

women is not merely a matter of equality, but a catalyst for national progress, innovation, and social justice. This essay will explore the evolving role of women in leadership and how their contributions are reshaping societies for the better.

The role of women in leadership can be exemplified through the life and contributions of **Fatima Jinnah**. Fatima Jinnah, known as the 'Mother of the Nation', was a prominent leader in politics and women's rights advocate in Pakistan's history. Born in 1893 in Karachi, she was the younger sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Trained as a dentist, she was among the few Muslim women of her time to receive professional education. Fatima Jinnah actively supported her brother during the Pakistan Movement, organizing women and encouraging their participation in political and social causes. She played a crucial role in mobilizing women through the All-India Muslim League and became a symbol of resilience and integrity. After independence, she continued to advocate

for democracy and openly criticized authoritarian regimes, notably challenging General Ayub Khan in the 1965 presidential election. Her political courage demonstrated that women could be decisive voices in shaping a nation's destiny. Fatima Jinnah's journey reflects the gradual breaking of gender barriers in leaderships, proving that women's inclusion in decision-making is vital for political stability, social justice, and national progress. Her example laid the foundation of future generations of women to claim their rightful place in leadership roles across the sectors.

Following Fatima Jinnah's unwavering struggle, another landmark in Pakistan's history of women's leadership emerged with Benazir Bhutto, the first woman to become Prime Minister of a Muslim-majority country. Her leadership broke social barriers and showed that women could hold the highest political office. She worked for the betterment of the poor, the promotion of women's rights, and the improvement of education and health facilities. She represented Pakistan at the international level with confidence and brought attention to the country's democratic values. Her political

journey was full of challenges, including opposition from powerful groups, political instability, and personal tragedies. Yet, she remained determined and continued to inspire women to take active roles in public life. Benazir's legacy is a reminder that women's leadership is not only possible but also essential for the progress and prosperity of a nation.

Hina Rabbani Khar is another example of a woman who has shown strong leadership in Pakistan's politics. In 2011, she became the youngest and first female Foreign Minister of Pakistan. Her appointment was a milestone in the country's political history, showing that women can hold high and important offices in foreign policy and diplomacy. Despite facing criticism and media focus on her appearance, she remained confident and professional, representing Pakistan at international forums with dignity. She worked on improving Pakistan's relations with its neighbour and other countries. She played part in promoting dialogue over conflict. Her example shows that women in leadership can combine intelligence, diplomacy, and confidence to serve their

nation - Her evolving role in leadership inspired many young girls to aim for careers in politics and international affairs, proving that women can be equally capable in shaping the country's future.

Moreover, the former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, **Sheikh Hasina**, also played her role in leadership - Serving multiple terms, she played a key role in the country's political stability, economic growth, and social reforms. Under her leadership, Bangladesh made progress in sectors like education, healthcare and women's empowerment. She was known for her strong decision-making and resilience in the face of political challenges. She also worked to strengthen Bangladesh's international relations and promote regional cooperation. Her government focused on poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and the digitalization of services. Despite criticism, she maintained her position as a central figure in Bangladeshi politics. Her leadership showed how women can effectively govern and bring social change, breaking stereotypes in a male-dominated political order. Her achievements inspire other women to take

active roles in politics and leadership. This shows how, in the present century, women are breaking barriers and their contributions have evolved in leadership and decision-making.

Maryam Nawaz, the most prominent figure in the present government, has also shown an evolving role in leadership. As a current Chief Minister of Punjab, her role has emerged as a prominent example of women's active participation in governance. As the daughter of former Prime Minister, although she has inherited political influence, but her growing role in leadership and decision-making reflects her own political acumen. She has been instrumental in shaping party strategy within the Pakistan Muslim League, mobilising support among women and youth, and advocating for developmental initiatives in Punjab. Her tenure has been marked by a focus on public welfare projects, infrastructure development, and reforms in health and education sectors. She actively participates in policy discussions and coordinates with party leadership to implement government agenda. Despite facing political

challenges and criticism, Maryam's ability to maintain her position and influence indicates her strategic skills and resilience. In the broader context, her role signifies a shift towards greater female representation in Pakistan's political decision-making, inspiring more women to engage in leadership roles at both provincial and national levels.

The evolving role of women in leadership and decision-making can also be seen through the perspective of Kamala Harris - Kamala Harris, the first woman, the first African American, and the first South Asian American to hold the office of Vice President of the United States, stands as a powerful example of women breaking barriers in the political sphere. Her ascent to one of the highest leadership positions in the world reflects the shifting dynamics of gender representation in governance. Harris's career demonstrates that women are not only participating in politics but are also influencing national and global decision-making processes. As a Vice President, she has played an active role in shaping policies on economic recovery, foreign relations, and social justice reforms, proving that

leadership is no longer confined to traditional male-dominated structures. Her achievements inspire a generation of women to challenge societal limitations, advocate for equity and take part in decision-making at the highest levels - Harris embodies the evolving role of women in 21st century, where competence and vision transcends gender stereotypes, aligning perfectly with the demand of century.

Following the examples of women breaking barriers in politics, leadership in the judicial system has also seen remarkable progress - **Justice Ayesha Malik** made history by becoming the first female Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. This achievement opened doors for more women to take leading roles in the country's legal system. She has worked to promote justice, fairness, and equality in society. one of her most important decisions was banning the 'two-finger test' in rape cases, which protected the dignity of women and upheld human rights. Justice Malik's presence in the highest court adds diversity to legal decision-making and ensures that women's perspectives are included in important judgements. Her success sends a strong message that

women can excel in any field, including those once dominated by men. She stands as an inspiration for young girls who dream of becoming judges, proving that dedication and courage can lead to real change.

In the field of human rights and legal activism, **Asma Jahangir's** name stands as a symbol of courage and determination. She was a leading lawyer, human rights activist, and the first woman to serve as the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan. Throughout her career, she fought against injustice, discrimination, and violations of human rights, often taking up cases others feared to handle. She worked for the protection of women, minorities, and marginalized communities, and she consistently spoke out against misuse of power. She also represented Pakistan internationally, serving as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights. Her fearless advocacy often put her at risk, but she remained steadfast in her principles. Her leadership and dedication showed that women can be powerful voices for justice and equality. Her life continues to inspire those who believe in truth, fairness, and the rule of law.

In the sphere of social justice and activism, **Malala Yousafzai** stands as one of the most inspiring figures of the modern era. She rose to international prominence as a young girl from Swat, Pakistan, who spoke out for girls' right to education in the face of Taliban oppression. Even after surviving a brutal attack in 2012, Malala's resolve only grew stronger - she became a global advocate for education and human rights, addressing world leaders, writing her autobiography, and founding the Malala fund to promote access to education for girls worldwide. Her courage and commitment earned her the Nobel Prize of Peace, making her the youngest-ever laureate. Her story is not just one of personal bravery, but also a powerful example of how women can challenge injustice and shape global discussions on equality. Her activism continues to inspire young people everywhere to believe that their voice can make a difference.

In the ongoing struggle for justice and equality, **Tarana Burke** has emerged as a key voice in highlighting issues of harassment and abuse. She is best known

as the founder of the 'Me Too' movement, which began in 2006 to support survivors of sexual violence, especially women from marginalized communities. Her work gained global attention in 2017, when Me Too became a worldwide social media campaign, giving millions the courage to share their experience and demand accountability. Burke's activism is rooted in empathy, advocacy, and the belief that every survivor's story matters. She has worked tirelessly to provide resources, create safe spaces, and push for policy changes to protect victims and prevent abuse. Her leadership shows how one person's determination can spark a global conversation, challenge systems of silence, and bring justice to the forefront. Her movement continues to inspire a culture of respect, dignity and equality.

Furthermore, the increasing participation of women in leadership and decision-making is a defining feature of this century, and **Mukhtaran Mai's** story is a powerful example. In 2002, after surviving a horrific gang rape ordered by a local tribal council, she refused to remain silent. Instead, she took a stand through the legal system,

challenging centuries-old oppressive traditions that targeted women. Her courage not only brought her justice but also shed international light on the prevalence of honor crimes in Pakistan. She went beyond her personal case, using her voice to advocate for women's rights and legal reforms. She established schools and women's support centers in her village, empowering others through education and awareness. By transforming personal suffering into a movement for equality, she has shown how women can lead social change, influence laws, and shift public attitude. Her journey reflects the broader reality that women today are breaking barriers and shaping a more just society through leadership and activism.

The evolving role of women in leadership and decision-making is not limited to politics and law - it extends to the fields of art, media, and storytelling, as seen in the work of **Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy**. She is an award-winning filmmaker and journalist who has used her platform to highlight issues of social justice, especially those affecting women. Through her powerful documentaries,

such as 'Saving Face' and 'A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness', she has brought global attention to problems like acid attacks and honor killings. Her films have not only earned international awards, including two Oscars, but have also influenced policy changes in Pakistan, proving that storytelling can drive legal and social reforms. Her courage in addressing sensitive issues shows how women in the 21st C are breaking barriers beyond traditional leadership roles, using media and art as tools for activism. Her work reflects how women are shaping society through creativity, leadership and commitment to justice.

Michelle Obama also stands as a powerful example of how influence can transcend traditional political boundaries. She redefined the position of First Lady of the United States by using it as a platform to advocate for education, health, and empowerment, particularly for women and young girls. Through initiatives like Let's Move! and Reach Higher, she demonstrated that leadership is not confined to holding political office but ^{can} thrive through social programs and public engagement. Her advocacy for girls' education worldwide, especially through

the Let's Girls Learn initiative; showcased her ability to merge influence with meaningful action. Michelle's speeches and books, such as her memoirs 'Becoming', have inspired millions to embrace resilience, self-worth, and civic responsibility - She has proven that women in leadership can shape public discourse, influence policy indirectly, and mobilize underscores that leadership today is not just about holding power, it is about using one's voice and platform to create inclusive, lasting impacts.

In the evolving role of women in leadership and decision-making, **Greta Thunberg** represents a new generation of female leaders who are shaping global agendas through youth activism - At just 15, she began her climate strike outside the Swedish parliament, sparking a worldwide movement known as 'Fridays for Future'. Her leadership style is unconventional, rooted in moral conviction, persistence, and the ability to mobilize millions of young people across continents. Greta has addressed world leaders at the United Nations, the European parliament, and international climate summits, boldly challenging governments to take urgent action

against climate change - Her influence demonstrates that leadership today is not limited by age or political position; rather, it thrives through passion, advocacy, and the ability to inspire collective action - Greta's work has reframed climate change as not just an environmental issue but a matter of intergenerational justice, compelling policymakers to listen to the voices of youth. She embodies how women, even at young age, are at the forefront of decision-making on critical global challenges, proving that leadership is evolving to include diverse voices and perspectives.

Last but not the least, the role of **Sana Mir** in the evolving landscape of women's leadership and decision-making is both inspiring and groundbreaking. As the former captain of the Pakistan Women's Cricket Team, she led her squad to historic victories, including two gold medals at the Asian Games, and brought international recognition to Pakistani women in sports. Under her captaincy, the team not only climbed the global rankings but also broke stereotypes about women's participation in competitive sports. Sana's leadership was

marked by strategic decision-making, resilience under pressure, and the ability to unite her team toward a common goal. Beyond the field, she has been a strong advocate for gender equality in sports, motivating young girls to pursue their passions fearlessly. Her achievements prove that leadership is not confined to politics or business; it extends to arenas like sports, where women can inspire national pride, challenge societal norms, and pave the way for future generations.

In conclusion, the evolving role of women in leadership and decision-making is a powerful force shaping modern societies. From the inspiring vision of Fatima Jinnah to the groundbreaking achievements of leaders like Benazir, Malala, Justice Ayisha and many other women have proven their ability to lead with courage, wisdom, and determination. They have broken through social and cultural barriers, entered spaces once dominated by men, and made decisions that bring progress and justice. This journey isn't about gender equality; it is about unlocking the full potential of nations by ensuring the women's voices shape important policies and directions for the future. As more women step forward, their contributions will continue to transform societies, proving that true progress is only possible when women lead side by side with men.