

# Gender Mainstreaming in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Gender mainstreaming is a critical strategy for achieving gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of policy, planning, and development. In Nigeria, despite the adoption of gender-focused policies, such as the National Gender Policy and ratification of international agreements like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), significant barriers to gender equality persist. This study examines the historical development and contemporary challenges of gender mainstreaming in Nigeria, exploring the socio-political, cultural, and institutional factors that have shaped gender policy and its implementation. Using a qualitative research design based on secondary data sources, the research analyzes scholarly literature, government reports, and publications from international organizations to assess the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives. Findings reveal that while some progress has been made in terms of policy formulation, key challenges, including cultural resistance, inadequate funding, limited political commitment, and institutional inefficiencies, continue to hinder meaningful progress. The study concludes that overcoming these challenges requires stronger institutional frameworks, greater financial investment in gender-focused programs, and more inclusive community engagement. By addressing these barriers, Nigeria can move closer to realizing its gender equality goals and achieving sustainable development.

**Keywords:** gender mainstreaming, policy implementation, gender equality, socio-cultural challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Gender mainstreaming, as a global strategy for promoting gender equality, seeks to integrate gender perspectives into all aspects of policy development, implementation, and evaluation (UN Women, 2020). Emerging from international frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, gender mainstreaming is widely regarded as essential for achieving socio-economic and political equality (True, 2010). The concept involves assessing the implications of any policy or program on both women and men, thereby ensuring that neither gender is disadvantaged, and that policies actively promote gender equality (Council of Europe, 1998). Over the past two decades, nations worldwide have made various efforts to incorporate gender mainstreaming into their policy structures; however, the success of these initiatives has varied significantly due to social, cultural, and institutional factors.

In the African context, gender inequality remains pervasive despite the adoption of numerous gender-focused policies and international commitments (Moghadam, 2018). African nations, including Nigeria, have ratified key agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), yet progress has been hindered by socio-cultural norms, patriarchal values, and weak policy implementation frameworks (Afolabi, 2020). Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa, faces a unique set of challenges related to gender mainstreaming due to its complex socio-cultural landscape and historical colonial legacy, both of which have influenced gender roles and shaped attitudes towards women's rights (Makama, 2013). Despite notable policy advancements, including the introduction of the National Gender Policy in 2006, the impact of these efforts has been limited, largely due to a lack of political will, limited resources, and resistance from traditional structures that uphold gender disparities (Nwoye, 2021).

This study focuses on understanding the historical evolution of gender mainstreaming in Nigeria, examining both the gains made and the obstacles that remain. By exploring the historical underpinnings and contemporary

challenges of gender mainstreaming, the research aims to highlight the complex interplay between policy and culture that has shaped gender equality efforts in Nigeria. Analyzing the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts within this socio-political context will provide insights into the structural adjustments needed to foster a more inclusive society. Therefore, the study addresses the question: How has the historical development of gender mainstreaming policies in Nigeria influenced the current landscape of gender equality, and what are the key barriers that continue to hinder progress?

This study employs a qualitative research approach using secondary data sources to examine the historical development and contemporary challenges of gender mainstreaming in Nigeria. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for this type of inquiry because it enables an in-depth exploration of social, political, and cultural factors that affect gender mainstreaming (Creswell, 2014). By using secondary data sources such as scholarly articles, government reports, and international organizations' publications, this research provides a comprehensive view of gender mainstreaming efforts and challenges within Nigeria's socio-political landscape.

## CONCEPTUAL GENDER MAINSTREAMING ISSUES

Gender mainstreaming has become a widely recognized strategy for achieving gender equality globally. The concept, which integrates gender perspectives into policies and programs, has generated extensive research, particularly in the context of developing countries like Nigeria. Scholars have investigated various aspects of gender mainstreaming, including policy frameworks, historical influences, cultural barriers, and the role of international conventions. This comparative and critical review examines key literature on gender mainstreaming in Nigeria, highlighting differences in perspectives and evaluating the strengths and limitations of existing studies.

Many scholars trace the roots of contemporary gender inequality in Nigeria to colonial rule, which disrupted indigenous systems where women held significant socio-political and economic power. Mba (1982) argues that British colonial administration imposed Western gender norms, marginalizing women and limiting their roles to domestic spheres. Similarly, Okome (2000) contends that colonial policies contributed to the erosion of women's status, as the British administration recognized only male leaders and heads of households, sidelining women from formal political participation.

Aina (1998) presents a nuanced view, asserting that while colonialism contributed to the marginalization of Nigerian women, pre-colonial Nigerian societies were not uniformly egalitarian. Some ethnic groups, particularly in Northern Nigeria, had more restrictive roles for women even before colonial influence. This suggests that colonialism exacerbated existing inequalities rather than creating them entirely. A critical limitation of Mba's (1982) and Okome's (2000) work is the tendency to generalize colonial impact without considering regional and cultural variations within Nigeria. Aina's (1998) perspective provides a more balanced view by recognizing diversity within pre-colonial gender dynamics.

The adoption of gender policies in Nigeria has been significantly influenced by international frameworks, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. Okeke (2000) argues that Nigeria's ratification of CEDAW was a crucial step toward mainstreaming gender equality into national policy. The National Gender Policy of 2006 aimed to address gender disparities across sectors by promoting gender-sensitive planning in education, health, and governance (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2006).

However, Afolabi and Oni (2012) are critical of the effectiveness of these policy frameworks, arguing that while Nigeria has ratified international conventions, it has not effectively translated them into action. They suggest that the National Gender Policy lacks enforcement mechanisms and suffers from weak political commitment. This critique aligns with Amadi and Agenyi (2015), who observe that institutional support for gender mainstreaming is limited by inadequate funding and the absence of clear implementation strategies. A key strength of Afolabi and Oni's (2012) analysis lies in its emphasis on the gap between policy formulation and practical application, which is often overlooked in studies that focus solely on policy content.

Institutional barriers are among the most commonly cited obstacles to effective gender mainstreaming in Nigeria. Amadi and Agenyi (2015) highlight the lack of resources, inadequate training, and institutional resistance as key challenges that undermine the implementation of gender-sensitive policies. They argue that the low representation of women in decision-making positions perpetuates gender inequality by depriving gender policies of strong advocates within government structures. This view is supported by Arowolo and Aluko (2010), who note that Nigeria's male-dominated political culture reinforces resistance to gender-sensitive changes, making it difficult to prioritize gender issues in the national agenda.

In contrast, Makama (2013) offers a more optimistic view, suggesting that institutional barriers can be overcome through sustained advocacy and capacity-building initiatives. She argues that increasing awareness of gender issues among government officials and stakeholders can lead to more effective gender mainstreaming efforts. While Makama's perspective is valuable for its focus on solutions, it may overlook the depth of institutional resistance that Amadi and Agenyi (2015) describe. The persistence of patriarchal norms within Nigerian institutions suggests that addressing these challenges requires more than advocacy and capacity-building; it may necessitate fundamental changes in organizational culture and leadership practices.

Socio-cultural norms that reinforce patriarchy are widely recognized as significant barriers to gender mainstreaming in Nigeria. Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002) argue that traditional beliefs and practices that prioritize male dominance limit the effectiveness of gender policies. For instance, practices such as early marriage and preferences for male children restrict women's opportunities and undermine gender equality initiatives. Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet's work is particularly valuable for its attention to the influence of community-level norms, which are often overlooked in studies that focus primarily on institutional or policy-level barriers.

Makama (2013) supports this view, emphasizing that socio-cultural resistance is often stronger in rural areas where traditional norms are more entrenched. She argues that efforts to implement gender mainstreaming policies in Nigeria must be sensitive to local cultural contexts and involve community leaders in the advocacy process. However, while Makama (2013) advocates for cultural sensitivity, she does not fully address the potential limitations of working within patriarchal structures. As Aina (1998) suggests, there is a risk that community leaders who uphold traditional norms may resist or reinterpret gender policies in ways that do not fully support women's empowerment.

## **THEORETICAL ANCHORAGE**

Feminist theory, intersectionality, and institutional theory offer valuable frameworks for analyzing gender mainstreaming in Nigeria. Feminist theory, as articulated by Lorber (2005), highlights the systemic nature of gender inequality and emphasizes the need for structural changes to dismantle patriarchal institutions. Scholars like Hooks (2000) argue that feminist theory is essential for understanding how deeply embedded patriarchal norms restrict women's access to economic and political power. This theoretical approach underpins much of the critical literature on gender mainstreaming, which views policy initiatives as inadequate without broader social and institutional reforms.

Intersectionality, a framework developed by Crenshaw (1989), provides a nuanced perspective on gender mainstreaming by examining how gender intersects with other social identities, such as ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status. Oyewumi (2003) applies this approach to the Nigerian context, noting that women's experiences of inequality vary significantly across regions and ethnic groups. Intersectionality highlights the importance of designing policies that account for these diverse experiences, avoiding a "one-size-fits-all" approach to gender mainstreaming.

Institutional theory, particularly as discussed by North (1990), explains how organizational norms and structures influence the implementation of gender policies. Amadi and Agenyi (2015) use this theory to examine the institutional barriers to gender mainstreaming, arguing that organizational culture in Nigerian institutions is often resistant to gender-sensitive reforms. Institutional theory underscores the importance of reforming organizational practices and norms to ensure that gender mainstreaming policies are effectively implemented.

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## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN NIGERIA**

Gender mainstreaming in Nigeria has evolved over several key historical phases, reflecting the influence of colonialism, post-independence policy shifts, and the impact of international frameworks. Examining this historical background reveals the complexities of gender inequality and the sociopolitical factors that have shaped efforts toward gender mainstreaming in Nigeria.

### **Pre-Colonial Gender Relations**

Before British colonial rule, Nigerian societies exhibited varied and complex gender relations, often depending on the ethnic group and region. In some pre-colonial Nigerian societies, particularly among the Yoruba and Igbo, women held significant economic and political roles. Igbo women, for instance, played a prominent part in the governance of their communities, participating in councils and decision-making assemblies, while Yoruba women wielded substantial power in the marketplace and in certain leadership roles (Mba, 1982). According to Aina (1998), pre-colonial gender relations in many Nigerian communities were more fluid, allowing for cooperation and mutual respect between genders rather than rigid hierarchies.

While some Nigerian societies maintained more gender-equitable structures, others exhibited stricter gender divisions. For example, Northern Nigerian societies, predominantly Muslim, often imposed stricter limitations on women's roles, particularly in public spaces (Okome, 2000). However, even within these societies, women were not completely marginalized and often held significant roles in domestic decision-making and religious practices. Overall, the diversity in gender relations across pre-colonial Nigeria underscores the complex nature of traditional gender roles, which colonialism would later disrupt and reshape.

### **Colonial Influence and the Entrenchment of Patriarchal Norms**

The advent of British colonialism introduced profound changes to Nigerian society, which would negatively affect the status of women and gender relations overall. Colonial administrators imposed Western norms and institutional structures that were inherently patriarchal and male-dominated. The British colonial government primarily recognized men as the heads of households and formal leaders, systematically sidelining women from political and economic life (Mba, 1982). Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002) argue that the colonial administration's legal and economic systems were biased toward men, curtailing women's participation in public life and limiting their roles to domestic responsibilities.

Colonial policies also restricted women's economic independence, particularly in agriculture and trade. For instance, British administrators introduced cash crops intended for export, such as cocoa and palm oil, which were managed primarily by men (Okome, 2000). This economic restructuring diminished the roles that women had previously held as traders and producers. Moreover, colonialism introduced European-style education, which initially favored men, further entrenching gender disparities. Education for Nigerian girls was often limited to skills that would prepare them for domestic roles, unlike boys, who were groomed for administrative or clerical positions within the colonial structure (Aina, 1998). This gender-biased approach to education institutionalized gender inequality, setting back women's progress and reinforcing traditional gender roles.

### **Post-Independence Era: Initial Steps Toward Gender Equality**

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, initial national policies and constitutions sought to guarantee equal rights for all citizens, laying the groundwork for gender equality. The 1979 Constitution, for instance, emphasized non-discrimination, guaranteeing all citizens, regardless of gender, fundamental rights (Okeke, 2000). However, despite this constitutional commitment, women's representation in political and economic spheres remained limited due to persisting patriarchal values and systemic inequalities. As a result, women's organizations and advocacy groups began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s, calling for greater inclusion and recognition of women's rights.

The establishment of the National Commission for Women in 1989 marked a significant development in the state's approach to gender issues. The Commission's mandate was to improve the status of Nigerian women by

advocating for their rights and facilitating their involvement in the country's political, economic, and social spheres (Afolabi & Oni, 2012). However, this initiative faced considerable resistance, as it lacked sufficient political support and was often underfunded. Additionally, cultural norms continued to hinder women's full participation in public life, creating a gap between policy intentions and actual outcomes.

### **Influence of International Frameworks: CEDAW and the Beijing Platform**

The international women's rights movement in the late 20th century significantly influenced gender mainstreaming efforts in Nigeria. The Nigerian government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985, committing to incorporate gender equality principles into national laws and policies (Okeke-Ihejirika & Franceschet, 2002). While this ratification was a positive step, implementation challenges remained, as Nigeria's legal and institutional structures continued to uphold gender-biased practices. Furthermore, some provisions of CEDAW were not fully adopted into Nigerian law, limiting its effectiveness as a tool for addressing gender discrimination.

The Beijing Platform for Action, introduced at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, further propelled Nigeria's efforts toward gender mainstreaming. The Platform emphasized the importance of integrating gender perspectives into all levels of government policy and decision-making processes. In response, Nigeria adopted the National Gender Policy in 2006, which aimed to institutionalize gender mainstreaming across sectors, from education and health to governance and economic development (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2006). This policy marked a significant shift in the Nigerian government's approach to gender issues, as it formalized the commitment to gender equality and provided a framework for addressing gender disparities.

Despite this progress, Okeke (2000) and Arowolo and Aluko (2010) argue that the National Gender Policy has faced substantial implementation challenges. Limited political will, insufficient funding, and resistance from conservative elements within society have hindered its effectiveness. Additionally, the policy lacks strong enforcement mechanisms, making it difficult to hold institutions accountable for failing to meet gender equality objectives. As a result, while international frameworks have spurred Nigeria toward adopting gender mainstreaming policies, actual progress has been uneven and slow.

## **CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND THE NEED FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN NIGERIA**

In recent years, gender mainstreaming has gained traction globally as an essential approach to achieving gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into all levels of policy-making and institutional practice (UN Women, 2020). However, in Nigeria, gender mainstreaming faces significant challenges that impede its full implementation and effectiveness. Key issues include entrenched socio-cultural norms, institutional resistance, insufficient funding, and limited political commitment. Additionally, emerging challenges such as climate change and economic instability further complicate efforts to mainstream gender. Addressing these challenges is critical for Nigeria's socio-economic development, as gender equality is strongly linked to national growth and human capital development (World Bank, 2021).

### **1. Socio-Cultural Barriers and Patriarchal Norms**

A major challenge to gender mainstreaming in Nigeria lies in deeply entrenched patriarchal norms that shape social expectations and behaviors. Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups often uphold traditional practices that place men in dominant roles, both within the family and the community. For instance, practices such as early marriage, male preference in inheritance, and restrictive views on women's mobility are pervasive, especially in rural areas (Makama, 2013). These norms undermine gender mainstreaming by reinforcing women's subordinate status, which limits their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities (Amadi & Agenyi, 2015).

Makama (2013) argues that even where gender-sensitive policies are introduced, societal attitudes often prevent their effective implementation. In many cases, gender mainstreaming initiatives face opposition from

community leaders and religious groups who view gender equality as a threat to traditional values. For instance, in Northern Nigeria, where gender roles are more stringently defined, efforts to promote female education or reproductive health rights can encounter resistance, leading to inconsistent outcomes (Egwu, 2016). Overcoming these socio-cultural barriers requires a culturally sensitive approach, including engaging religious and community leaders as advocates for gender equality.

## **2. Institutional Resistance and Male-Dominated Political Structures**

Institutional resistance within Nigeria's political and bureaucratic structures presents another significant barrier to gender mainstreaming. Despite formal commitments to gender equality, Nigeria's political institutions remain largely male-dominated, which affects the prioritization of gender issues in policy agendas. Women hold only about 6% of elected positions at the federal level, a statistic that underscores their marginalization in decision-making processes (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). This underrepresentation limits women's influence over policies affecting gender equality, as male policymakers may lack the awareness or motivation to support gender-sensitive reforms (Afolabi & Oni, 2012).

Arowolo and Aluko (2010) suggest that Nigeria's political institutions are deeply influenced by patriarchal values, leading to an implicit bias against gender mainstreaming efforts. Bureaucratic resistance to gender policies also reflects a lack of institutional accountability and transparency, which hampers the enforcement of gender equality initiatives (Amadi & Agyeni, 2015). Furthermore, women in political or administrative roles often face systemic discrimination and harassment, deterring other women from pursuing public office. Building institutional support for gender mainstreaming requires structural reforms that address gender biases and increase women's representation in governance.

## **3. Insufficient Funding and Lack of Resources**

The implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in Nigeria is hindered by insufficient funding and a lack of resources. Gender mainstreaming requires financial investment to support gender-sensitive programs in education, healthcare, and economic development sectors, as well as to conduct gender analysis and training across government departments. However, budget allocations for gender programs in Nigeria are often inadequate, with most gender initiatives receiving limited or inconsistent funding from federal and state governments (Nwoye, 2021). According to Afolabi and Oni (2012), this lack of financial commitment reflects a broader issue of weak political will, as policymakers often deprioritize gender initiatives in favor of other concerns.

The limited funding impacts gender mainstreaming efforts in practical ways, such as reduced resources for capacity building, training, and awareness campaigns. Many local and state governments lack the resources to integrate gender perspectives into all stages of policy planning and evaluation. Furthermore, international donors have provided some funding for gender equality projects in Nigeria, but such external support is often short-term and does not address systemic funding gaps (Oluwatobi & Oladeji, 2020). Addressing these funding challenges requires a stronger commitment from Nigerian policymakers to prioritize and invest in gender-sensitive programs as an integral part of national development.

## **4. Limited Political Commitment and Policy Inconsistencies**

A significant barrier to gender mainstreaming in Nigeria is the limited political commitment to implementing gender-sensitive policies. Although Nigeria has ratified international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and adopted the National Gender Policy in 2006, there remains a gap between policy formulation and execution (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2006). This gap is often due to inconsistencies in government policies and frequent changes in political leadership, which disrupt gender mainstreaming initiatives and hinder long-term progress (Okeke-Ihejirika & Franceschet, 2002).

Furthermore, the lack of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender policies contributes to policy inconsistencies. Many government agencies responsible for gender mainstreaming lack

clear mandates or enforcement powers, leading to a lack of accountability (Nwoye, 2021). The absence of a centralized body to oversee gender mainstreaming efforts across sectors makes it difficult to ensure consistent and coordinated action. To overcome this challenge, Nigeria requires stronger institutional frameworks and monitoring mechanisms that can hold public officials accountable for meeting gender equality targets.

## 5. Emerging Challenges: Climate Change and Economic Instability

Emerging challenges, such as climate change and economic instability, present new obstacles to gender mainstreaming in Nigeria. Climate change disproportionately affects women, particularly in rural areas where they rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. The increased frequency of droughts, floods, and other climate-related events exacerbates food insecurity and poverty, pushing women into more vulnerable economic positions (Olaniyan & Afolabi, 2021). Despite the need for gender-sensitive climate adaptation strategies, there is limited integration of gender perspectives in Nigeria's climate policies, which hinders effective responses to the specific challenges women face in the face of climate change.

Economic instability, including fluctuations in oil prices and rising inflation, further complicates gender mainstreaming efforts. Economic downturns often lead to budget cuts in social services, disproportionately impacting women who depend on public resources for healthcare, education, and other essential services. Women's employment opportunities are also affected, as they are more likely to work in informal sectors with limited social protections (Olaniyan & Afolabi, 2021). Addressing these emerging challenges requires that gender mainstreaming policies adapt to incorporate climate resilience and economic stability as part of broader gender equality goals.

## The Need for Gender Mainstreaming in Nigeria's Development Agenda

Given the multi-faceted challenges facing gender equality in Nigeria, gender mainstreaming remains essential to the country's development agenda. Research indicates that gender equality is linked to improved economic outcomes, higher levels of educational attainment, and better health indicators (World Bank, 2021). As gender disparities persist across sectors, integrating gender perspectives into policy-making can help address systemic inequalities and enhance human capital development. Gender mainstreaming can also contribute to social cohesion by empowering women to participate more fully in economic, social, and political life (UN Women, 2020).

Gender mainstreaming is particularly crucial in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 on gender equality, as well as goals related to poverty reduction, health, and education. By incorporating gender analysis into all levels of governance, Nigeria can develop more inclusive and effective policies that consider the needs of all citizens (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Achieving meaningful progress in gender mainstreaming will require collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners, with a focus on building institutional capacities and transforming social norms.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender mainstreaming in Nigeria remains a critical yet challenging endeavor, deeply influenced by the historical context of colonial legacies, socio-cultural norms, and enduring patriarchal structures. While Nigeria has made strides in policy formulation, such as the adoption of the National Gender Policy and the ratification of international frameworks like CEDAW, the implementation of these policies has faced significant obstacles. Socio-cultural resistance, institutional biases, inadequate funding, and limited political commitment have hindered meaningful progress. Furthermore, emerging challenges, including climate change and economic instability, underscore the urgent need for adaptive and inclusive gender-sensitive approaches across all sectors.

The integration of gender perspectives into Nigeria's policy frameworks is crucial not only for achieving gender equality but also for fostering economic growth, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Addressing the challenges to gender mainstreaming requires a multi-dimensional approach that involves

government institutions, civil society, and community leaders working in unison. Empowering women to participate fully in Nigeria's economic, social, and political spheres will ultimately contribute to a more inclusive and prosperous society.

To enhance the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in Nigeria, the following recommendations are essential:

- 1. Strengthening Institutional Frameworks and Accountability Mechanisms:** Establish a centralized agency with the mandate and authority to oversee and coordinate gender mainstreaming efforts across sectors. This agency should be empowered with resources and enforcement capabilities to hold government departments accountable for implementing gender-sensitive policies. A robust monitoring and evaluation system should be developed to track progress and ensure adherence to gender equality commitments.
- 2. Enhancing Funding and Resource Allocation:** Increased budget allocations for gender-specific programs are essential to address resource gaps in health, education, and economic empowerment. Sustainable funding models, including partnerships with international donors, can supplement government resources. In addition, funds should be directed toward capacity building, community outreach, and gender-sensitivity training within public institutions to strengthen gender-focused programs and initiatives.
- 3. Promoting Women's Representation in Governance and Decision-Making:** Policies aimed at increasing female political representation should be prioritized, such as the implementation of gender quotas within political parties and public institutions. Women's participation in leadership roles would facilitate the development and prioritization of gender-sensitive policies. Training and mentorship programs for women aspiring to enter politics and leadership positions should also be established to help address structural barriers and empower potential female leaders.
- 4. Addressing Socio-Cultural Barriers Through Community Engagement and Education:** Engaging community leaders, religious figures, and traditional authorities is essential to foster a more inclusive understanding of gender equality. Initiatives that promote positive narratives around gender equality should be implemented at the grassroots level. Public awareness campaigns and educational programs focusing on the benefits of gender equality for community development can help shift societal attitudes and reduce cultural resistance to gender mainstreaming.
- 5. Integrating Gender Perspectives into Climate and Economic Policies:** Given the disproportionate impact of climate change and economic instability on women, gender-sensitive approaches should be integrated into climate adaptation and economic recovery policies. Programs that provide women with access to climate-resilient agricultural resources, skills training, and social protection can mitigate the adverse effects of these challenges. Additionally, policies supporting women's participation in sectors like renewable energy and sustainable agriculture could help enhance their economic resilience.
- 6. Fostering Partnerships with Civil Society and International Organizations:** Collaborations with civil society organizations and international agencies can support gender mainstreaming initiatives through technical expertise, financial support, and advocacy. NGOs, women's rights organizations, and international bodies should work closely with government institutions to enhance the reach and effectiveness of gender policies and programs.
- 7. Promoting Gender-Sensitive Education and Skills Training:** Reforming the educational curriculum to emphasize gender equality and women's empowerment from an early age can help change societal norms over time. Vocational training and skills development programs targeting women, particularly in emerging sectors like technology and green industries, would enhance their economic opportunities and reduce gender disparities in traditionally male-dominated fields.

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