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The Evolving Role of Women in Leadership and Decision-making

Outline

1. Introduction

1(a) Definition of Leadership and Decision making in modern society

2. Rise in women's role due education, activism and policy reforms

2(a) Women got voting rights long after males

(Britain → Suffrage for men 1867, Suffrage for women 1918)

3. Drivers behind Evolution of women-Leadership

3(a) Education and Empowerment

(UNESCO (2023) → Global female literacy rate now at 83%, up from 68% in 1980)

3(b) Global Gender Equality Movement

(UN SDG Goal 5 → Achieve gender equality and empower all women by 2030)

3(c) Legal and political Reforms

(In Pakistan → 33% seats reserved for women in local bodies)

(Rwanda: 61% of parliamentarians are women → the highest in the world [IPU-2023])

3(d) Virtual activism and global connectivity have created platform for women leaders

4. Contemporary Role of women in Leadership

4(a) Political Leadership

(27 women serving as Heads of State or Government (UN women 2023))

(69 women currently in the

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National Assembly (2024) of Pakistan)

4(b) Economic and Corporate Leadership

(Women run 33% of businesses
globally (World Bank 2022))

4(c) Women in Science and Sports

(Nida Dar - Captain of Pakistan
women's Cricket Team)

(Approx. 40% of nuclear work-
force of Iran are women)

4(d) Women in Global representation

(Malala Yousafzai - Nobel Peace
Prize (2014) for advocacy in girls'
education)

5. Challenges to women's Participation in Leadership

5(a) Cultural and Patriarchal Barriers

(Honor-Based restrictions in
underdeveloped areas of Pakistan)

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5(b) workplace and institutional Discrimination

(Pakistan Labour force Survey 2021:
Women's Labour force participation
is 23% vs. men's 68%.)

5(c) Violence and Harassment

(70% of women in politics in
South Asia face harassment (UN-2022))

6. Impacts of Women Leadership

6(a) Inclusive Leadership

(Studies show female Legislators
focus more on health and education)

6(b) Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

(UNSC Resolution 1325: Recognizes
women's role in Peacekeeping)

7. Way forward: Closing the Gender Leadership Gap

7(a) Entrepreneurship training

7(b) Use media to spread
awareness for girls

8. Conclusion

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Essay

Throughout history, leadership and decision-making have been predominantly male-dominated domains, shaped by patriarchal values and institutionalized exclusion. For centuries women were assigned only domestic roles and were deprived of even the fundamental human rights like education and suffrage, while women's voices were silenced in both public and private domains. Yet, the modern world is witnessing a transformative shift. The growing influence of women in education, politics, business, health sector etc shows a global movement toward gender inclusivity. From suffragette struggles to United Nations Conventions, from village councils in Pakistan to Parliaments in Europe, women are rising as decision-makers who not only challenge the

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status quo but reshape it. Education, political reforms and activism have collectively fueled this evolution. Women's role in leadership is evolving from symbolic presence to substantive influence, yet deep-rooted barriers still hinder full equality.

Patriarchal norms were challenged through education. In 19th century, with the rise of industrial revolution many feminist movements started that demanded basic human rights like education, suffrage and equal labour rights for women. Many reforms were done to provide security and equal labour rights for women. The Prime Minister of Britain, Robert Peel reformed the labour rights for women working in mines. Free schools were established for girls' education during his period. It led the foundation of

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equal rights for women.

Although, women got educational rights, they were not allowed to cast vote. Male got suffrage rights after second reform Act in 1867, but women got this right in 1918. Full vote rights were given in 1928. The right to vote provided women a key place in decision making of politics.

Education not only provide knowledge but also spreads awareness about fundamental human rights. In old times, women education was not common and people considered it wastage of money. Recently, a drastic shift is witnessed in education sector of Pakistan. with the establishment of large number of schools in rural areas of Pakistan. According to UNESCO 2023, the global female literacy rate is now at 83% up from

68%. in 1980.

United Nation ^{has} ~~passed~~ set few goals known as sustainable development goals and its 5th goal is related to gender equality. United nation has made a council for women to provide them representation on international level. The 5th SDG states,

“Achieve gender equality and empower all women by 2030.”

Legal reforms paved the path for women empowerment and their representation at global level. The constitution of Pakistan 1973, provided political rights to women and 33% seats are reserved for women in local bodies. In Rwanda, approximately 61% of parliamentarian are women and it is highest number in the world (IPU-2023).

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with the advancement of technology world became a global village. women all over the world came together for their fundamental rights and that global connectivity helped them to be a part of global decision-making bodies like UN, world bank, WTO etc.

women's Political rights shaped the future of world leadership. By getting political representation, women became an active part of political machinery of the state. UN's report on women 2023 shows, 27 women are working as head of states or Government. For example PM G. Meloni of Italy. In Pakistan 69 women are member of national assembly in 2024. Women in politics help other women to get equal rights as men.

women are running businesses globally which provide leadership and decision making role to women in international market. According to a recent report, about 33% business globally are run by women, reported by world Bank, 2023.

Women are also leading in economic sector, which was initially considered as men's field.

Now, women not only have influence on science and technology but also on sports. Nida Dar is the Captain of Pakistan women cricket team. Iran which is considered as patriarchal society has approximately 40% women working in nuclear program. But freedom in Iran is limited to some extent. Women are leading in almost every field.