effort; discontent and fear; and erosion of self-worth.

Moreover, self-negation is also one of the common features. There are those who tend to sell themselves short, using negative words about themselves, which makes them doubt themselves. They might create an impression of successes as they could be as "easy" despite investing much time and effort into them. In fact, they might reluctantly accept the compliments as if they failed to do something and need someone's help.

Putting it in a nutshell, Impostor Syndrome is a mental health disorder that usually interferes with one's life. It might bring up feelings of inadequacy, perfectionism and ultimately unhealthy patterns of working, discontent and stress.

The Imposter Syndrome is the problem which not only individuals but also teams and whole businesses encounter. As a result, it could reduce self-esteem, reject movement up the ladder, and shy away from new assignments or high-risk tasks. These people are the ones who are not used to, yet happy when they are getting compliments or praise, attributing their success to lucky things or knowing the right people.

To deal with Impostor Syndrome, it is crucial to recognize that you have it. If you answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions, you may be suffering from it:

1. Feeling constantly inadequacy;
2. Ensuring your work is perfect;
3. Avoiding new projects due to fear of failure;
4. Finding it difficult to accept praise;
5. Worrying about others seeing your work and what they might say;
6. Feeling like you are "acting a part" and fearing being found out.

Recognizing that there is a possibility that you are struggling with impostor syndrome is the first step towards achieving victory over it. Moreover, feeling like a fraud is a low self-esteem extinguisher as time goes by. How to control and deal with the impostor syndrome include seven strategies.

Impostor Syndrome is a mental health condition which can end up as a self-reproach and inadequacy. If you want to get over it, you need to accept them and realize why they are happening. You can do this by maintaining a journal where you write your thoughts and feelings which arises during these times. While cognitive restructuring can help fight this by providing positive affirmations or affirmative statements of non-negative self-talk.

In fact, discussing with peers can help you to realize that your fears are exaggerations. Inform the people who you trust and permit them to narrate how their fears are not existing ones.

Response plan should be prepared in a hurry for Impostor Syndrome management. When negativity is fighting you, subdue by acting as an external observer to the voice. Imagine of yourself seeing you from a

distance and ask, "Why did they feel this way?" It will help you to get a more objective view of the situation and of your thoughts and emotions.

Overcoming the feelings of "I can't do that" by doing something new may provide the counterevidence to convince your inner critic. Having a confident view of yourself by knowing your strengths and not focusing on your weaknesses can help one to conquer perfectionism. Execute a Personal SWOP Analysis and catalogue your abilities and flaws and assemble a support group made up of individuals who inspire you and support you over your inner adversity.

Conquering the state of being a perfectionist requires you to take some regular breaks, use relaxation techniques, plus to look at the big picture. Practice establishing reasonable, challenging and achievable objectives while understanding that making mistakes is others part of life. Considering your mistakes to be points of development will increase your chances of doing exceptionally well the next time.

As the mastery of your success is another vital element in the process of solving Impostor Syndrome. We fail to recognize our own influence during good times and fall back on ourselves in times of adversity. Develop a strong internal locus of control by feeling more in charge of your life when you believe that outcomes are determined by your actions, choices, and decisions. Along with recognizing your skill and talent as the reason of all your successes, allow a bit of praise as well. This will prevent you from being another target of criticism.

Gender Mainstreaming: Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity in Leadership:

Gender mainstreaming is in policy making aimed at ensuring that the gender needs and interest are considered. It was initiated in during the 1985 Nairobi World Course on Women and became an approach in global gender equality policy. It was endorsed by the 4th UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and has been widely adopted to promote gender equality and human rights across all levels. In 1998, the Council of Europe determined that gender mainstreaming is the process of reorganizing, upgrading, and analyzing all policy processes from the gender equality perspective.

The gender mainstreaming entails having a gender equality perspective in the whole life of the policies, programs, and projects. It recognizes the distinct needs, as well as the living conditions, of both men and women, and the inequalities in access to decision-making processes, resources, human rights, and institutions. The aim is to plan, implement and evaluate those policies, programs and projects which will serve all the two sexes with no gender division but rather gender balance. The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to uncover deeply-rooted inequality and to help promote gender equality among the masses.

The gender inequalities take the direct costs with the public policies Primary giving importance for the needs of the dominant group or traditional decision makers, in most cases men. The women's rights movement, increased women's participation in the decision-making process and reaffirmations of women's human rights have triggered calls to mainstream gender in public policies and services. This comprehensive plan seeks to address all needs of the general people, whereby women form the majority in most communities. Gender mainstreaming assist in the designing of high-quality public policies, programs and projects, which result in the well-use of resources. Better outcomes generate personal welfare not just for the genders but also for the society and therefore the creation of a more equal and sustainable society. The idea of women not being a "vulnerable group" as such but can rather lead to a better result for both genders is at the heart of the gender mainstreaming approach.

The gender equality problems should be considered at the all phases of policy making and project programming that emphasizes mostly on planning phase. In this phase the matters of problems, worries, and needs of beneficiaries are identified. Evaluate gender and impact assessments, which are important tools needed for the practice of gender mainstreaming. Those issues like political will, commitment to gender issues, knowledge, resources, and information availability are highly significant too. Gender mainstreaming is an obligation to all actors and is relevant for all policy activities, at all levels, which concern the provision of people's needs. It is to say that it is a multi-year strategy, which is complemented by policies promoting women's advancement. Addressing gender mainstreaming in an adequate way leads to a powerful sustainable technique with substantial impact on society. A twin approach which may adopt gender mainstreaming and

women-oriented measures are generally recommended for effective policy formulation and welfare maximization. This eclectic approach can be seen in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including a goal specifically about gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5).

In the gender mainstreaming concept, we are not just about putting women in the list and stirring all, but being able to have the representation of both genders in decision making and activities. It is not about just saying "women and men are different but not superior" but giving a reason for it. This implies that the intention is to incorporate gender equality perspective throughout policies, documents or programs as well. Of equal importance, we must perceive "women" and "men" as a multifaceted group with not one objective, but many different aims and hopes, such as age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender-trueness, social status, or disability. Overall, the results of this approach guarantee that gender equality is not just about putting women and deviating but about promoting gender equality.

Along with the inclusion, a workplace can be productive and strong. In India, women have experienced massive discrimination and many obstacles to equality, which has caused terrible consequences not only for individuals, but for the society as a whole. Encouraging the inclusion of roles in a workspace is necessary to reach gender equality, promote diversity, and provide equal chances to all employees. Companies must see the necessity of building up culture of inclusiveness and diversity that can promote women and help them be successful.

Gender inequality continues to be a substantial obstacle to workplace equality on a global scale including that of India. Although deeply entrenched in the Indian society, gender biases keep girl child unable to break into male domains. The main obstacle women face is a widely held social view that men and women have distinct gender forms. A large number of Indians believe that women should not work on commercial basis and concentrate their attention on their families. Such belief often goes along with government policies that are claimed to be addressed to ensure the protection of women.

Women who try to break male-dominate fields sometimes have to endure discrimination, harassment, and end up with limited chances of advancement. However, as long as the gender biases do not get resolved, it will be hard for women to participate in all areas of Indian society on an equal footing with men. These challenges have drawn more attention and have prompted more people to focus on making workplace cultures more diverse and equitable through enabling and supporting women employees. In addition to this, redressing the underrepresentation of women in leadership by implementing policies and programs, providing training and development opportunities for women, and creating a culture that values and supports women in leadership roles is critical.

It has been proved that companies that attempt to gender equality and inclusivity in the workplace perform better than their competitors in terms of recruitment, retention, creativity, innovation and finally productivity. The result will benefit the society as well and eradicate poverty and promote economic growth, among others. In India, having females in working age of the total of 432 million, 94% of them are working in the informal sector. India could gain around $770 billion to its GDP just based on the increased participation of women which is expected by 2025.

India's overall labour participating rate is 20.3%, whereas it is 18.2% in urban India which accounts for the total. The female employability by 2022 is forecasted to be around 51.44%, as against 41.25% in 2021. Workplace inclusivity is pluralism that enables work environment's success and productivity. In India, women have had to endure great obstacles to being treated equally to their male counterparts in the workplace, which in the long run has adverse effects for both women individually and the society as a whole. An essential part of the gender equality giving rise to diversity and opening up the equal chances for all staff members is the promotion of inclusivity in the labour environment.

However, the reality is that regardless of the efforts to introduce women into the workforce, the consequences is only more participation in the lower ranks of the organizational downfall. On one hand, despite noteworthy progress, internationally the issue of gender inequality in workplaces, including India, is still a hefty problem because of the enduring social bias and ubiquitous cultural perception of traditional gender roles.

It is worth mentioning that India has workers' social biases, for instance, in the workplace, that prevent women from fully participating in society at all levels. Such biases include laws requiring either separate train cars--segregation by sex--or different treatment, harassment, discrimination or reduced opportunities for promotion. Women have in some way improved but they mostly experience inequitable wage, inadequate for promotion, and gender discrimination.

To counter these obstacles, there is rising realization of the noted significance of developing a more empathic and women-friendly corporate culture. These include introduction of programs and policies that encourage gender diversity, providing training and development tools for women, and fostering a culture that recognizes and supports women in leadership positions. It has been found that companies highlighting gender equality and diversity in the workplace have high chances of getting and keeping the best talents, are as well more innovative and productive.

As India's labour force participation overall stands at 20.3% and urban India makes 18.2% of the total labour force. In the 21st century, the rate of female employment is predicted to be 51.44%, that is more than two times from 41.25% in the previous year. One of the hallmarks of work space is the inclusivity that is the basis for productivity and success in the workplace.

Since the beginning of times, women had to struggle through to attain equal rights with men in the workplace and that can lead to many problems for women and society on a larger picture. It is necessary to encourage inclusion in the India workspaces to ensure gender equality, diversity in workforce, and an atmosphere with equality of opportunities for all employees.

The businesses need to acknowledge the significance of cultivating such an environment that supports inclusivity and diversity so that women can achieve their full capability thus helping in exponential innovation, improved productivity and a better society.

The problem of gender inequality exists worldwide as it impacts India where traditional stereotypes that hinder women from entering male-dominated industries do. The government endorsement that justifies the orthodox gender roles, such as the women are supposed to stay at home and care for their families is also based on the idea that the state protects women. These biases come in variety of forms and shapes and are displayed in areas such as education and workplace. Female applicants to male dominated occupations typically encounter gender bias, harassment, and little chances of professional development.

While consideration has been given to some issues, women are still subject to discrimination which takes many forms such as uneven pay, restricted opportunities for advancement and discrimination according to gender. With a view to wielding these challenges, there is an increasing realization that establishing more inclusive workplace environments that respect and freeze women employees is essential. This incorporates the entire spectrum of policy making and implementation of programs for women inclusion, creating a trainee program for women to develop their abilities to the maximum, and a corporate culture that regards and respects women as leaders.

According to research, the companies that implement approach to gender equality and inclusivity in workspace are more likely to get and retain the best talent, and they benefit from the increase of creativity, innovation, and productivity. Moreover, the improvement of more equal work places is expected to affect different parts of the society positively, such as reducing poverty and boosting economic growth.

This rate for total Indian labour is 20.3% and urban India is 18.2% of the whole. While in 2022 women's employment opportunities are estimated to be 51.44%, which is higher than the figure 41.25% of 2021.

In the continuously changing environment, organizations are now to the understanding that integrating gender awareness in their decision-making processes is the least they should do. Humanizing: through giving comprehensive training and education programs, leaders can attain the level of understanding on gender issues and their meaning. Integration of gender perspectives into policies and processes allow for the decisions to be made with the knowledge about diverse needs and backgrounds of members of both genders. Moreover, data collection and analysis by gender enhances the ability of organizations to detect disparities and proffer solutions as and when necessary. The collaborative decision-making involving both women and the marginalized groups

has an approach to problem-solving which is holistic and a sense that the decisions reflect a broad range of perspectives.

Closing the gender pay gap and fostering opportunities for women leaders are crucial steps toward achieving gender equality in the workplace. Transparent salary structures, pay audits, and pay equity legislation are essential components of equal pay policies aimed at addressing disparities in compensation. Leadership development programs, mentorship initiatives, and targeted recruitment efforts are instrumental in supporting the advancement of women leaders and breaking down barriers to their progression. By challenging stereotypes and showcasing successful women leaders, organizations can inspire and empower women to pursue leadership roles, contributing to a more inclusive and diverse leadership landscape.

Women in Corporate Leadership: Strategies for Advancement and Representation:

COVID-19 pandemic has shown us why greater inclusion and diversity among leaders is necessary, as it often makes those vulnerable more vulnerable and magnifies the slack of the unequal. The competent leadership is at the heart of the societal domains such as communities, organizations and government that help achieving common objectives in all domains. Nevertheless, the problem of equal and their deliberate participation and leadership in politics, governance, and 'hard' security will certainly not plague us in the future. Internationally, hurdles for women have risen, predictions of the time by which gender equality would be achieved has slipped to over 130 years.

The political-socio-cultural environment is the key source of difficulties for women in establishing career paths as they are forced to deal with issues of leadership norms to domestic roles and expectations in the family and infrastructure. The violence against women which took a virtual turn pervades not only the physical spaces, but also leaves the track of its effect on the women's ability to talk freely. Women require different abilities, instruments, and strategies to be successful in leadership, to restore confidence through the creation of mind models, and to resist the detrimental mental models and social norms that hinder their progress.

Importance of women's leadership development strategies cannot be overstated because they ensure continuous advancement in the level of thinking, skills, and methods thereby enabling women to accomplish more. They give women means to not only draw on the latest knowledge but also recognize their exact strategies to achieve self-confidence, position, and resourcefulness. Each leader possesses a set of one-of-a-kind characteristics that stem from his experience, outlook, and skill that invariably influence their intellect and competence. It is the demand that all genders should be considered in decision making and leadership positions equally, in the provision of policies that are targeted for the benefit of everyone.

Political empowerment of women is encompassed in several components including the financial and technical support to stand for office and run the campaigns, robust impartiality mechanisms to protect and stem the wave of violence and intimidation, learning and development opportunities, role models and networks of support and quotas to ensure that political parties are obligated to promise to nominate women and encourage them to go for power seats.

Barriers to women leaders includes attitudes of sexism, violence, intimidation and people opinions of truly a leader should look like and act like. Other features happen in the wake of intersecting elements like the economic standing, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, language, age, relationship status, and caring responsibilities. Society's attitude towards women and systems of schooling, health care, taxation, and social services play roles either as barriers or means to a change.

The integral characteristics of a female leader include fostering trust, collaborative leadership within the organization as well as with partners, and setting a purpose and mission that is comprehendible for everyone and motivates people to get involved. These aspects necessitate both IQ (intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional intelligence), authenticity, confidence, presence, strategic thinking, political mindfulness, and a wide set of behavioural, influencing and management skills.

Women may become leaders through formal and informal ways inclusive of gaining expertise in the field, getting personal qualifications, experience, and cultivating relationships and informal networks of influence.

Women's leadership is an essential component of the process to eliminate evolving deficiency caused by gender issues like poor and insecure environments and economy. Women who are different women contribute many new trends, and expertise to the areas such as hard security science and technology that is beneficial to greater efficiency. On top of that, they are good at emotional intelligence and collective intelligence as well.

All female and male leaders are equal in the ability of their leadership, which is based on what they are able to achieve and the kind of character they have. Humanizing women leaders is a critical component of personal development and collective achieving progress. The women may find encouragement through their sisterhood of women who have gone through the similar challenges offering strategies and support. Empowerment is preceded by the development of self, engaging other people and trying to influence their behaviours. Organizations should allocate resources, such as investments in training, assignments which contribute in career progression, as well as social networks for cross-gender norms through mentoring, sponsorship and sociable functions.

The main challenges for female leaders include gender inequality, developing courage to speak up against gender-based discrimination, and working towards gender equity. Women require leadership training to enable them appraise their current situation, build a positive prognosis and vision for a better future and determine the ways to fulfil it. Socially, structured journeys will primarily serve as systems that are geared towards constructive mindsets, skills, and tools, and trainers/ fellow participants shall provide personal feedback and insights to trigger personal reflection, learning, accountability and ultimately success.

The current world is characterized by globalization and interconnectedness; endorsement of various leadership representation is not only a just social cause, but also, a business/organizational necessity. The leadership that encourages diversity the innovation, makes the crucial decision-making process and perfectly shows how complex a society is. Through an intentional approach to diversity in leadership, companies will gain access to profitable growth potential as well as encourage a welcoming environment built on inclusivity and acceptance.

As networks and mentorships to women in the corporate world must be the top priority for their progress and success in the corporate environment. These initiatives do not just offer necessary assistance, but also professional counselling and relevant tools that women may find helpful while manoeuvring through the corporate world's complexities. Mentorship programs, which allow women to learn from those who have already faced the challenges and gained the wisdom, are the best way for organizations to support them in overcoming the obstacles, seizing opportunities, and being thriving in their careers. Furthermore, these networks are a source of collegiality and camaraderie among women which plays a key role in bringing them together in the larger decision making within organizations, and outside them.

Political Leadership: Shaping Policies for Gender Equality and Empowerment:

Feminine voices in politics and public management are vital for reaching the Sustainable Development Objectives by 2030. Nevertheless, a review of data reveals that they are underserved at all levels of power across the world with gender equality in politics still facing a huge gap. As of the 11th of January, 2024, there are 26 states where 28 women have assumed the position of the Head of the State or the Government. The report indicates that it is going to take the global population 130 years to achieve gender equality in the leadership.

For the first time, UN Women data compiled shows that women represent only 22.8% of cabinet members (representing ministers heading the leading ministry policy areas as of 1st January 2023). The top five portfolios women Cabinet Ministers hold in AL are Women and gender equality, Family and children affairs, social inclusion and development, social protection and social security, and Indigenous and minority affairs.

Women representatives of single parliament chambers or lower houses remain at a disappointing 26.5% which has slightly improved compared to 11% in 1995. Only six countries have 50% or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda, Cuba, Nicaragua, Mexico, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates. In addition to the 23 countries that have already got 40%, 13 countries in Europe, 6 in Africa, 3 others in Latin America and the Caribbean are ahead with one more in Asia.

The gender parity in the national legislative bodies is not expected to be attained prior to the year 2063. The Latin America and the Caribbean region and Europe and Northern America see women holding 36% and 32% of parliamentary seats, respectively. In sub-Saharan Africa, we have 26% of women parliamentarians which is the second highest number after Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Oceania, Central and Southern Asia and Northern Africa and Western Asia.

Equal participation of women and men with balanced sharing of political power and decision-making meeting international target as agreed in Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Gender targets have considerably improved dynamics in the last years, since the proportion of women in parliaments and in local government assemblies is five percentage points and seven percentage points more than in countries that do not have such legislation.

Women in politics display the leadership skills by working together in the Parliament women's caucuses and advocating for the issues of gender equality like the end of gender based violence, maternity leave and child care, pension, equal law for women and electoral reform.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is an international institution that, among other things, helps governments to develop sustainable food and agricultural systems. As the foremost pole in terms of policy dialogue, it is only FAO that helps member countries prioritize the challenges, and implement the decisions taken, as well as tracking the effectiveness of the interventions. It hastens the adoption of multilateral treaties, conventions, declarations, norms, standards and voluntary guidelines by governments, and deepens the capacities of law-makers to make informed decisions in a transparent, consultative and inclusive manner.

Women and girls play a vital role in the country's poverty reduction programs, improving food security and overcoming malnutrition. However, they still suffer many difficulties that hinder their general well-being and the productivity of the rural economy. The gender inequality is not only costing countries real money but also diminishing food and nutrition security and social and economic progress. FAO will be assisting the partners in the best possible way, in maximizing their potential and in enhancing the agricultural and rural development processes so as to achieve the long-term goal of reducing the poverty level.

Gender-sensitive policies are a precondition for the practicalization of the sustainable agriculture and rural development as women and girls can take part of and share benefits fully. Yet, the gap in the technical expertise such as disaggregation of data by sex and undertaking gender analysis still exist on the side of national governments and relevant stakeholders. This leads to the sustaining of gender inequality and the rural women and girls' economy devaluation. Through FAO, governments can develop policy frameworks and strengthen expertise to strive for gender equality as well as the economic empowerment of women in agriculture as part of their struggle of ending hunger, decreasing food insecurity and promoting sustainable agriculture.

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is promoting gender-sensitive policies in relation with food security and nutrition, seeking to give consideration to women's specific needs as well as difficulties. These polices can promote economic growth, food security, and sustainable rural economic growth and promising equal rights and opportunities for men and women. The FAO makes policy makers equip themselves to design and implement policies which address the needs of rural women and girls also.

Women in political elections commonly encounter a docket of obstacles, such as sexism, gender stereotypes, and the absence of equal access to resources and opportunities. They may not be able to perform well in the run and might not even get a chance to get involved with voters. Eliminating these obstacles needs targeted strategies such as training on the skills required for campaigning, providing support networks and of course the implementation of policies that emphasize gender equality in politics. Not only this, but the promotion of the unique challenges of women in political campaigns can be one of the ways to build a more honest process of elections.

Increasing women's participation in decision-making processes is crucial for achieving gender equality and creating more representative and responsive governance. This can be achieved through measures such as implementing quotas, promoting mentorship and leadership programs for women, and creating supportive

environments that encourage women to engage in decision-making roles. Additionally, challenging societal norms and advocating for the value of diverse perspectives in decision-making can help shift attitudes and create opportunities for women to contribute meaningfully to policy and governance. By promoting women's participation in decision-making processes, societies can benefit from a broader range of perspectives and solutions to complex challenges.

Education and Mentorship: Fostering the Next Generation of Women Leaders:

Education becomes a vital part of the future women leaders growth by helping them to learn, gain, and possess the skills and courage to occupy leadership posts. Through a cohesive and gender-inclusive curriculum, which fosters the development of critical thinking, communications, and leadership skills, young women can be knowledgeable and skilled in an increasingly competitive work environment. Role models and sponsorship structures are also important for women who aspire to be leaders in the future, because from them they get a way forward, sturdy backing and networking links that help them circumvent any obstacle and advance in their careers. Apart from this, enabling girls to take the lead during their childhood years serves a crucial role in establishing their desire and ensuring their self-esteem improves. This can be done through mentorship schemes, models and leadership traits drives to name a few. Additionally, supplying women with the leadership training facilities and resources create the ground for them to polish their leadership capacities, which is supposed to employ bright and diverse future leaders.

The part played by education in building up woman leaders who can have the potential breaking down the barriers is indeed crucial in promoting gender equality. Education helps in acquiring women knowledge, competency and empowerment, which ushers them into positions of leadership and social responsibilities. It improves critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills thereby enabling the women leaders to deal with the complex situations of leadership roles. Besides that, education can equip women with inner qualities of confidence, courage, and initiative among others that are indispensable for leadership. One of the ways to overcome this is to provide opportunities for women, through quality education, including leadership development programs. These enable them to effectively challenge societal norms and rights advocacy, which results in building positive community and beyond. Hence, promoting education for young women should not be seen as merely rebalancing inequality but also as a strategic need to train girls to be role models and female leaders of the future.

Apprenticeship and support programs is such key element in developing women leaders providing them with guidance, orientation and space for growth professionally. Mentoring provides an important channel for women to get positive advice, evaluate the quality of their work and to be motivated for excellence through the directness of admired employees. Moreover, sponsorship programs provide a space for aspiring women authorities to be recognized, gain access to networks, and get the chance for career development. Sponsors speak up for their protégés, offer them with strategic tips, and make sure that their protégés get such high-impact projects or promotions. Both mentorship and sponsorship are important for dealing with the specific obstacles to career development women encounter, facilitating their advancement, and as a result, increasing gender diversity and representation in leadership positions.

Enticement of girls into leadership positions at early stages is very fundamental for the promotion of the culture of empowerment, ambition and gender equality. Through installing courage, aspiration, and leadership talents in adolescent girls from old, society can assist to erase the gender stereotypes and biases that may restrain their aspirations. This can encompass a mixture of various approaches, such as mentorship programs, leadership development initiatives, and positive role modelling. Besides giving girls chances to acquire leadership positions in their schools, communities and after-school activities, these positions will enhance their confidence and equip them with important skills such as communication, mutual cooperation and decision making. Moreover, amplifying success stories and the accomplishments of inspirational female leaders can fuel the desire in young girls to want to be leaders and to eventually become leaders. Through the creation of an environment where girls are encouraged to take on leadership roles, society can help foster the development of a next generation full of girls who are leaders, confident, capable, and have great ambitions.

Training in leadership and access to such resources is paramount for women to build on their capabilities including skills, knowledge and self-confidence in order to step into leadership positions. Multiple activities

may be part of this project, for example, workshops, seminars, online courses, and tailor-made leadership programs may help women overcome their difficulties in that sphere. As well as that networking and establishing support systems which will encourage mentorship, coaching and guiding are able to improve the skills of leadership.

Resources such as books, articles, tools related to a leadership and personal development can add value as well. Additionally, to this, companies can grant grants or scholarships to women such that they can participate in the leadership training programs and not any disappointments of financial issues can limit their professional development. Being able to gain these experiences helps women to develop their leadership skills, to make better decisions and to build their self-confidence which is essential for them to take leadership positions. Thus, greater gender diversity adds more representation of women in decision-making role which in-turn benefits organizations and the society at large.

Intersectionality: Recognizing and Addressing the Unique Experiences of Women from Different Backgrounds:

Identifying and tending to the vital distinctions of women from different societies is an inalienable process aimed at attaining genuine inclusion and equality. It means seeing the connection between gender, racial, and other identity groups and the distinctive obstacles and persecutions faced by women of different origins. Suggesting inclusive policies that take such varying perspectives into account is necessary in order to tackle the huge questions of systemic inequalities and representation equality.

Besides, the equalization of leadership opportunities for women, who belongs to the groups marginalized, is vital, too. It may encompass the enactment of policies assuring equal representation at leadership levels as well as creating mentorship programs and networks targeting the uniqueness of this group of women. Enhancing the female voices from diverse backgrounds dissertations around leadership will bring the attention to other perspectives which are outside the circle and thereby make the decision-making process richer for both men and women.

The acknowledgment and management of the overlap between gender and other identities is also important. Women from all backgrounds must not only be given equal opportunities for success, but also stand a chance to lead. Organizations and societies can only create such environments by putting in place inclusive policies, addressing disparities, and emphasizing the importance of diverse voices.

Identifying the linkages among the gender, ethnicity, race and other identities is essential to comprehend the varying experiences and difficulties encountered by people who possess more than one marginalized identification. This notion, commonly known as intersectionality, recognizes that these identities are not single and isolated entities but rather function as a whole, thus creating a person's experiences and social realities in a much more complicated manner.

Intersectionality means that multiple forms of discrimination may be affecting individuals because they come from more than one of the many groups to which they belong such as their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status. It is essential to understand that these different identities overlap, which means that participation in activities and representation in leadership positions greatly varies for different groups of people. The efficiency of policies and practices for various people groups also needs to be taken into account.

Taking an intersectional approach involves actively listening to and valuing the diverse experiences of individuals, advocating for policies and practices that address the specific needs of marginalized groups, and working to create inclusive environments that recognize and celebrate the richness of diversity. This understanding is fundamental in promoting equity and inclusivity for all individuals, regardless of their intersecting identities.

Advocating for inclusive policies that consider diverse experiences is essential for creating environments where all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, have equal opportunities to succeed and lead. Inclusivity involves recognizing and valuing the unique perspectives and challenges faced by people from different backgrounds, and ensuring that policies and practices are designed to address these diverse experiences.

Advocacy for inclusive policies can encompass a range of actions, including:

1. Engaging in dialogue: Encouraging open and honest conversations about the impact of policies on diverse groups, and actively seeking input from individuals with varied backgrounds.
2. Policy development: Participating in the creation and review of policies to ensure they account for the needs and experiences of marginalized communities, and advocating for specific measures to address disparities.
3. Representation: Advocating for diverse representation in decision-making bodies to ensure that policies are informed by a wide range of perspectives.
4. Training and education: Promoting training programs that raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity and provide tools for implementing inclusive policies.
5. Accountability: Holding organizations and leaders accountable for the implementation and impact of inclusive policies, and advocating for continuous improvement.

By advocating for inclusive policies, individuals and organizations can work towards creating fair and supportive environments that consider and address the diverse experiences of all people. This approach is fundamental in promoting equity and ensuring that leadership opportunities are accessible to individuals from all backgrounds.

Addressing disparities in leadership opportunities for women from marginalized communities requires a targeted and multifaceted approach to promote equity and inclusion. Some strategies to address these disparities include:

1. Targeted mentorship and sponsorship programs: Developing mentorship and sponsorship initiatives specifically tailored to support women from marginalized communities, providing them with guidance, networks, and opportunities for career advancement.
2. Leadership development programs: Creating programs that offer training, skill-building, and resources focused on empowering women from marginalized backgrounds to pursue leadership roles and navigate potential barriers.
3. Advocacy and representation: Advocating for increased representation of women from marginalized communities in leadership positions, and actively supporting their inclusion in decision-making processes and leadership roles.
4. Addressing systemic barriers: Identifying and addressing systemic barriers that hinder the progress of women from marginalized communities, such as discriminatory practices, lack of access to resources, and biases in hiring and promotion processes.
5. Creating inclusive organizational cultures: Fostering inclusive and supportive organizational cultures that value diversity, equity, and inclusion, and actively work to eliminate biases and barriers that hinder the advancement of women from marginalized communities.
6. Amplifying voices: Providing platforms and opportunities for women from marginalized communities to share their experiences, perspectives, and expertise, and actively amplifying their voices in leadership discussions and decision-making processes.

By implementing these strategies and prioritizing the needs of women from marginalized communities, organizations and communities can work towards creating more equitable and inclusive pathways to leadership, ensuring that all women have the opportunity to thrive and contribute in leadership roles.

Amplifying the voices of women with diverse backgrounds in leadership discussions is an important step toward creating more inclusive and representative decision-making processes. Some effective ways to achieve this include:

1. Providing platforms for diverse voices: Creating opportunities for women from diverse backgrounds to speak at conferences, participate in panel discussions, and contribute to thought leadership articles and publications.
2. Mentorship and sponsorship: Establishing mentorship and sponsorship programs that specifically support women from diverse backgrounds, providing them with guidance and opportunities to share their perspectives in leadership settings.

3. <u>Inclusive leadership development:</u> Designing leadership development programs that are tailored to address the unique experiences and challenges faced by women from diverse backgrounds, and providing them with the skills and resources to engage in leadership discussions.

4. <u>Representation in decision-making bodies:</u> Advocating for and supporting the appointment of women from diverse backgrounds to leadership positions and decision-making bodies, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued in shaping organizational strategies and initiatives.

5. <u>Cultivating inclusive dialogue:</u> Encouraging open and inclusive dialogue in leadership discussions, where all voices are actively sought and respected, and where diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

6. <u>Recognizing and celebrating diverse leadership:</u> Acknowledging and celebrating the achievements and contributions of women from diverse backgrounds in leadership roles, and highlighting their success as a means of inspiring others and promoting representation.

By actively amplifying the voices of women with diverse backgrounds in leadership discussions, organizations can benefit from a wider range of perspectives, insights, and innovative ideas, ultimately leading to more effective and inclusive decision-making processes.

Findings:

1. <u>Intersectionality and Unique Experiences</u>**:** Recognizing and addressing the unique experiences of women from different backgrounds is essential for achieving genuine inclusivity and equality. It involves understanding the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, and other identities, and acknowledging the distinct challenges and discrimination faced by women with diverse backgrounds. Advocating for inclusive policies that consider these diverse experiences is crucial in addressing systemic inequalities and promoting fair representation.

2. <u>Disparities in Leadership Opportunities</u>**:** Additionally, addressing disparities in leadership opportunities for women from marginalized communities is imperative. This can involve implementing measures to ensure equal access to leadership positions, as well as creating support systems and mentorship programs tailored to the specific needs of women from these backgrounds. Amplifying the voices of women with diverse backgrounds in leadership discussions is also vital, as it brings attention to a broader range of perspectives and experiences, enriching decision-making processes and promoting equity.

3. <u>Understanding Intersectionality:</u> By recognizing and addressing the intersectional nature of gender and other identities, advocating for inclusive policies, addressing disparities, and amplifying diverse voices, organizations and societies can foster environments where all women, regardless of their backgrounds, have equal opportunities to thrive and lead. Understanding the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, and other identities is crucial for recognizing the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals who hold multiple marginalized identities. This concept, known as intersectionality, acknowledges that these identities intersect and interact, shaping a person's experiences and opportunities in complex ways.

4. <u>Compounded Discrimination and Barriers:</u> By understanding intersectionality, we can recognize that individuals may face compounded discrimination and barriers due to the intersection of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and other factors. It is important to consider how these intersecting identities influence access to opportunities, representation in leadership roles, and the impact of policies and practices on different groups of people.

5. <u>Promoting Equity and Inclusivity:</u> Taking an intersectional approach involves actively listening to and valuing the diverse experiences of individuals, advocating for policies and practices that address the specific needs of marginalized groups, and working to create inclusive environments that recognize and celebrate the richness of diversity. This understanding is fundamental in promoting equity and inclusivity for all individuals, regardless of their intersecting identities. Advocating for inclusive policies that consider diverse experiences is essential for creating environments where all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, have equal opportunities to succeed and lead. Inclusivity involves recognizing and valuing the unique perspectives and challenges faced by people from different backgrounds.

Solutions:

1. Intersectional Awareness Training: Implement workshops and educational sessions to raise awareness about intersectionality, fostering understanding of diverse experiences and challenges. Integrate intersectional perspectives into diversity training and leadership development programs to promote inclusive practices and decision-making.
2. Inclusive Policy Development: Conduct thorough assessments of existing policies to identify areas for improvement in addressing the needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Formulate and advocate for policies that actively consider and accommodate the unique experiences of individuals with intersecting identities, promoting equitable opportunities and representation.
3. Mentorship and Support Programs: Establish mentorship initiatives specifically tailored to women from marginalized communities, providing guidance, networking opportunities, and support in navigating career challenges. Create platforms for amplifying diverse voices, such as leadership forums and networking events, to showcase the contributions and perspectives of women from varied backgrounds.
4. Diversity and Inclusion Committees: Form dedicated committees comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds to ensure that the voices and experiences of all members are heard and valued in decision-making processes. Empower these committees to propose and oversee initiatives that address the specific needs of marginalized groups, promoting an inclusive and supportive organizational culture.
5. Intersectional Leadership Development: Establish leadership development programs that recognize and celebrate diversity, providing resources and training opportunities to empower individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue leadership roles. Create platforms for showcasing the achievements and contributions of diverse leaders, fostering a culture that values and promotes inclusive leadership.

Conclusion:

Last but not the least the attainment of gender parity and women's empowerment in decision-making remains a multi-faceted and intricate undertaking that must entail a holistic and inclusive strategy. Overcoming barriers, encouraging inclusivity, supporting representation in executive committee, influencing policies at a political leadership level, focusing on education and mentorship, and taking heed of intricate links among different groups make this work. Without doubt, it is a social issue with no alternative and it is also key towards sustainable development, economic prosperity and the quality of life for societies. When we talk about equality we need to realize that women leaders have unique problems and this world will be thriving with more diversity and inclusivity. Hence, it goes without saying that people, groups, and societies broadly are expected to continue and intensify efforts in tearing down the barriers, implementing gender mainstreaming, and creating atmosphere where women have a fair chance as leaders, contributors, and decision- makers.

Women's leadership and gender-mainstreaming action are significant, both of which will be useful in the creation of a more united, diverse, and prosperous contemporary world. Continued advocacy as well as women's leadership matters in all sectors of society including encouragement of talented women to lead that would push for change and ensure diverse and inclusive team. Taking advantage of gender diversity can be a great tool for companies, community, and all the countries to be innovative, to work as a team, and to grow in a sustainable way. While we applaud the gains made in empowering women leaders, nevertheless, it is our responsibility to recognize the challenges that continue to haunt us and to resolve to act till these are done away with.

Women are such a vulnerable group. We appeal to individuals, organizations and the policy makers to take concrete measures to let women participate as leaders and also try to dismantle the old barriers and create an environment that will allow women to thrive. Through mentorship, education, and supportive environment, we note down that the development of women's leadership is very key, and thus our key target is to invest in these areas. Growing our resolve will be necessary if we are to continue eradicating obstacles and make way for women regardless of where they come from, to participate as leaders. In unison, let us hold on to the drumbeat for a world where the voice of women's leadership is not only acknowledged but treasured, generously supported and fully realized, acting as a change agent for and propelling humanity forward.

Empowering women is critical because its goal is to encourage gender diversity, fight traditional roles and births a more acceptable and fairer world for everyone.

References:

1. Patel, K. (2022, October 4). PATEL: Expectations for women in society. Retrieved from https://marquettewire.org/4082484/opinion/patel-expectations-for-women-in-society/

2. About the GCSP's women's leadership training. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.gcsp.ch/topics/women-leadership-training-geneva?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA_5WvBhBAEiwAZtCU72ApxUujnZGDu0yKeEoX9RnUtJb1c0FOHMC82ridrHk6ELIg7kX7yRoCKr4QAvD_BwE

3. Balancing Women's Professional and Personal Lives: Struggles, Solutions, and Success Stories. (2023, May 11). Retrieved from FEMLEADS: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/balancing-womens-professional-personal-lives-struggles-solutions#:~:text=1)%20Flexible%20Work%20Arrangements%3A%20Employers,productive%20and%20engaged%20at%20work.

4. Butoliya, V. (2023, July 31). SIGNIFICANCE OF NETWORKING IN A WOMEN'S CAREER. Retrieved from SheReal: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/significance-networking-womens-career-sherealtherealshe#:~:text=Cultivating%20genuine%20relationships%20based%20on,mentorship%2C%20and%20joint%20venture%20opportunities.

5. Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation. (2023, September 18). Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures

6. Gender-responsive policy-making and budgeting. (2024). Retrieved from Gender: https://www.fao.org/gender/learning-center/thematic-areas/gender-responsive-policy-making-and-budgeting/en#:~:text=Gender-responsive%20policies%20can%20foster,the%20gender%20gap%20in%20agriculture.

7. Importance of Inclusivity in Workspace for Women in India. (2023, August 28). Retrieved from https://kinaracapital.com/importance-of-inclusivity-in-workspaces-for-women-in-india/

8. Impostor Syndrome Symptoms and How to Overcome It. (n.d.). Retrieved from MindTools: https://www.mindtools.com/azio7m7/impostor-syndrome

9. What are gender roles and stereotypes? (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what-are-gender-roles-and-stereotypes

10. What is gender mainstreaming? (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming#:~:text=The%20aim%20of%20gender%20mainstreaming,inequality%20but%20enhance%20gender%20equality.