

Relationship between Gender Inequality, Women's Empowerment and Economic Development: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract: *This study scrutinizes the complicated interconnectedness amid gender inequalities, women's self - empowerment and economic growth across the globe. We establish how pervasive patriarchal ideologies perpetuate political marginalization, unequal earnings and educational opportunities, and bias in health care systems towards females worldwide. Our goal is to investigate the complex relationship that exists between women's empowerment and economic development to tackle the main issue of gender inequality as a factor affecting socio - economic progress. Here we show that empowering women through access to education, healthcare, and political participation fosters economic growth and societal advancement, offering valuable insights for gender parity and inclusive development. Our findings indicate a clear correlation between women's empowerment and economic development along with different components of development. Although these vary due to regional differences, the impact of women's empowerment on the economy is universally applicable.*

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Workspace, Women's Empowerment, Economic Development, Lack of access, constituents of developments

1. Introduction

Inequality against women involves uneven treatment centered purely on sexes. Unfair treatment against women has been a persistent issue for many years and has not calmed down to this day [1]. Women are subjected to gender stereotypes which leads to reduced political and career aspirations along with organizational discrimination which are in turn followed by depression, anxiety and lack of self - esteem [2]. Worldwide, around 5% more males are born than females. In the past three decades, there has been an increasing recognition of the significant impact that gender discrimination has had on the population's proportion of men and women and is referred to as "missing women". Low female - to - male ratios in Asian and North African nations due to social variables and, prenatal and postnatal sex selection. Based on the sub - Saharan ratio of 1.022, the number of "missing women" in China is estimated to be 44 million, in India to be 37 million, and overall to be over 100 million globally [3, 4]. Globally, 129 million females are not attending school, comprising 32 million elementary school age students, 30 million lower secondary school students, and 67 million upper secondary school students. Only 49% of nations have achieved gender equality in elementary education. The difference deepens at the secondary level, with 42 percent of nations achieving gender parity in lower secondary education and 24% in upper secondary school [5]. Women who are married or have a partner are less likely to work in a paid job or be actively seeking one in both developed and developing countries. Globally, women face barriers in their job search and paid employment due to the shortage of accessible care for children and family members

[6]. For instance, women are not largely involved in leadership roles such as business, education, religion or politics. In the executive branch, there is a smaller proportion of them as compared to the legislative ones and this amounts to 13.8% of globally ruling government officials. Furthermore, 26.9% of lower chamber and single parliamentarians are women. Women's access to political leadership is hampered by pragmatic prejudice, which is the withholding of support for members of groups when achievement is believed to be difficult or impossible to obtain [7, 8].

Increasing women's economic participation promotes growth, diversified economies, decreases income inequality, mitigates demographic transitions, and adds to financial stability. In nations with reduced gender inequality, sectors with a greater female share expand quicker than those with higher gender disparity [9]. Economic downturns and crises jeopardizes economic opportunities for women. Although gender equality policies have been enacted, there are regional inequalities. Global unemployment is predicted to grow in lower - income nations, and women make up a disproportionate share of the jobs gap. There are also considerable disparities in statutory protections, parental leave options, and conceptions of equitable caregiving among men and women. To achieve gender equality, governments and businesses must move both resources and attitudes towards an innovative economic model in which gender parity is accepted as a prerequisite for fair and sustainable growth. [10]. In this study, we focus on gender biases and discrimination against women, empowerment of women and the relationship between economic development and women's empowerment. We aim

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to shed light on the various gender biases prevalent in economies of the world, their effects on economic development, women's empowerment outlined as women's access to socioeconomic components such as education, healthcare, career opportunities, rights, and political engagement and how it acts as a catalyst to economic development with the objective of strengthening and uplifting the position of women, and their role and participation in an economy.

2. Discussion

2.1 Study Scope

The research is about females between the age of 18 and 50. It seeks to determine if there is a relationship between women empowerment and economic development. For this purpose, it examines their fulfillment in terms of such vital elements of development as health, education, income opportunities, rights and engagement in political affairs. The paper utilizes various sources from the literature (1997 - 2024) that tackle transnational dimension with a focus on SouthEast Asia, USA, Europe and other regions across the globe. Selection criteria for data collection - The collection of data were based on the following criterias: The data should help understand the contemporary landscape. The data should be credible/reputable. The data should be relevant to women's issues. Usage of historical references shall explain the root cause that relates to the problems of the present. The content should link and explain the various constituents of development in relation to women empowerment. Content must help understand and explore the iceberg phenomenon that is gender inequality. Methods used to collect data - The method for data collection for this article was primarily based on secondary sources. The secondary data was gathered from credible databases and journals. This way the study leveraged the existing scholarly work, whilst investigating further and building up on links and correlations found.

2.2 Comprehensive investigation into variables and timelines

Health - Population health is both a result of and influences the economic development and prosperity at a global, national and sub - national (local) level [11]. The lack of women empowerment is evident in the country's inadequate response to women's development, which can be reflected through insufficient health care providers in health care facilities and a general lack of awareness of gender issues across all sectors. Health reforms are significant as they work towards improving women's economic and social role in society [12].

Education - Women empowerment is closely related to the concept of autonomy [13]. According to the data from UNDP (2015) there is a correlation between countries with higher literacy rates exhibiting lower rates of poverty. Hence, education promotes overall societal growth and female literacy is seen as an essential factor in fostering women empowerment and advancing greater social development [14].

Earning opportunities - Gender mainstreaming is indispensable in order to obtain gender equality and women

empowerment in traditional societies. Gender mainstreaming and secondary and postsecondary education are necessities that help women develop their confidence, which in turn boosts their mobility, independence, and, most importantly, their professional options and prospects. Educated women are transformed, they are able to tap into their full potential and make informed decisions [15].

Rights - There is a strong correlation between women's rights and economic development. Increased rights for women is linked to higher resource allocation for children and healthcare which is beneficial for overall development of the nation. In African countries, women gained political rights leading to economic development; however, in America, basic economic rights and development preceded women's rights. Regardless of sequence, the two are strongly interconnected [16].

Political participation - Policies promoting equal representation serve as the catalyst to rectify historical gender imbalances within decision making positions [17]. Despite advancements in women's education levels and participation in the labor market over the past 20 years, women have made minimal progress with regard to their representation in national politics [18]. Women's participation in politics is anticipated to yield positive development results, since women both as voters and politicians tend to prioritize development - friendly policies. However, in corrupt environments the standing of women can be weakened and may be used to perpetuate the status - quo and even diminish the developmental outcomes [19].

The timeframe under examination: The examination of data from the last 30 years makes it easy to comprehensively overview trends, changes in the pattern and even the genesis of certain issues relating to women and development. This timeframe gives us robust room for quality analysis.

2.3 Gender bias in the workplaces of women

Compensation Gap: A persistent wage gap has been observed in the labour market, women who have the same qualifications as men continue to earn less for similar jobs. This bridge between men and women has been observed in developed nations [20]. According to data from 2017, The United States of America had a raw wage disparity of 18.4% which increased to 23.1% after being adjusted for age and education. This suggests that women's higher rates of college graduation fail to bridge the compensation disparity. Similar trends are observed in the United Kingdom where more than one - third of the salary disparity is explained by characteristics related to industry and employment [21]. Gender pay disparity occurs when employers let their prejudices affect their evaluation and judgement about a person's employment, compensation and advancement [22]. There are notable differences between the occupations of men and women. Women earned less money on average than men did. Furthermore, there is a considerable difference in the frequency of marginal work episodes between men and women. The average daily income grew for both men and women. But throughout their lives, women earned less on average than men did. Compared to the rise in women's income, men's average daily income shows a more rapid increase over time [23]. Labour - market inequalities cause

pay disparity, which leads to wealth inequality. Over the course of their lives, women will acquire fewer assets of all types than men since they receive lower salaries [24].

Gender Roles and Stereotypes: Gender stereotypes are deeply rooted in our cultural milieu, which detrimental impacts the workplaces of women. One of the more popular examples of such a gender stereotype is the assumption that certain job roles are more appropriate for women than men. Man is perceived as the one who works hard and provides for the family, while woman is perceived as the one who looks after the home and the children. Companies often view women as additional breadwinners [25]. Even when women have closed the achievement gap and proven they can balance families and professions, they are still underrepresented in top managerial roles. The perception that women are more comprehensive, sensitive, emotional, and supportive than males is widespread. Conversely, it's a common belief that males are stronger, more competitive, brutal, and capable leaders than women and therefore people are automatically inclined to believe that men are more suitable for executive and higher roles than women because they have been socialized to believe that men make better leaders than women [26]. These biases act as impediments to a woman's career and also propagate discriminatory treatment of women in workspaces in the form of a lack of advancement opportunities and barring them from certain positions [25]. Women often face devaluation in their performance, even when performing tasks similar to men's, leading to their efforts being viewed as inferior. They are often denied credit for their success and viewed as an "exception". Even when successful, competent women may face penalties due to violating prescriptive gender norms, leading to social disapproval, personal derogation, and dislike, impacting career decisions and promotions, especially in non - traditional roles [27].

Motherhood Penalty: Mothers' job interruptions and subsequent re - entry into the workforce contribute to the motherhood penalty, a negative income consequence of childbirth that may be summed up as lower hourly compensation for working women. This motherhood - related income disparity often lasts for medium to extended periods and has been deemed a universal trend by multiple studies [28]. When it comes to commitment and competence, mothers

are viewed as far less competent than women without children. Compared to childless women, mothers receive competence and commitment evaluations that are around 10% and 15% lower, respectively. Mothers were recommended to start at an initial wage that is \$11, 000 (7.4%) less than non - mothers while also dealing with greater performance criteria and decreased tardiness. They are less likely to be recommended for managerial positions and are thought to be less promotable, while women without children are 8.2 times more likely than mothers to be nominated for managerial positions [29]. The motherhood penalty may arise due to several reasons. The motherhood wage gap, according to the theory of human capital, is a result of the loss and non - accumulation of human capital during child - related employment breaks or reduced working hours, as well as differences in the standard human capital characteristics of mothers and non - mothers. The disparity in labour effort between mothers and non - mothers at work also explains the maternal wage penalty [30]. The regulations of the nation regarding parental leave are also a significant aspect that affects the motherhood penalty. Parental leave laws and accessible childcare services encourage the return of new mothers to the job market and retain them in the workforce. According to study findings, policies that support women in balancing work and family can increase female employment without lowering fertility and possibly lessen the stigma associated with having a child [31]. Mothers with lower wages due to the motherhood penalty have greater long - term poverty rates, lesser income streams when they age, and lower contributions to social security and retirement schemes. Regardless of education and productivity, working mothers make less money than men and women without children and the penalty ranges from 4 - 7% for one kid to 11 - 15% for multiple kids. Reduced parental time, poor childcare, and the psychological effect of not belonging to well - off peers all cause distress among their children [32]. Generally speaking, among European mothers, the number of children has a definite negative correlation with work chances. There is a 17 percentage point disparity in employment rates between having two children as opposed to one. A family of three reduces employment rates by thirty - two percentage points. The employment rate for moms who have four children or more is virtually zero [33].

Table 1: Gender bias in workplaces for women

Bias	Description	Impact
Compensation Gap	Women are paid less than males on average for similar jobs despite being equally qualified.	Women earn less than men, leading to wealth disparity and reduced asset accumulation in a lifetime despite women having higher college graduation rates. Wage and wealth disparities persist in labour markets.
Gender Roles and Stereotypes	Stereotypes perpetuated by culture indicate that some occupations are better suited for women. Women are viewed as caretakers, and males as the major providers. Men are viewed as stronger leaders, while women are thought to be more sentimental and nurturing.	Women encounter prejudice in the workspace. This is evident in the underrepresentation of women in managerial and other senior roles. Moreover, their performance is undervalued and they are often penalised and denied credit for their accomplishments. Defying gender norms results in societal criticism and lesser prospects for career advancement.
Motherhood Penalty	When mothers return to the workforce, they often experience employment disruptions and reduced hourly wages. Mothers tend to receive lower starting salaries since they are perceived as less devoted and capable than non - mothers.	Mothers get significantly less pay and are less likely to be recommended for executive roles. They have higher rates of long - term poverty, fewer sources of income in old life, and smaller retirement and social security contributions. Financial difficulties can lead to inadequate childcare facilities, psychological distress, and less time spent with children.

2.4 Economic Consequences of Patriarchal Ideologies on Women

Some recent research papers have found out that patriarchal ideologies have economic implications for women. Here are some of the key findings:

- **Limited Access to Education and Employment:** Access to education and employment opportunities become limited as a result of patriarchy and leads to low economic participation. For instance, gender norms leads to marginalization of women in political and economic sectors as observed in a study on the impact of patriarchal culture on women's roles in politics and governance [34].
- **Gender - Based Discrimination:** Gender - based discrimination is perpetuated by patriarchal ideologies within various aspects such as education, employment, healthcare etc. Women are frequently denied equal chance to these with stereotyping attitudes that limits their potential [35].
- **Economic Dependence:** Patriarchal ideologies make women economically dependent upon men thereby limiting their autonomy to take independent decisions or control over their own resources for production. In fact it has been observed that in many domains like buying big household items that women seem not to be allowed to exercise enough authority due to the influence of patriarchy on them which was shown by one research about redeeming patriarchy through empowerment of women [36].
- **Time Allocation:** Patriarchal ideologies have an impact on allocation of time by women, which mainly favours the domestic ones over income generating activities and thus leaving little or no time for self - development and economic empowerment such as a survey on freedom of information and economic empowerment of women revealed that their times spent on family production as well as money generation is determined by patriarchal frameworks and ideas [35].
- **Violence and Stress:** Besides: Women's violence and stress emanate from masculine - minded perspectives. Another study on gendered roles in political leadership positions has shown that patriarchal tradition often places women at the receiving end of physical mistreatment because they cannot manage psychological pressure involved in politics [34].
- **Lack of Representation:** Women are not adequately represented in decision making organs such as politics or even economics due to these patriarchal views leading to policies that do not respond to women's issues, hence perpetuating gender inequality [34].
- **Economic Inequality:** On the other hand, economic inequality is perpetuated by patriarchal ideologies which restrict women's access to education, employment and monetary resources. However, women are usually expected to concentrate on domestic duties rather than their professional advancement; a situation that results in them becoming dependent on their male counterparts [37].
- **Resistance to Change:** Patriarchal ideologies can resist change and challenge efforts aimed at promoting gender equality. The difficulties faced by advocates of gender equality like social sanctions and backlashes make it hard to effect permanent changes [35].

In sum, patriarchal ideologies can also have detrimental effects on the economy of women such as limited access to education and employment for females, sexist practices against them, financial reliance on males, time spending allocation discrimination stress violence and representation gaps in jobs as well as business. Thus, finding solutions for these problem areas is very significant in attaining gender equality thus ensuring a more judicious society.

2.5 Contemporary Landscape of Economic Development & Women's Empowerment

Education a foundation for development: In most developing countries, there has been a growing acknowledgement that women's education is an essential element for economic and social development. There is also a correlation between the lack of investment in women's education and a reduction in the potential benefits of educating men. In fact, in countries such as Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan (China) and Thailand, the return on investment (ROI) was higher for women than for men [38]. Education significantly influences a country's overall socio - economic condition and has a radical impact on women's lives on a micro level. Studies show that education enhances a woman's decision - making authority within households. This autonomy can be reflected in women's involvement in making decisions about large and daily household purchases, their own health care, and other traditionally female - dominated areas [39]. Education also has a large impact on whether they work in "white - collar" non - manual jobs. In India and Thailand, women with higher education are more likely to work as employees and hold non manual jobs rather than being self - employed, working on unpaid domestic tasks and engaging in agriculture. The latter are more labour intensive and offer lower pay and incentives [40]. Overall, education is the fundamental foundation for development, it gives agency, it gives the rural poor the capacity to escape from poverty and hunger with their own power and help turn the situation around. This is because those who are educated are more likely to find a job and also have *ceteris paribus*, the ability to use one's resources rationally. Even in this argument gender plays a role, mothers have shown to give higher value to overall well - being of their children, resource allocation to health and nutrition. Therefore, higher female literacy has been correlated to significant decline in under five child mortality [41].

Earning Opportunities, A Stepping Stone Towards Progress: The scope of earning opportunities for women has progressed over the years in multiple plausible ways; however, there are ongoing challenges faced by females in the economy. This section of the research paper explores the transformations made thus far and the remaining gaps. Implementation of affirmative actions and feminist movements are the main culprits of the progress made this far regarding closing the gap between men and women in various sectors. Modern anti - discrimination policies, employment rights, and the concept of "equal pay for equivalent value of work" played major parts in tackling disparities. Not only did these address the wage gap between both genders in the same job sector, they also opened a system for evaluations of occupations so that employers are obligated to pay similar salaries to female employees working in female dominated jobs and male employees working in male dominated jobs of analogous

value [42]. Although existing research papers acknowledge the achievements made to ensure impartiality, they also pinpoint the remaining gaps and challenges though the prominence level differs from continent to continent and country to country. One of the cases is Paucity of skills among the human resource becoming a common complaint of employers. As our world develops in technological, social and economical aspects, certain sets of skills are degraded while some become prerequisites for job qualifications. Hence, resolving these skill chasms is a critical step in embellishing women's success and involvement in the industry [43]. Societal acceptance is also a major problem for women in countries like South Africa because the corporate organizations still fail to comprehend the idea of women as professional equals. Additionally, the policies and government bills that are in motion are operating against the advancement of corporate women than they are working in their favor [44]. On the contrary, the informal economy has higher poor women participation than it has men in the Global South. Patriarchal customs, unspoken social rules and theological - based community standards have made Bangladesh an exception to the aforementioned generalization. Poor Muslim women in Bangladesh are restricted from earning income in public spaces [45]. Moreover, recent research highlights the effect of social norms in molding choices and outcomes of married women and mothers in the labor market. Despite the increment of the accommodation ability of skilled women in labour markets, mothers carry negative pressure for entrusting the care of their kids to others. This makes mothers incline to engaging in jobs with lower salaries but more flexible duty hours [46]. Among the factors that impacted gender disparities is the recent pandemic. Taking tourism as an example, this paragraph discusses the effects. - Just like other economic sectors, tourism has been significantly affected by Covid - 19. As a result of the foregoing gender disparities and women's prevalence in the industry's human resources, the pandemic has particularly made women vulnerable to its effects. In the recovery of Covid - 19, The UN Women publication named "Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment in the Tourism Sector in Covid - 19 Response and Recovery" points out inventive actions and solid suggestions to ensure that women's economic empowerment is prioritized [47]. A report done by UNWTO "Global Report on Women in Tourism" studies the variables augmenting gender bias in this sector, reports the challenges and distinguishes mitigation methods, channeling advancements in women's empowerment globally

[48]. Proceeding to the prominent challenges faced by women in tourism, skill deficiencies, exogenous effects, work - life balance, bias, lack of representations in leadership positions, and wage variances are among the leading issues.

Healthcare Facilities, healthy women for a healthy future: A phenomenon known as "Missing women" has been observed in multiple developing countries. This is due to the high difference between the proportion of men and women. A serious problem of inequality and neglect that results in disproportionate female mortality is exposed by high male - to - female ratios in many countries. The rise in sex ratio at birth is indicative of high rates of abortion of female children. Females also record excess mortality rates. The number of missing females increased by 43 percent (38 million) between 1990 and 2010, reaching 126 million [49]. Society is full of gender stereotypes and constrictive gender standards, which are reflected in and reinforced by the health systems. These prejudices endanger public health in general as well as the security and well - being of medical personnel. The confluence of socioeconomic inequality and gender has deleterious effects on the health system and the individuals it serves [50]. This particularly affects women as during pregnancy, delivery, and the postpartum period, they are more vulnerable to severe morbidity and mortality, particularly in low - and middle - income countries, which account for 95% of all maternal fatalities. Most maternal deaths can be avoided, as the medical solutions to prevent or manage complications are well known [51, 52]. Clinical trials, a history of underrepresentation: The necessary data on the rational use of new drugs are given by clinical trial. When a subset of the population is excluded or underrepresented it could have a negative impact on the proper usage and effectiveness of the therapy [53]. However, in recent decades clinical trials have not properly enrolled women or scrutinized gender specific differences in data. This hinders our understanding on how women react to certain medications and dosages and what is the appropriate way of treating them considering the sex - specific differences. Variance in health is also observed between both genders, mainly caused by cultural, biological, social and economic factors. These differences need to be addressed in order to successfully attain health equity [54]. Contemporary medical literature still perpetuates sexism which does little to improve women's health [55]. Impact on medical guidelines: In this area, there are major consequences of gender discrimination in medical guidelines for women. Some of them are outlined in table 2.

Table 2: Biases and ramifications including medical outcomes.

Sr. No.	Types of Discrimination	Perusal
1	Underdiagnosis and Misdiagnosis	Medical diagnosis is often skewed by gender, leading to underdiagnosis and misdiagnosis of female health problems. For instance, physical causes of chronic pain in women may be diagnosed as psychological ailments; thus, suitable treatment could be delayed or avoided totally [56].
2	Delayed Diagnoses	Women might wait longer than men for their diagnoses. In a study conducted in Denmark, 72% of the time women waited longer on average before getting diagnosed compared to men [57].
3	Deficient Symptom Mitigation	This can result from gender bias. For example, when it comes to women's chronic pain doctors do not give much thought about it leading to less effective painkillers and more antidepressants being prescribed [58].
4	Avoidance of Medical Care	Due to negative experiences caused by gender bias, females sometimes avoid seeking medical care thereby resulting in late or missed diagnoses as well as treatment of chronic diseases [59].
5	Lack of Representation in Research	The historical focus on male subjects has created gaps in knowledge about female and other marginalised genders' health; so, research has not been inclusive enough to help solve this problem hence contributing further into biases experienced with healthcare delivery [60].

6	Leadership and Representation	The presence of gender bias in medical academia has been attributed to lack of representation of women in key leadership positions and contributes significantly towards its persistence. A recent study released in 2019 revealed that men are considered as naturally better leaders than women, which hampers career progression for the ladies [61].
7	Impact on Health Outcomes	This may lead to fatal outcomes as a result of gender inequality. For example, misdiagnoses or underdiagnosis of heart attacks can be preventable causes leading to death among women [62].
8	Intersectionality	Gender discrimination combines with other acts of oppression like racism, ableism, classism and heterosexism but during this process worsen health inequalities. This is an intersectional issue that needs to be emphasized within medical protocols and healthcare practices [63].

In order to address and eradicate these issues, healthcare institutions and professionals need to commit to having fair treatment guidelines for all genders. These may include enacting equal treatment policies for all sexes in the organization of research, setting up fair standards of conduct, and holding individuals accountable for their prejudiced actions.

Ethical and Regulatory Challenges: There are a variety of complex problems in the field of women's healthcare, among them are that some women cannot get reproductive medical services because of their location, the arguments about freedom to abortion and its limitations, protecting vulnerable groups, fighting harmful cultural patterns as well as ensuring full incorporation into any research. Regulating hurdles include such demanding issues as interpretation of multiple directions; seeking for permissions in different regions; making sure participants' welfare and dealing with disproportionality in global investigations. The complexities surrounding these challenges require a sophisticated strategy that primarily focuses on the security and rights of women [64] [65] [66].

Professional and Institutional sexism: Sexism plays a vital role in creating gender disparities in access to healthcare. Sexism by definition means systematic imbalance in power and resources that favors men and disadvantages women. Additionally, institutional sexism influences provider bias and discrimination in the healthcare system in the form of: underrepresentation of women in policy formation and healthcare leadership. Sexism across economic, labour force and political institutions acts as a fundamental hindrance to women's access to healthcare both directly and indirectly [67]. Gender bias affects not only the patients but also the healthcare professionals. Implicit and explicit mistreatment at the workplace manifests in the form of macro and micro aggressions such as - conspicuous sexism, abuse and denied promotions despite qualifications. Microaggressions are more subtle than macro - aggressions. The study indicates that female physicians are more likely to burn out in comparison to their male counterparts, who, unlike the female healthcare professionals, did not have to face the brunt of sex based discrimination [68].

Women's Rights and Equality: The disregard of women's rights is still a major problem in the world as seen from the continuing disparities and obstacles to progress faced by women across a range of sectors including education, healthcare, economic opportunities and political representation. Women have not gained equal access to education even with progress being made, especially among marginalized groups and in rural areas. Women are also left out when it comes to quality healthcare services like reproductive health and maternal care. The existence of the

gender wage gap shows that there are systemic inequalities in labor markets since women earn less than men for doing similar work [69] [70] [71]. The number of women who participate in political leadership as well as making decisions is very small thereby reducing their influence on policy outcomes. In many aspects of life deeply ingrained cultural norms and customs often act as a barrier to the autonomy and agency of women. Women disproportionately suffer from poverty while lacking economic opportunities that hinder their economic empowerment [71]. The neglect of women's rights emanates from structural imbalances and long standing patriarchal systems. Society's ignorance about the importance of women's rights and its intersectionality with other forms of discrimination leads them to be overlooked by society itself. Systematic barriers cannot be addressed due to ineffective policies coupled with weak enforcement mechanisms [72]. The neglect of women's rights requires a multifaceted approach. This involves; promoting gender equality in education, ensuring universal access to quality healthcare, closing the gender wage gap, increasing women's political representation, challenging discriminatory cultural norms and economic opportunities for women. Policymakers, civil society and international organizations must come together in order to prioritize those rights of women and put into place effective measures that protect and promote them [69] [70] [71].

Political Representation, the voice of women: As the country becomes wealthier, the focus on economic growth and well-being in politics plummets, allowing parties and voters to prioritize on issues such as gender inequality and selection of political representatives, therefore, it can be understood that resolving fundamental economic issues in a country can lead to more political representation of women. Facilitating women's access to election opportunities can elevate the caliber of policy making by fostering competition for seats and broadening perspectives due to greater diversity. Furthermore, recent studies indicate that women in legislative roles help steer political discourse (both internally within the parties and parliamentary context) toward topics that are significant to women. Here, political representation can translate to better policies for women and improved quality of life because of it. When we study contemporary societies, we notice distinct differences between men and women in their daily experiences. This prompts an intriguing question of how a rise in the number of women elected affects the functioning of these societies. Gender functions as a lens highlighting the key issues in the landscape of representation visible: Who do elected politicians represent? What is at stake in parliamentary proceedings? How does the interplay between parliaments and the daily lives of citizens unfold? In research on 'substantive representation' an element of politicization is highlighted. In the aforementioned view, it is said that societies cannot attain gender equality by simply ignoring the

gender related differences. According to the 'theory of the politics of presence' equal rights to vote is not enough to

ensure gender equality, there must also be equality among the elected representatives [73].

Table 3: Bolstering women's empowerment and welfare

Sr. No.	Potential solutions	Elucidation
1	Political participation is a call to action.	Increasing the number of women in politics and decision - making bodies by implementing gender - based quotas and affirmative action policies. This will guarantee diverse perspectives and inclusive governance. Women's political participation should be encouraged as it is a crucial component of democratic societies and necessary for more representative and responsive governance [74].
2	Economic empowerment can be improved	This can increase their purchasing power, decision making ability and overall empowerment [75]. Some of such programs include government schemes as well as other welfare programs that promote women's economic development [76].
3	Better access to education and healthcare are needed	Literacy programmes for young girls are one way of expanding their potential. These would target reproductive health, maternal care among other healthcare services [77].
4	Gender stereotypes should be fought against	Community Awareness Campaigns and Involvement Strategies to Challenge Generalizations of Sex Roles and Foster Gender - Sensitive Cultural Attitudes [75]. Reducing gender - based inequality and violence against women for a fairer society [74].
5	Strengthening Legal Frameworks	Legislating and implementing laws for protecting women's rights, including law against sex - based assault or discrimination [77].
6	Leveraging the Role of NGOs and Government Schemes	Philanthropy organisations outside government in partnership with them implement welfare programs as well as empowerment projects that impact on women [75]. Increasing access to and effectiveness of government schemes meant for women empowerment [76]

By using an all - inclusive strategy that encompasses political, economic, social, and judicial perspectives, societies can empower women towards achieving gender equality thereby ensuring the overall welfare of women.

3. Conclusion

This study demonstrated the crucial link between women's empowerment and economic development while recognizing its limitations. The need for further investment in the empowerment of women in education, health, earning, rights, and political engagement is underlined by the findings. The data presented here is relevant, the implications valid and, therefore, the overall objective pertinent in the context of future research and policy design in the context of gender equality with a resultant benefit on economic growth.

Our study suggests that women face gender bias in their workspace in multiple forms which obstructs their access to equality in career opportunities, compensation, promotions, and work credit. One of the most prominent gender biases can be seen in the form of the gender wage gap where similarly qualified women are paid less than men because of numerous stereotypes and societal expectations. These have great long term economic impacts on women. There is a need for reforms which ensure equal pay for equal work thereby empowering women in the workspace. Gender stereotypes creep their way into the workspaces of women thereby adversely affecting their performance. These stereotypes affect promotions, wages and future prospects of women in the workspace by undervaluing the work for women or being considered as luck. Therefore, societal shifts are also required to recognise women and their existence on the same pedestal as men in order to produce a more inclusive workspace. Another huge gender bias discussed in our study is the motherhood penalty where mothers are perceived as incompetent, and having commitment issues as compared to other women with similar jobs which results in slower career advancement thereby adversely affecting their current potential to earn as well long-term financial stability. This study on gender bias in the workspaces of women highlights

the negative effects that influence women's empowerment and economic growth. It is therefore crucial to address these adverse trends and patterns, closing the wage gap between men and women, combating gender stereotypes, and diminishing maternity penalty in order to establish a workspace which fosters empowerment of our women unleashing their true potential thereby aiding economic development. The findings prove that women's education is the main force behind economic and social development in developing countries. Regression analysis shows a highly significant positive correlation between investing in women's education and the returns that follow. The most important or interesting point of note is that the Return on Investment (ROI) in women's education is higher in some countries than men. Higher ROI increases the impact on the society at large. Education is identified as one of the factors influencing a country's overall socio - economic status, though more importantly by changing women's lives at the micro - level. Education empowers women to make decisions at home and make meaningful choices on household spending - both big and small spending - or health matters and other traditionally female intensive areas. This tends to go beyond the household to influence a woman's participation in the workforce. The data shows that the women with relatively higher education are more likely to have 'white - collar' non - manual jobs. This transformation will not only raise the economic status of the women but also that of the country. Educated people are much more likely to be employed and use their resources in the best possible way. Gender has come to play a significant role in this regard as the increase in female literacy is found to better the conditions of the children below five years of age as mothers with better education will show greater interests in maintaining the health and nutritional status of their children. This is corroborated by the dramatic fall in under - five child mortality rate with higher female literacy. Briefly, the concept of development is based on education; particularly, women's education empowers them in terms of their own decision - making power and furthers overall socio - economic progress. The benefit of educating women goes to the next generation, and that is why development is sustainable through education.

According to the study, there are various ways in which patriarchal teachings have affected women's economic standings; such findings reveal a lot about limitations in education, job placements and self - determination. It also emphasizes continued gender discrimination, financial dependences and disparities in time use. There is a great need for immediate policy reforms that challenge existing inequalities and create an enabling environment for gender equality. Nevertheless, even though it has some limitations, this research demonstrates the need for broad systemic changes that will economically empower females and promote all - inclusive growth. There is a pattern seen among countries that achieve economic development to different degrees. The political concerns shift from economic growth, one such concern is gender inequality and political representation. This shift suggests that the economic problem - solving approach can lead to gains in political representation for women. Women having access and participating during elections improves policymaking due to increased competition and a mix of views. Research has found that women tend to shift the political agenda towards issues that are relevant and important to women. Therefore, the quality of policy improves, enhancing the quality of life.

Different everyday experiences for men and women reflect the consequences of increased female political representation. However, the 'theory of politics of presence' states that formal rights to equal vote are not enough, and the representatives must also be equal. Thus, women are better off with economic development, and gender issues are taken up for political representation. Women's political participation leads to an all - encompassing better policymaking that takes care of sex - related issues and leads to a more even society. True gender equality is possible only with equal gender representation in elected institutions. Women's rights are persistently challenged on a global scale, which is evident through the existing differences in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This equality is hindered by structural disparities as well as firm male - oriented systems. These problems require multiple solutions including gender parity in education and healthcare, bridging the pay gap between men and women, and increasing female presence in political institutions among others. The involvement of policy makers, non - governmental organizations and international organizations has become important in order to set priorities and safeguard women's rights effectively.

There are considerable difficulties associated with gender discrimination in medical guidelines including underdiagnosing, late diagnosis and inadequate symptom relief for women. Lack of inclusion in research perpetuates bias to affect health outcomes. Leadership differences contribute to gender disparities in medical academia. Health inequalities are compounded by multiple dimensions of social inequality. Correcting them necessitates adherence to just treatment rules, moral deliberations, and statutory amendments that guarantee even healthcare to all sexes. The future is about what could be of use in solving the problem of women's empowerment and welfare. The outlined potential solutions present a comprehensive approach to bolstering women's empowerment and welfare. By addressing political participation, economic empowerment, education, healthcare access, combating gender stereotypes, strengthening legal

frameworks, and leveraging NGOs and government schemes, societies can create a more inclusive environment. In summary this strategy looks at the many angles that gender equality covers and how it will take all hands-on deck from various sectors to make the necessary changes that last. This holistic strategy recognizes the multifaceted nature of gender equality and emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts across various sectors for meaningful and sustainable change.

Despite being a comprehensive review, our study also has multiple limitations. One inherent limitation within our study is that it relies on secondary sources of data which carry the risk of biases and inaccuracies from the original data source. Moreover, our data spans from 1997 to 2024 and covers multiple nations such as the developed United States of America and the United Kingdom along with other European countries to the developing Southeast Asian Countries. Although this wide scope helps us in better understanding and generalising our results, it also causes variability and fluctuations that affects the consistency of our study across different regions and time periods. Another limitation that is faced by our study focuses on women between the ages of 18 and 50, which excludes younger and older women that might also experience the multidimensions of economic development and women's empowerment during childhood, adolescence and old age. Exclusion of certain age groups may not showcase the experiences of all women. However, these limitations provide scope and highlight the needs for future studies that include primary sources of data while encompassing women from all age groups which would provide a broader and a better understanding of the relationship shared between women's empowerment and economic development.

However, the relevance of the study cannot be undermined. It is valuable in its focus on the age group 18 to 50 years, as this group is often at the forefront of gender discrimination. Further, by analysing women who have been subjected to and have overcome the challenge of empowerment programs, the study draws attention to strategies and interventions that have proved to be successful and can be used in further policy and intervention activities. The literature presents an analysis time frame of 1997 to 2024, which ensures that the study reports both the historical and the contemporary position on women's empowerment and economic development. It has vital implications for policy, educators, and development practitioners. Policymakers will understand the complex link between women's empowerment and economic development, and this will enable them to design better policies that will meet the specific needs of women in society. The need to come up with tailor - made approaches, however, is underlined by the fact that the study notes diverse geographical places. This makes the data very valid in answering the research question. Selection criteria of data collection are stringent and thus increase the reliability of the data collected. The research used reputable and credible sources in the data collection process. The use of historical references in the research helps in placing contemporary issues within context, for a more comprehensive understanding of the root causes and ongoing challenges of gender inequality. In addition, the use of several reputable search engines and databases such as Google Scholar,

Research Gate, PubMed, Science Direct, JSTOR, IEEE Xplore, and SpringerLink also provides a more robust and comprehensive data set.

In the end, this research paper explains how feminism, economic growth and gender disparities are interconnected. This study reviews indicators of well - being, schooling, employment chances, rights as well as civic engagement to provide a holistic understanding of the complex ties between social transformation and gender equity. For instance, it is possible to see that education is needed for economic development thus there is a need for better academic opportunities especially for women and girls who will lead in different sectors of lives and initiate socio - economic changes [78]. Further exploration into wage gaps based on sex in addition to bias by employers or common assumptions reveal the urgent need for policy change and organizational adjustment that would welcome women into new ways through promoting inclusivity while outlawing prejudice. The role of patriarchy in impeding equitable advancement becomes evident [79]. Other researchers will be able to look at the role of entrepreneurship, political participation and human capital in shaping the way feminism can become a tool for economic development using this study as an example. Moreover, this could lead to meaningful discoveries if gender is studied together with other aspects such as race, class and ethnicity with examination of situational factors and institutional arrangements that may facilitate feminist outcomes or even conducting longitudinal research to explore the dynamic connections between these variables.

Supplementary Material

Not applicable

Author contributions

A. A., K. P., K. B., and H. D. K - Conceptualisation, Data Curation, Resources, Writing - Original Draft, and Former Analysis, K. B., K. P., and A. A. - Investigation, Methodology, Project Administration and Writing - Review & Editing.

Competing financial interests

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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