

# ***Urban Gender Equality and Economic Development***

## ***—— Practice and Challenges of Gender Mainstreaming in the Urbanization Process***

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**Abstract:** In the context of growing cities and economies, this paper explores the interactions that gender equality generates within them. This article is inspired by the United Nations concept of gender mainstreaming, which emphasizes the need to ensure that gender equality is a primary goal in all areas of economic and social development. This article will emphasize that gender equality will promote economic development because society will get more talent and explore how gender mainstreamization is being implemented and the obstacles in this process in today's more diverse and open world: men's social resources and hindrance to gender mainstreaming, the challenges of urbanization to gender equality, and empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming. By analyzing the research of other scholars, the results show that men always get more preferential treatment in some areas, but women are less powerful in others. We, therefore, call for a deep understanding of the purpose and importance of gender mainstreaming strategies to reduce inequality. We will elaborate on these inequalities and offer some solutions.

**Keywords:** Gender Mainstreaming, Mainstreaming, Economy, Gender Equality, Urbanization

### **1. Introduction**

In the process of gender equality and rapid economic development in modern cities, gender mainstreaming also needs to face the practices and challenges of the urbanization process. The purpose of this paper is to compare the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the global urbanization process over the past 50 years and the difficulties encountered in its implementation, as well as the impact of gender mainstreaming on modern urban and economic development. The difficulties faced in urbanized areas are different from those encountered in marginalized areas, which are more inclusive, more diverse, and more prone to gender equality, which can lead to women's participation in the workplace and, thus, to the promotion of the economy. Gender mainstreaming is influenced by a variety of factors, such as gender equality, urban development, economic development, and people's self-awareness. This thesis focuses on the challenges of

gender mainstreaming in the context of urbanization and argues that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are challenges that both genders have to face in today's society and that urbanized women can get more social inclusion and more employment opportunities, which can help women to promote economic progress. To a certain extent, gender mainstreaming has come to the fore today, but in the process of continuous efforts, we are equally faced with many new challenges. This paper mainly analyzes the interplay between gender equality economic development and gender mainstreaming and discusses the challenges and practical difficulties faced by gender mainstreaming. In the future, gender equality and gender mainstreaming will appear more in the public eye, and more people will understand and recognize their importance in urban development. Due to inherent data limitations and global scope constraints, this study focuses only on data collection and organization over the past five decades.

## **2. Positive Impact of Gender Equality On Economic Development**

Gender equality means that the other half of the world's population can get reasonable and full employment in the market, which will undoubtedly bring many efficient workers to the market and promote the economic development of the whole market. Therefore, gender equality is a catalyst for social and economic progress. When some women have good employment, those still in school will be encouraged more, which means that women will get equal education and treatment with men. Countries and cities prioritizing gender equality tend to achieve higher levels of human development, improve governance, and increase overall well-being [1]. Gender-sensitive policies can help develop a skilled and productive workforce. For example, investing in girls' education can yield significant economic returns, as educated women are more likely to participate in the labor force and contribute to economic growth [1]. In the context of urbanization, where economic activity is concentrated, gender-responsive policies contribute to a diverse and innovative workforce. It is worth noting that investing in women's education is a very nascent idea. In the 19th century, several authorities argued that men have a higher average brain capacity than women and that brain capacity is a determinant of intelligence. Therefore, men have a higher average intelligence than women. This idea was put forward by Paul Broca, a French physician and professor of medicine at the University of Paris. At the beginning of the 20th century, when Binet and Simon of France invented the intelligence test, studies on sex differences in intelligence began to be published, in which most authorities asserted that there were no differences between men and women. Thorndike was one of the first to conclude, writing that "subtle differences between male and female concentration tendencies are a common finding of psychological testing." This idea was further developed in early studies in the United States, where Terman wrote that in an American standardized sample of children aged 4-16 years on the Stanford-Binet test, "the advantage of girls over boys is very slight ..... For practical purposes, it seems negligible!", and in England, this argument was made by Burt and Moore. In 1932, this argument was confirmed in a survey of the intelligence of all eleven-year-olds in Scotland, in which boys (N=44,210) scored 34.506 and girls (N=43,288) scored an almost identical 34.411. Even though the theory of gender equality has been gradually proposed by scientists and attempted to be popularized by the public since the beginning of the twentieth century, there are still a lot of women who have been treated unequally in their childhood. This gap leads women not only to doubt their abilities but also hinders the realization of gender equality. Such inequities can impede gender equality and lead to a significant skewing of social resources favoring men.

### **3. Men's Social Resources and Hindrance To Gender Mainstreaming**

In urban settings, gender mainstreaming faces barriers rooted in deeply entrenched patriarchal societies with power dynamics that favor men's access to social resources. Throughout history, men have been privileged in education, networks, and decision-making platforms, which have perpetuated gender differences in urban development [2]. These differences manifest themselves in urban planning processes that tend to marginalize women's perspectives and needs. Especially in public spaces, women's needs are often neglected: public toilets do not have enough rooms for mothers and babies, and elevators in shopping malls are not spacious enough to allow women pushing strollers to pass through. Male-dominated decision-making structures can overlook issues such as safe public spaces, easy access to transportation, and affordable childcare facilities, disproportionately affecting women [3]. To overcome this challenge without drastically altering urban planning, there is a need to ensure that as many and as fair and objective female members as possible are in the government, making more suggestions for the general public to refer to and adapt. However, as gender mainstreaming has not yet entered the public eye and the education system, it is not easy to call for more women to join the government, and the public eye and women's self-perception bias is a major challenge to gender mainstreaming.

### **4. The Challenges of Urbanization to Gender Equality**

The rapid process of urbanization poses multifaceted challenges to gender equality. As populations migrate to urban centers in search of better opportunities, traditional gender roles and norms often become intensified. Women frequently encounter restricted access to education, healthcare, and formal employment, as well as increased vulnerability to exploitation and violence in densely populated urban areas. Additionally, the lack of affordable childcare and social support systems in cities can disproportionately affect women's ability to balance work and family responsibilities, constraining their economic and personal development. Urban planning and infrastructure often overlook women's specific needs, resulting in inadequate public transportation, poorly lit streets, and insufficient public spaces, all of which can limit women's mobility and safety. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach, including the development of gender-sensitive urban policies, the active building of more women's willingness to participate in political decision-making and urban planning, and relatively fair and liberal policies for local governments to give women a reasonable degree of access to basic services, such as the lighting of alleys and streets at night, and the availability of sufficiently densely populated police stations in case of emergencies. (c) Promote women's participation in decision-making processes to ensure that urbanization is equitable and inclusive.

### **5. Empowerment of Women And Gender Mainstreaming**

As stated above, calling for more women's participation in social activities and government is a challenge to achieving gender mainstreaming. Women's empowerment is key to effective gender mainstreaming in the urbanization process. Discriminatory rules and practices weaken women's initiatives and limit their role in formulating urban policies and development strategies. Urbanization amplifies these challenges by exacerbating the burden of women's unpaid care work. Women's unpaid care work includes, but is not limited to, dragging themselves home from work to take care of their husbands and children, including even sexual subordination, and a large proportion of women are even required to care for their husbands and their parents. To address these issues, a comprehensive urban gender mainstreaming strategy is necessary. List three possible solutions based on multiple discussions. The first must include addressing gender-based violence. A joint report notes that violence against women is alarmingly common and starts at a very young age.

Globally, one in three women will experience physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner during their lifetime - a figure that has remained largely unchanged over the past decade [4]. This shows that there are still many women in today's society who are suffering from terrible acts of violence and are powerless to fight back, and they need help. The second is to increase women's access to early childhood education and health care equally with men. Many families are more willing to pay for a man to get a high degree, even if the woman is equally good or better performing. Finally, it is a call for the medical community to use the female paradigm in innovation and research to develop medicines that are more suitable for women's bodies to ensure women's health. According to one report, "more than 500 women and girls in crises die during pregnancy or childbirth every day" [5], which indicates that medical technologies for women are still scarce in some regions and that efforts to improve these conditions are needed to preserve the lives of women around the world.

## 6. Intersectionality in Gender Mainstreaming

The complexity of gender mainstreaming is compounded by the intersection of identities such as race, class, and ethnicity. Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of "intersectionality" highlights how these identities are intertwined, leading to increased discrimination and marginalization [6]. The theory of intersectionality highlights the multiple avenues through which racial and gender oppression are experienced. Urban environments often exacerbate the challenges faced by marginalized groups. For example, women from marginalized communities may experience not only gender discrimination but also racial or economic disparities that limit their access to resources and opportunities. For women living in marginalized or underdeveloped areas, where local governments cannot even guarantee regular compulsory education and civil rights, obtaining the same rights and benefits as men are more difficult or even unattainable than obtaining the same rights and benefits as men in urbanized areas, and solving the livelihood problems of women in marginalized areas is more complex. The difficulties faced by women in urbanized areas are also different. Due to the unique inclusiveness and diversity of urbanized areas, women of different colors and races can enter the workplace and schools for work and education. Still, they have to face implicit discrimination after entering society. Effective gender mainstreaming requires an intersectional approach to ensure that policies are genuinely inclusive and meet the unique needs of different urban populations, not only targeting and accommodating men of different skin colors but also giving women of different skin colors, especially local minorities or out-of-towners, their fair share of entitlements.

## 7. Overcoming Gender Equality Challenges In Urbanization

In order to overcome the contradictions brought by urbanization and promote gender equality, people need to take some comprehensive and resolute measures. First, one must recognize the critical role of urban planning and the need to bring a profound gender perspective to the process. By meticulously incorporating women's insights and needs into the layout of public spaces, infrastructure and facilities, cities can be transformed into safer and more inclusive environments. This encompasses not only well-designed and secure physical spaces but also accessible transportation networks and versatile recreational areas that empower women to navigate urban landscapes without hindrance. Concurrently, establishing robust social support systems, underscored by affordable and high-quality childcare facilities, and this can provide women the means to seamlessly integrate work and familial obligations. An indispensable facet of dismantling traditional gender dynamics lies in education and awareness initiatives, which effectively challenge ingrained societal norms and encourage the equitable sharing of domestic and parenting duties among both genders. In this case, women can free up more time to focus on themselves rather than

their families. As a result, they will become more free to do things they would not have had time to do otherwise, allowing them to realize their value. When they have more flexible time, women will be more interested in science subjects, broadly defined as "female ineptitude," such as politics, finance, and mathematics. Moreover, elevating women's participation in decision-making spheres across various tiers of urban governance can instigate the formulation of policies attuned to their distinct requisites. Allowing women's associations everywhere to be of real use and not be stigmatized by women as mere window-dressing. Initiatives that meet women's demands should include but are not limited to, differentiation between male and female standardized scores, denial of biological differences between men and women in pursuit of absolute equality, or overly low physical demands on women. Ultimately, collaborative endeavors uniting governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities are instrumental in effecting these transformative measures. By harnessing the manifold influences at play, this collective endeavor can turn urbanization into a propeller of gender parity rather than a source of discrimination.

## 8. Conclusion

In sum, the convergence of urban gender equality and economic development holds promise for the creation of diverse and inclusive cities. Gender mainstreaming in the process of urbanization offers a transformative path to redressing gender inequalities in history and in today's society, and potentially even in the future. Driving socio-economics and achieving sustainable growth. However, enormous challenges remain, including the historical dominance of men in deeply entrenched patriarchal societies that hold most of the effective social resources and the limits of female power. Realizing the potential of gender-sensitive urban development requires a concerted effort to realign power dynamics, reform institutional frameworks, empower and call upon women to claim their rights and interests, recognize the complexity and strive to achieve equality between different races, classes, and ethnicities, and eliminate discrimination caused by intersectionality. This can be achieved through the collective efforts of these women the objective support of the government, and the introduction of appropriate policies and transformation of urban public spaces. Through these efforts, in the future, urbanized areas will have more ideas on how to face the challenges of gender mainstreaming and the range of issues raised by the promotion of gender equality so that gender equality and economic growth can be mutually reinforcing.

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