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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE LEADERSHIP OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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UAE- United Arab Emirates, FNC- Federal National Council, GEM- Gender Empowerment Measure, HCT- Higher College of Technology, GCC- Gulf Cooperation Council, GWU- General Women's Union, UNDP- United Nations Development Program.

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ABSTRACT

Present era is the era of leadership of women and almost all countries in the globe started women empowerment and fostering the women leadership in political, social, economic and cultural sectors of the country. UAE is also not different from other global countries, UAE is also started movement for women empowerment by providing priority and equality in many areas like education, legislation, workforce, social, political and diplomatic sectors. The research entitled "Role of Women in leadership of UAE" is study based on the secondary sources of data only. The researcher collected data from various published sources and processed and discussed the leadership of the women category in various areas like education, political, legislative, workforce and diplomatic sectors. The researcher found that the government and rulers of United Arab Emirates are very much conscious and concerned about the women empowerment and brought them in to the leadership at the strategic and all other areas of the economy including the workforce in government as well as private sector.

INTRODUCTION

Women plays a very vital role in human progress and have a significant place in the society. Throughout history, the central role of women in society has ensured the stability, progress and long term development of the nations, At the present era women is the backbone of any economy who can contribute a lot in social, economic, political and cultural environment. They are playing many crucial roles in the development of micro-macro environment in many countries. The social and economic development of many economy of the world is possible through women participation and empowerment because in many countries population if we consider half or more than half of the total population is women. In United Arab Emirates 49.3 Percent of the total population is women. Therefore the successful management of economy of UAE is possible with the help of providing opportunity to the women in nation building process. Today women are playing an important role in at the top leadership at the federal level and at the forefront in workforce both government as well as in the growing private sector.

Importance of Women leadership: Globally women comprises a major work force in many sectors especially in agriculture in many countries.

Women, notably mothers, play the largest role in decision making family meal planning and diet, preserving child health and nutrition. Women are primarily care takers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrates that when the economy and political organisation of a society changes, women takes the leadership to adjust the new realities and challenges. The contribution of women to a society's transition from preliterate to literate likewise is undeniable. Today, female share of the global workforce 45.4%. Women formal and informal labour can transform a community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant in the national economy. The role of women in the rural and urban workforce has expanded exponentially in recent decades. When women are empowered and can claim their rights and access to leadership, opportunities and choices; economies grow and future prospects are improved for current and future generations.

Scope of the Present Study: The political, social and economic reforms in the Middle East are slowly increasing but not without challenges. The UAE's population doubled over the past twenty years. The limited number of nationals in the work place further complicates identifying the actual growth of female leadership within the UAE. In the increasingly globalised context of the UAE, women leadership have become high on the agenda of government, academic and private sector organisations.

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Therefore the scope of this present study is limited to the role of women in the leadership of United Arab Emirates.

Objectives of this Study

- To examine the importance of women in leadership.
- To study and closely analyse the women leadership in United Arab Emirates
- To offer suggestions for the women empowerment in UAE, if necessary.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data used for this study are secondary in nature. The secondary data are collected from various journals, Thesis and Dissertations and other published records.

Limitations of this Study: No research is free from limitations, this project study is also not free from limitations. The following are some of the limitations of this study.

- The time factor is the most important limitation of this study. With in short span of time, to conduct an elaborate study is not possible.
- This study is only a case study, the chance to generalization is also limited.
- The major sources of data is the data from secondary sources, it may affect the accuracy of the study.

Review of Literature: Since the oil boom of the 1970s and 1980s, the rapid development in the Gulf, and in particular the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has been striking. The UAE is experiencing both globalizing and localizing processes simultaneously and these bring both opportunities and challenges for women in the nation and the Arab region more broadly. In the increasingly globalized context of the UAE, women's leadership development programs have become high on the agenda of government, academic and private sector organizations. Accordingly, the UAE is an interesting example to look at and assess the growth in women's leadership development programs and to better understand their evolution, goals and impact.

At the core of the UAE government's strategy throughout the past decade has been the support and empowerment of women, and the recognition that they are crucial players in the nation building process. Much of the official discourse on the role of women focuses on their role in national development, international competitiveness and global success. Both private and public sector organizations acknowledge the key role of women's leadership in strengthening talent pools, promoting entrepreneurship, driving investment, cultivating dynamism and increasing organizational creativity and proficiency. Today, with the ongoing evolution of UAE society and the dynamic modernization process that has taken place over the last 36 years, the government's strategic vision for women is based on providing them with the necessary tools to achieve professional excellence. This strategy aims to energize and utilize women's role in public service as well as the private sector and to ensure that all career tracks remain open to them should they choose to pursue them. In essence, the UAE understands that it is a national imperative for women to contribute to the development process.

Educational indicators show that women's achievements in education have reached its targeted levels, and in some cases, exceeded that of men because of a strong desire amongst women to become financially independent and professionally successful. Along with economic growth, the UAE has progressed in the social arena too. Gender-Related Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), UAE is the best rating in the Arab World. Women's active status and achievements are a product of the far-sighted policies of the country's leaders, and have evolved as the norm and not an exception. Although UAE women have made great strides in a number of spheres, the Government views women's issues as a part of a larger 'work in progress' and is determined to continue supporting their empowerment.

Analysis and Interpretation

Facts and Figures of Women in UAE

Education

- Literacy rate of women in the UAE is 95.8%
- The UAE has focused on educating both men and women. In 1975, the rate of adult literacy was 54 percent among men and 31 percent among women. Today, literacy rates for both genders are close to 95 percent.
- At two of the nation's three federal institutions of higher learning, women comprise between 80 and 90 per cent of the student population.
- 95% of female high-school graduates pursue further education at tertiary-level institutions, compared with 80 per cent of males.
- Women constitute almost two-thirds of students attending government universities and over half at private tertiary-level institutions.
- 77% of Emirati women enroll in higher education in secondary school and make up 70% of all university graduates.
- More than 10,000 students of the HCT are women.
- 56% of the UAE's graduates in at government universities are women.
- At the prestigious Masdar Institute of Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi, 60 per cent of Emirati graduate students are female

Legislation

- In April 2018, the UAE Cabinet endorsed a bill for the first legislation that ensures equal pay for men and women.
- In December 2012, The UAE became the first country in the Arab region and to introduce a mandatory female presence in boardrooms.
- Since November 2016, the maternity leave has been extended from 2 months to 3 months paid maternity leave.
- Established in 2015, the UAE is the first country in the GCC to establish a federal level entity – the UAE Gender Balance Council – dedicated to reducing the gender gap and enhancing UAE's global ranking in regards to the gender balance agenda.

Workforce

- Today women age 15 and over constitute 46.6% of the labor force.
- Women make up 66% of the public sector workers, with 30% in leadership roles and 15% in technical and academic roles.
- UAE women comprise over 40% of all employees in education, at least 35% work in the health sector and approximately 20% in social affairs.
- About 75 per cent of positions in education and health sectors are occupied by women.
- At the nine-year-old Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, women constitute 43% of its investors while the city's Businesswomen's association boasts 14,000 members.
- 23,000 Emirati businesswomen run projects worth over AED50 billion, and occupy 15% of the positions in the boards of chambers of commerce and industry nationwide.
- 15 Emirati women join the country's first Women's Firefighting Unit at the Sharjah Civil Defence in February 2018.

Political

- UAE's women representation in the 2019 elections is set to be at 50%. The President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, has directed the authorities concerned to double women representation in the FNC from the current 22.5 per cent.
- Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi is the first woman in the Arab world to be elected as speaker of a national council.
- The UAE has 9 female ministers (out of 31), making up 29% of ministerial roles, one of the highest in the region.
- Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashimy - Cabinet Member, Minister of State for International Cooperation
- Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi - Cabinet Member, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development
- Hessa bint Essa Buhumaid - Cabinet Member, Minister of Community Development
- Jameela bint Salem Al Muhairi - Cabinet Member, Minister of State for General Education
- Dr. Maitha bint Salem Al Shamsi - Minister of State
- Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi - Minister of State for Happiness and Wellbeing
- Shamma bint Sohail Faris AlMazrui - Minister of State for Youth Affairs
- Maryam bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb Al Mehairi - Minister of State for Food Security
- Sara bint Yousuf Al Amiri - Minister of State for Advanced Sciences

Emirati women are currently leading the Federal National Council with 8 seats on the council, making its 20% of women representation one of the highest in parliamentary bodies in the region. In December 2006, the first ever elections for the Federal National Council (FNC) awarded women with the right to vote and run as candidates.

UAE Women Leaders: Under the leadership of Sheikh Fatima bint Mubarak, the General Women's Union (GWU) has been tirelessly supporting women since its formation in 1975.

Dubai Women Establishment, led by Her Highness Sheikh Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is the first government entity in the UAE that supports and focuses on women in the workforce

UAE female diplomatic representation: Women make up 30% of the diplomatic corps, where they occupy 234 positions, 42 working on missions abroad, and 7 being ambassadors.

The UAE has started appointing women as ambassadors ever since 2009. Up to date the UAE has 7 female ambassadors:

- HE Dr. Hessa Abdullah Al Otaiba, UAE Ambassador to Spain
- HE Nabila Al Shamsi, Consul General of the UAE to Hong Kong
- HE Hanan Al Alili, UAE Ambassador to Latvia
- HE Fatima Khamis Al Mazrouei, UAE Ambassador to Denmark
- HE Noora Mohammed Juma, UAE Ambassador to Finland
- HE Hafsa Al Ulama, UAE Ambassador to Brazil
- HE Lana Nusseibeh, UAE Permanent Representative to the UN

International Rankings

- UAE ranks 34 out of 189 countries in the 2018 UNDP Human Development Report
- UAE ranks 49 in Gender Inequality Index in the 2018 UNDP Human Development Report
- UAE ranks 1st out of 132 countries in "Women Treated with Respect" indicator in the Social Progress Index 2015 report.

Most influential UAE Women: The UAE government has made significant progress on the women empowerment front and they have been giving equal constitutional rights to men and women. A glance at the list of popular UAE women who have been conquering heights in diverse fields proves the fact. Here, we have listed some of the most influential UAE women, who have been successful in creating their own niche in UAE as well as across the globe.

Sheikha Lubna: Sheikha Lubna is the first woman to hold a ministerial post in the United Arab Emirates. One of the most iconic figures of the country, Lubna served as the Minister of State for Tolerance, Minister of State for International Cooperation, and Minister of Economic and Planning of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Impressed by her hard work and determination, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum awarded her the "Distinguished Government Employee Award" in 1999 and appointed her as Chief Executive of Tejari. It was under Lubna's leadership that Tejari won awards for the World Summit for Information Society's "Best e-Content Provider in e-business" (Geneva) and the UAE Super Brands Council's "Super Brand of 2003".

Amal Al Qubaisi: Amal Al Qubaisi, the President of the Federal National Council, is the first female leader of a national assembly in the United Arab Emirates and the Arab world. Prior to her current role, Amal Al Qubaisi served as the chairwoman of the Abu Dhabi Education Council. Amal Al Qubaisi is the senior most female politician in the Arab world

who has been inspiring young women to cross barriers and conquer the world.

Fatima Al Jaber: Fatima Obaid Al Jaber holds the distinction of being the first Emirati woman to be elected to the board of directors at the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce in 2009. She currently serves as the chief operating officer of the United Arab Emirates-based Al Jaber Group.

Mariam Al-Mansouri: Mariam Al-Mansouri, the first female fighter pilot in UAE. Mariam, who has led UAE mission airstrikes against ISIS over Syria, is a true inspiration for women across the globe. Mariam Al-Mansouri is quite popular across the country, which is evident from her large social media following. Her courage and determination have helped her earn the titles “Lady Liberty” and “ISIS’s nightmare.” She was honoured with the Mohammed bin Rashid Pride of the Emirates medal for excellence in her field.

Reem Al-Hashimi: Expo 2020 is one of the most anticipated events in UAE and winning the bid to host the expo was not an easy task. It is the result of hard work and determination of many and one person who played a significant role in winning the bid was Al Hashimi. She is the Director general of the Expo, who also happens to be the UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation. Reem Al-Hashimi is the chairperson of Dubai Cares, a children’s education charity established by HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

Nayla Al-Khaja: Nayla Al-Khaja is the first female film director/producer in the UAE. She made history at Cannes by being the first Emirati filmmaker, whose project got accepted by the festival’s Producers’ Network. Filmmaking being one of the hardest areas to work in as a creative, Nayla Al-Khaja’s journey had never been easy. It was not all roses in the garden for Nyla; she had her shares of ups and downs but was eventually successful in building her own empire. Nayla Al-Khaja was awarded the Best Emirati Filmmaker award at DIFF in 2006 and in 2017 she won the jury’s special prize for short fiction at the Italian Movie Awards.

Huda Kattan: Kattan is the person behind the billion-dollar beauty empire, Huda Beauty. A makeup artist, beauty blogger, and entrepreneur, Kattan is one among the “ten most powerful influencers in the world of beauty”. Kattan rose to fame by doing makeup tutorials online and soon emerged as one of the biggest online beauty sensations. Kattan who is ranked #1 on the “2017 Influencer Instagram Rich List”, earns \$18,000 per post of sponsored content.

Amina Al Rustamani: Amina Al Rustamani is the former group CEO of TECOM Group, who started her career as an electrical engineer at the company. An influential and charismatic business leader, Al Rustamani was ranked number 9 in the CEO Middle East’s fifth annual list of the world’s most powerful Arab women, published in 2015. In the same year, she grabbed the title of Advertising Person of the Year by Dubai Lynx . Al Rustamani took active participation in the development of Dubai Design District and Dubai Wholesale City.

Noura Al Kaabi: Al Kaabi is the minister of Culture and knowledge development for the UAE.

She served as the minister of state for Federal National Council Affairs before she was assigned the current responsibility. She has also been the chairperson of twofour54 and Abu Dhabi Media Company. Al Kaabi made it to the list of ‘Top 100 Global Thinkers’ by Foreign Policy Magazine, the first Emirati to have achieved the distinction. She was honored with “Business Woman of the Year” title at the Gulf Business Awards and she also received the “Young Achiever Award” at the AmCham, Abu Dhabi’s Annual Excellence Awards.

Nahla Al Rostamani: Nahla is not your conventional type of woman who used to play with dolls when she was small. She was rather attracted towards racing cars and was successful in breaking through the glass ceilings and fulfilling her passion of becoming a racing driver. Al Rostamani is the first female Emirati F3 driver.

RESULTS

- Highest rate of literacy amongst the women (95.8%), 95% of the female School graduates pursue higher education as compared to 80% in males and 56% of the students in government universities are women.
- The UAE became the first country in the Arab region and to introduce a mandatory female presence in boardrooms.
- Women make up 66% of the public sector workers, with 30% in leadership roles, 43% of the investors of Abudhabi Stock exchange are women and 15% positions of the Chamber of Commerce in UAE are held by women.
- UAE’s women representation in the 2019 elections is set to be at 50%, 22.5% of the Federal National Council members are women.
- Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi is the first woman in the Arab world to be elected as speaker of a national council.
- The UAE has 9 female ministers (out of 31), making up 29% of ministerial roles, one of the highest in the region.
- Women make up 30% of the diplomatic corps, where they occupy 234 positions, 42 working on missions abroad, and 7 being ambassadors.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above discussions and findings that the Emirati women are playing an important and crucial role and effective and efficient leadership for the socio-economic, cultural, legal and legislative sectors in United Arab Emirates. All the indexes in various sectors especially in the education sector showing an inspiring and promising trend that the women are coming up in the forefront in many sectors indicates the bright future of this country showing effective leadership from the women citizens of United Arab Emirates.

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