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Women Empowerment Is Needed To Boost Gender Equality In Malaysia

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Abstract

While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including equal access to primary education between girls and boys, the women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. The SDGs aim to build on these achievements to ensure that there is an end to discrimination against women and girls everywhere. Although many governments and organizations claim to be tackling the issue of inequality, there are still approximately 1.4 billion women and girls who are still victims of discrimination, violence, and sexism. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to address the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment in Malaysia context in order to close the gap existed in gender inequality. Data were collected through in-depth individual interviews; the participants interviewed included nine women leaders in the public and private sector. The finding of this research indicated that women need personal, relational, and environmental empowerment that boost gender equality in Malaysia. As a conclusion, this finding will open the eyes of civil society, local grassroots advocacy initiatives, men & women, national governments, religious groups, tribal structures, international community, academia & research, as well as media in solving women related issues. This research carries values to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in enhancing the policy on gender equality; this would be the most appropriate tool in addressing and empowering Malaysian women in particular and ensuring inclusiveness and equality for them, as well as calling on the international community to reduce inequality within and among countries.

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Introduction

The Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, in his speech at the United Nations on September 2018, stated, "The new Malaysia will firmly espouse the principles promoted by the UN in our international engagements; these include the principles of truth, human rights, the rule of law, justice, fairness, responsibility and accountability, as well as sustainability" (NewStraitsTimes, 2018). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for a new and transformative vision; it establishes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Women, UN, 2018). Of the 17 goals, SDG 5 for gender equality is arguably the most imperative and central priority goal of all. Malaysia is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs; the key principles and imperatives of these goals are reflected in the Manifesto of the Government and well incorporated in the Mid-term Review of the 11th Malaysia Plan: New Priorities and Emphases and the 2019 National Budget that sets out the development direction of the country moving forward. Gender refers to the social, behavioral, and cultural attributes, expectations, and norms associated with being a woman or a man, and gender equality refers to how these aspects determine how women and men relate to each other and to the resulting differences in power between them (World Development Report, 2012). Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Gender equality is not only about the equal status that the women are entitled to, but it is more concerning on the opportunity available for women to participate. The concept of gender equality is where the women and men are subjected to the same conditions to realize full human rights and having equal chance to contribute towards economic, social, cultural and political development (Zeti Aziz, 2011). Gender equality does not necessarily mean equality of outcomes for males and females; its more on equal access to the "opportunities that allow people to pursue a life of their own choosing and to avoid extreme deprivations in the outcomes", gender equality in rights, resources, and voice (World Bank, 2011). Its indeed, equality of rights refers to equality under the law, whether customary or statutory, equality of resources refers to equality of opportunity, including equality of access to human capital investments and other productive resources

as well as the to markets, and finally, equality of voice captures the ability to influence and contribute to the political discourse and development process (Finance & Development, 2007).

While Asia and the Pacific has made progress in some areas of gender equality, available data against the SDG indicators highlights significant inequality for women and girls. Moreover, major gaps remain in data availability and comparability in the region (ADB and UN Women, 2018). Women in Malaysia, for instance, received support from the Malaysian government concerning their rights to advance; the full commitment of the Government to achieve gender equality is reflected in the formulation and adoption of numerous policies and measures taken to promote women's development and address gender issues, including the establishment of a Cabinet Committee on Gender Equality (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2007). Malaysian Government, through the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, has established measures to achieve gender equality; steps have been taken to elevate women in various sectors (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2007). After more than 60 years of independence, women in Malaysia have achieved a certain level of equality as compared to men; they are appointed to various decision-making levels either in the public or private sectors. Consequently, from 1980 to 2009, according to the Ministry of Women's, Family and Community Development, the Malaysian Gender Gap Index recorded slight improvement in gender inequality; gender inequality declined markedly over the period 1980–2004 (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2007).

In the first place, why are we still talking about gender equality and women's empowerment? Why is it important for us to sustain the agenda of gender equality and women empowerment? How far has Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development succeeded in promoting gender equality? What are the current strategies and policies adopted in accelerating gender equality and women empowerment in Malaysia? ? It's a known fact that women in Malaysia make up almost half the nation's population (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018); and they are highly important

contributors to the country's economic and social development. Improving women's access to jobs and economic opportunities could significantly boost productivity of the nation. Much progress has been made to ensure women's advancement in Malaysia, particularly since the early 1990s. Successive national development plans have included major policy initiatives for the advancement of women in almost every sector. Of particular note are the higher levels of educational attainment of women, their increased labor force participation in higher paying occupations, their greater involvement in business activities, and their improved health status (Aminah Ahmad, 1998). However, there is general agreement that Malay women, past or present, have not played an important role in statecraft or politics. With few exceptions, Malay women's prominence in economic and ritual matters has not led to leadership roles in the public or political spheres. On the Political Empowerment Score, one of the four components of the Global Gender Gap Index, Malaysia ranked 121 in the world (World Economic Forum, 2013).

Although the Government recognizes the important role women play and their contributing to the development of the nation (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2007), yet Malaysia ranked extremely low (102 of the 136 countries) in the Global Gender Gap Index based on statistical data on male-female gaps in education, economic mobility, health, and participation in political roles (Charles Hirschman, 2016). The claim that Malaysian women lag behind men primarily because of traditional cultural values is challenged, however, by the writings of area studies specialists and social historians about gender roles and equality in South-east Asia (Charles Hirschman, 2016). And according to Denison Jayasooria, (2016), to justify a lack of progress in terms of gender equality is that a government should "remove stereotyping, cultural values, behavior, mind-sets, including laws and policies that hold back women", instead of saying "that's our culture". She argued that people were still uncomfortable when traditional gender roles were challenged, and concluded that existing monitoring processes could be more productive in an environment that supported freedom of expression, freedom of information, and freedom to dissent.

Sustainable Development Goal (2019) progress reports reveal that the world will not achieve the SDGs by 2030 unless efforts are accelerated at all levels, particularly at the national and subnational levels. The 2018 SDG Report found that issues of inequality is seriously hampering progress and stressed the need for disaggregated and timely data towards evidence-based policymaking for achievement of the SDGs. Gender inequality is a universal issue; there are still gross inequalities in access to paid employment in some regions, and significant gaps between men and women in the labor market. Sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public decision-making, all remain huge barriers. Studies indicated that 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15-49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period and 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. Progress is occurring regarding harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), which has declined by 30% in the past decade, but there is still much work to be done to completely eliminate such practices (Sustainable Development Goal, 2016). Though Malaysia is making remarkable progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is stillroom for improvement, especially on the 5th goal, namely gender equality and women empowerment. According to Samantha Cheh (2018), Malaysia has a poor track record when it comes to gender equality. Undeniably, females have to struggle with gender biases since school-age as they have limited opportunities to gain exposure in the science stream, resulting in the lack of tertiary female students enrolled in science, technology, engineer, and mathematics (Malaysia Gender Gap Index, 2015). Indeed, Malaysia needs to disrupt the norms in changing the stereotyping so that the nation could start building the culture of equality for both women and men. As women go back into the labor force, there are certain areas that need to be addressed, for instance, the areas of discrimination in pay that lead to gender pay gap. Therefore, researchers need to think on how to empower women and girls to unlock their full potential as full participants and contributors to economies, social life, family and community

(Marcela Suazo, 2019). In this paper, researchers have gone beyond the emotional image of women being among the main sufferers of inequalities. Gender equality is not just limited to fighting for women's rights to participate in the labor market; it is about giving them equal opportunity to unleash their full potential in the workplace. And as a matter of fact, most of the challenges women face relate to the government policies implementation, lots of government policies are created, many of which are intended to create greater equality for women. However, there is generally a lack of political drive to implement those strategies. As women are generally excluded from becoming powerful agents in the new state, traditional structures prevail that maintain women's inferior status to men. Therefore, many of the policies that would mandate equality only exist on paper. Therefore, and based on the above, this paper will analyze studies and researches related to gender equality, women empowerment and policies related. Moreover, it will analyze the tendency for violence based on established risk factors for recurrence.

Gender Equality & Women Empowerment

Although the widespread of literature on gender equality and women role has led to wonderful advances in the need for women empowerment, there has been little definition available on what empowerments for women means. Indeed, a procedural definition for the concept of women empowerment is required to deliver women to a position in which they can defend themselves, take fateful decisions in their lives, enhance their capabilities, educate themselves, know their rights and responsibilities toward the society, achieve their ambition and hopes by removing all stereotypical processes and attitudes in society, and providing all material, legal, moral, economic and educational means to enhance their capabilities and improve their status in life. "Empowerment means that people are enabled to take more control over their lives" (Chambers 1993). Indeed, "empowerment … also refers to the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" (Kabeer, 2001). The society must have a strong memory to recall women's participation throughout the history; they have made extraordinary contributions to their societies; some are well known, and some are less. They have played prominent roles in peace

negotiations between different parties, families and communities. They have taken good steps to contribute to peace building as the case in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia and others. They have done lots but still some societies are not recognizing their efforts, empowering and allowing them to participate in peace building process. A UN Women (2012) identified that out of 31 major peace processes conducted since 1992, 4% of signatories of peace agreements were women; 2.4% of chief mediators were women; 3.7% of witnesses or observers to peace negotiations were women; and 9% of negotiation team members were women. Considering this fact, what women need are empowerments; social empowerment of being able to contribute at all levels of society and not just home. Educational empowerment for educating a male means educating an individual but educating a female is educating the whole family. Women also need economic empowerment as equal work opportunities, equal organizational benefits, equal treatments and equal working environment. Besides political empowerment, empowering women politically is the highest need; women's political empowerment means to distribute equal power and authority between men and women and creating an environment of freedom from domination and suppression. In addition, psychological empowerment is needed; when women join educational institutions, political parties, and participate in decision-making process, they feel psychologically powered and that can help them build their self-confidence, recognize their self-worth, self-respect, pride, maturity, and self-actualization. According to Diaa Shreteh (2016), When talking about empowering women, we are not only targeting women, but the entire society and all its components, especially the family, making the woman able to fulfill her roles and tasks fullest way in order to achieve comprehensive development that will ultimately be reflected in the progress of society and its advancement. However, in order for empowerment to succeed, it must be based on the principles of Islamic law, society's beliefs, principles, culture, and traditions because women are the deepest part of society's values, and in some situation, she might oppose and inhibit this empowerment. Therefore, empowering women individually is impossible, as it will create a significant impact on the family and society. It is essential to look at women

empowerment collectively and in a holistic view of women's roles in the society as a part of the family and society, not a separate or independent entity. At the end, gender equality is not possible due to the nature of men and women; each are unique and different; they are different mentally, psychologically, and physically; they also differ in their roles in life and society. Therefore, justice between men and women is the basis of empowerment; wherever justice exist both genders will be satisfied, and as a result, it will reflect positively on empowering women economically, socially, legally, and politically. In conclusion, what are we looking in this paper is a method for women empowerment: a search for signs that assist women to engage in critical thinking, exercising choices, and taking action that gives them greater control over livelihood.

Types of Empowerment

Empowerment has been defined as a process of "providing the cultural, educational and material means so that individuals can participate in a decision-making and control of resources" (Waseem Husam Al-Din Al-Ahmad, 2016). It's indeed addressing the inequality between women and men, set goals to eliminate all kinds of inequality: socially, economically and politically; thus when researchers talked about empowerment, they focus on these three basic aspects: economic, social, and political empowerments. For the economic empowerment, relative distribution of administrative, organizational and professional jobs, distribution of income, and wages for both male and female equally are needed. The Djakarta Declaration (1994) critically examines that "empowerment of women is not only equal consideration, it was a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development." Without economic self-sufficiency other rights and scopes remain meaningless to the people. Economic empowerment can be described as a means by which the poor, landless, deprived and oppressed people of all societies can be freed from all kinds of deprivation and oppression; can directly enjoy the benefits from markets as well as household; and can easily manage a square nutritious food and fulfill basic requirements as house, cloth, medicine and other basic needs. Indeed, for social empowerment, women exercise their powers and capabilities in order to build a social culture that is not limited to just raise the children. According to Mandal (2013),

social empowerment refers to the enabling force that strengthens women's social relations and their position in social structures. Social empowerment addresses the social discriminations existing in the society based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Undoubtedly, the political empowerment is another important fact that focuses on the number of parliamentary seats available to men compared to women, and also the participation of women in civil society organizations, such as parties, unions, NGOs and others (Ahmed Ibrahim Khader, 2013). According to Saber Baloul (2009), the most important indicators of empowering women in different societies are as follow: the participation of women in leadership positions, the participation of women in committees' board and public sites, providing all types of educations and training opportunities for women, participation of women in the decision-making process, and allowing women to claim for their rights.

According to Ahmed Ibrahim Khader (2013), that social empowerment means that women exercise all of their powers and capabilities in order to build a social culture that limits what they call masculine control. Whereas the economic empowerment means the relative distribution of both men and women in administrative, organizational and professional jobs, as well as the relative distribution of income gained by the economically active population of both sexes, and the relative wages of females compared to males. Indeed, advocates of this type of empowerment assert that this is only possible if the woman has a regular private income. In addition to the political empowerment, that measured according to the opinion of its advocates, by the number of parliamentary seats available to men compared to women, and also the participation of women in civil society organizations. Shaima Rifai Taha Yassin (nd) initiated the dimension of women's empowerment that was grouped into the cultural, social, developmental, economic, and political dimensions. Whereas, Mandal (2013) indicated that empowerment of women now can be categorized into five main parts: social, educational, economic, political and psychological. And Rustinsyah (2018) indicated five types of empowerments: the social, the educational, the religious, the organizational, and the economic empowerments. The social empowerment can be seen in the closer relation

between the women, particularly in the health aspect. The educational empowerment is obtained through the scholarship and training programs provided to women. The religious empowerment is seen in the number of women who become religion teachers and who provide the meals for the religious festivities. The organizational empowerment is achieved from the administrators' role assumed by the women for the important organizations. Finally, the economic empowerment has enabled the women to improve their livelihoods. According to Ghadoliya (2006), empowerment is not essentially political alone; it is a process of having personal, economic, social and political dimensions with personal empowerment being the core of the empowerment process; in fact, political empowerment will not succeed in the absence of economic empowerment. In conclusion, the types of empowerment can be grouped into three main points; the social, economics, and political empowerment.
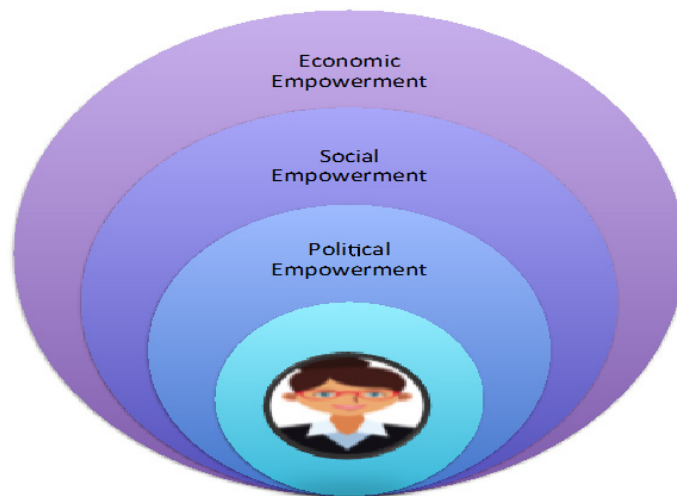

Fig.1: Types of Empowerment

Obstacles To Women's Empowerment
Throughout the history, women have stood in the prison without a crime, except that she is a female; they have been subjected to different types of injustice: the economic, social, and cultural injustice, in addition to exploitation and dispossession (United Nations (2014). Thus, in all cases, the judges are the societies. In the past, the general rule for women was the one that Socrates himself drafted "the political for men, and the home for women". And in China it is stated by one of the high-class girls that: (We women occupy the last place in the human race, and we are the weakest part of mankind, and it must be from our share the most despicable jobs) (Will & Ariel Durant, 1935). And the Arabs (Pre-Islam) were like other ancient peoples; they celebrate if a male was born to them, and indiscreet if a female was born to them. Furthermore, the status of women in the modern era for each country is more dependent on the politics and the policy of that country; in democratic countries, for instance, they prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex; women have received equal treatment with men. As for backward countries, women suffer from great persecution and various kinds of injustice (Fatima Omar Kazouz, 2016).

From the social perspective in protection of women, which is expressed by many leaders, women's political participation is refrain by family, political leaders, and tribal parties; in addition, there are other obstacles like political obstacles that use weak politics to promote women's participation and representation, personal obstacles that are related to the fear of women competing for political seats, cultural obstacles that some societies are facing; a culture that promotes male domination and female subordination, and finally, extreme religious beliefs that play a major role in limiting women's access to decision-making positions. Although women make up a large percentage of the elections, women are

not allowed to access to decision-making positions; as women are generally excluded from becoming powerful agents, traditional structures prevail that maintain women's inferior status to men (Kemitraan Partnership, 2014).

Indeed, Bhasin (2004) indicated that the subordination that women experience daily, regardless of the class they might belong to, takes various forms: discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence- within the family, at the place of work and in society. And Shettar (2015) mentioned that social norms and family structure in developing countries manifests and perpetuate the subordinate status of women. The gender gap is closing more rapidly in high-income countries, while continuing to widen in emerging economies (European Commission, nd). Malaysia, for instance, has a marginally improved score of 72.7% in economic participation and opportunity, with women participation as legislators, senior officials and managers increasing from 22% in 2017 to 24.7% in 2018. And in the area of educational attainment, Malaysia scored 105.4% as the enrollment rates for women in all levels of education were higher than men (TheStar, 2019).

Research Methodology
The purpose of this study is to describe the types of empowerment women perceived and the obstacles to the women's empowerment in Malaysia. The research seeks to uncover the women empowerment practices, guiding beliefs, lived experiences, influences, and future goals of the women. In essence, this study aims to also signify whether gender, religion and culture play a role in influencing the women empowerment and gender equality in Malaysia. This study used qualitative methods, as recommended by feminist literature (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), to collect data that reflects the subjective experience of women. The person-environment fit theory posits that people work hardest and are most motivated in settings where there is a good fit between what their needs are, and the opportunities that are provided for them (Eccles, as told to Bembenutty, 2008, p. 536). Data were gathered through open-ended qualitative interviews with nine participants; the respondents were identified through purposive sampling. The

nine women were leaders from different backgrounds of who were responsible in significant leadership positions in their organizations in Malaysia. These identified women while upholding national policies were also involved with maintaining and implementing organizational policies. The data collection protocols were prepared by drafting interview questions, which provided the platform for data collection and analysis. The list of interview questions was given to two peer reviewers for feedback and revision. Towards that, we created an interview template using the specific questions to be asked during the interviews. The one-on-one interview protocol included 10 questions that focused on the job responsibilities, which relate to policy-making, their career path, their position, the reasons for pursuing the position, their opinion on women empowerment, and types of empowerment needed by women. The participants were Malay women leaders who specialized in their own leadership position and involve in policy making within their country. The selected Malay women were personally contacted and invited to participate in this study; upon confirmation of their participation, the interview schedule together with a study brief and consent form were emailed to them. The interviews were then scheduled on a date and time at a venue convenient to them; the interviews were transcribed verbatim and sent to the interviewees for verification. Revisions were made where necessary when requested by the respondents.

Finding
This section discusses the key findings from the research with a focus on identified patterns and themes from the research and key quotes and examples where relevant; the findings related to the job responsibilities which relate to women role in society, career path which related to leadership roles, types of empowerment, obstacles to women empowerment, and culture as well as religion influences in their leadership and empowerment.

Individual Interview
Profile of Participants
Throughout this section code names will be used to identify the nine participants; a brief description of the nine participants involved in this study is provided below:

Table 1: Profile of Participants

Code Name	Age	Present Status	Work Experience in related field
R1.1	Early 50	Headmistress	25 years
R1.2	Mid 40	Head of Student Affairs	14 years
R1.3	Early 50	Head of College	25 years
R1.4	Early 50	Deputy Dean	20 years
R1.5	Late 50	Research Manager	27 years
R1.6	Early 50	Director	11 years
R1.7	Mid 50	Director	32 years
R1.8	Mid 50	Headmistress	30 years
R1.9	Early 50	Director	28 years

Job Responsibilities of the Participants

The participants of this research position are bound to government policies as well academic, operations, administration, student affairs and community involvement at organizational level. The figure below shows that, the respondents' responsibilities involved more in management of their organization (50%) followed by implementing the government policies (25%). Other than that their job responsibilities included student affairs or welfare (17%) and community awareness (8%).
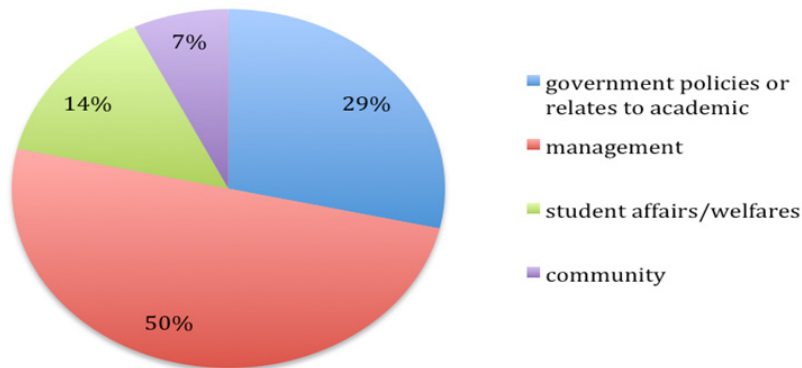

Fig. 2: Job Responsibilities

Government and Organisational Policies

Basically, all the respondents were involved in implementing government policies, setting up policies, managing, and running their organisations. This showed how they were empowered in the organization they work with; four of the nine women claimed that their job responsibilities need them to implement government policies. The government policies required them to rule their organisation by following the guidelines given by the government. When they were asked about their main responsibilities, R 1.1, R 1.6, and R 1.7; they quoted as below:

"I'm, well known in implementing the government policies; I work hard towards building up the nation." (Respondent R 1.1)

"That will be to the daily running; when there are decisions made at the highest level we have to execute." (Respondent R 1.6)

"Well in terms of my responsibility; it is from agenda setting to the implementation….I am also involved in the design of both infrastructure and organizational structure." (Respondent R 1.7)

Management Responsibility

Except for one, all respondents were involved in conducting the management aspect of their organization; they were fully empowered to do the operation and administration management job. Quotations from some respondents are as follows:

"…. Another responsibility that I have to look through for every year is the finance of my organization." (Respondent R 1.7)

"..To make sure the planning gets executed, and to maintain the budget so the corporation does not go over budget." (Respondent R 1.8)

"My responsibility is basically to manage all the academic programs, I will also assist the university to come out with a new policy. " (Respondent R 1.4)
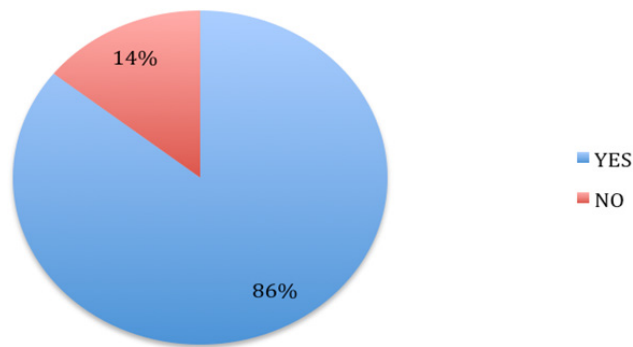

Fig. 3: Career Path

Career Path

All of them had an education related background, except one.

In reference to the above Figure, 86% of the respondents had an education related background. Quotations from some respondents are as follows:

"Before joining the present organization, I was working in a mid managerial level at a public university for 23 years, and a senior position in an international research organization for 4 years." (Respondent R 1.5)

"I started in 1980, and in 1985 I involved in training as a training officer." (Respondent R 1.6)

"I was in the ministry of education for quite some time; I involved in policymaking process." (Respondent R 1.7)
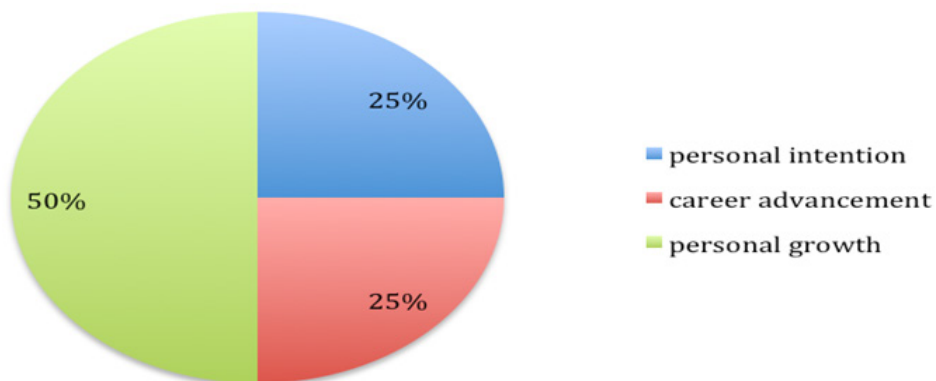

Fig. 4: Passion in Career

Factors Contributed to Women Position in the Organization

The women's responses to a question about how they reached this level and what contributed to their position in the workplace. The three categories are: (a) personal intention, (b) advancement and personal growth (c) making the best of a situation; they quoted as below:

"I believe this work is the responsibility that I felt for the nation, the responsibility that I felt toward the country...." (Respondent R 1.7)

"I'm a PHD holder, and I have to move forward to fulfill my responsibility toward the nation." (Respondent R 1.4)

"Probably this could challenge and motivate me to continue working as a leader with lots of responsibility." (Respondent R 1.2)

"…so, whatever work I have; it's always a challenge for me." (Respondent R 1.6)

"The opportunity to develop something new and to leave a mark." (Respondent R 1.5)

"......It was a "coincidence, there was no planning, " but actually, I've done very well in my work." (Respondent R 1.8)
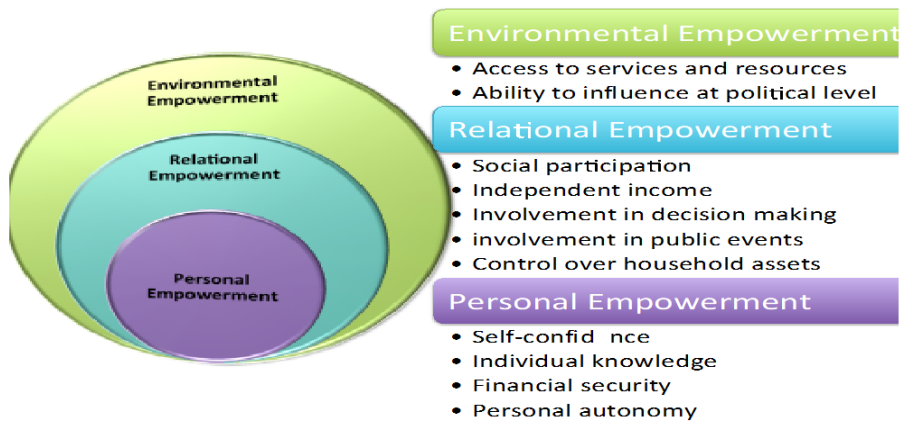

Fig. 5: Types of Empowerment

Respondents Opinion on Types of Empowerment

Each of the women leaders had their own individualistic point of view about types of empowerment needed by women; the respondents identified the personal, relational and environmental empowerments, as they quoted below:

"I believe on the important of self confidence; women need to be given the confident in leading the organization...." (Respondent R 1.7)

"The autonomy given by the organization encourages all of us to work freely and work hard." (Respondent R 1.2)

"Probably this could be a challenge the transformation of the existing unequal society is very crucial and

important; and that will never occur unless women involved in decision making, and participate in social and public events." (Respondent R 1.6)

"It is more significant to accept women's voice in decision making." (Respondent R 1.2)

"Women needs to be given more political power, we need to voice out, and I use to voice out my opinions, I think that is right way." (Respondent R 1.7)

Conclusion

Equality between men and women is one of the fundamental principles recognized under international law and specified in the basic international human rights instruments. Providing women and girls with equal access to education,

health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. Of the 17 sustainable development goals, SDG 5 for gender equality is arguably the most imperative goal of all; the women are the foundation of a strong country, resilient community and family. When women and girls are empowered socially, economically and politically, the country and all its citizens including men and boys will benefit and flourish. With women and girls making up half the population globally, there can be no measurable change in any country's living standards unless women and girls are an integral, and integrated, part of the process. It is now well-known fact that the issue of women's empowerment is very crucial and more important; this issue is in every corner of the earth; girls are the future mothers of any nation, educating them, for instant, is a prominent priority for her offspring that has a ripple effect of constructive change in the society, as well as the country. It is well known the fact that women have a considerable role in every society; therefore, they should be empowered at all level "education, human capital, politics, and economics because women's empowerment is necessary for human progress. Indeed, the world will never achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) if half of the citizens cannot receive their full potentiality. If a family and society give proper supports to empower the women, then ultimately, this will increase the social development of the country. This paper tested out the types of empowerment and obstacle related; the objective was to identify gaps existed in gender inequality and how to achieve the gender equality. Data was collected through in-depth individual interviews to get their point of view on this issue. The findings indicate that women empowerment can break the gap in gender inequality, and personal, relational, as well as environmental empowerments is required to achieve gender equality. As a result, this research carries values to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in enhancing the policy on gender equality.

Conflict of Interest
The authors do not have any conflict of interest.

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