

The evolution of the value of women

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AUGUST EDITION - 'WOMEN'S MONTH'

When tradition and modernisation combine, we evolve to create a future of endless opportunities. Evolution is especially true for women and the value they bring to society and globally.

Traditionally, women have built homes bearing children due to societal pressure, micromanaging life at home, and seeking men's approval when making decisions. Consequently, they faced discrimination upon entering the workplace, such as glass ceilings (Carpenter 2018), whilst creating foundations to keep societies afloat.

Because of this situation, women build their careers within the same arenas as men but, unfortunately, at a slower pace. Women are under-represented at senior levels within international organisations that shape much of the global dialogue. The UN recognises that gender parity within the organisation is a crucial first step to orienting the system to gender equality (United Nations 2017).

Women's newly found identity now adds value to building the economy. Women embrace opportunities such as entrepreneurship, teaching, and law, making it their mission to prove that they can do their jobs well.

The general limits that patriarchy has set for them and never breaking the glass ceiling are visible to educated women. Women become financially self-reliant when they acquire education, which leads to more extensive involvement in social, political and cultural aspects of life (News 2010). All evidence shows that investment in literacy for women yields high development dividends (News 2010).

Furthermore, women have assumed the roles of decision-makers in society, business and government. A perfect example is Smriti Irani, born in 1976 and currently serving as the

Union Minister for Women and Child Development in India. She is India's youngest union cabinet minister in the government and the first woman to hold office as Union Minister for Human Resource Development and Union Minister of Textiles (India 2021).

The value women add through their wisdom harnesses and shapes society into moulding solid principles and values. By enforcing decisions raised solely by men, women now play crucial roles and have evolved into leaders and voices for the voiceless and the less fortunate.

Women's rights and politics have dominated current political affairs. Movements seek to address gender-based violence (GBV), for instance, the fight for women's rights in societies and the workplace regarding sexual abuse and harassment, discrimination and oppression. Women are now standing in solidarity and enforcing policy changes and laws in breaking the toxic reality of patriarchy, abuse, oppression and unjust laws. A good example is the three new bills recently introduced into parliament by President Cyril Ramaphosa, designed to bring justice to the victims of GBV (Mlaba 2020). With these bills, the government hopes to tackle three key issues that relate to GBV: the process of applying for a protection order, state police not taking harassment claims seriously, and the lack of accountability and adequate punitive measures for offenders (Mlaba 2020).

A second example is how South Africa continues to be a beacon of hope. We recently witnessed the confidence and faith in women's abilities through the appointment of defence minister Thandi Modise. This appointment was a clear affirmation of the value of women in our society. 'New defence minister Thandi Modise was recalled from parliament to the national cabinet to position her for a higher post in President Cyril Ramaphosa's administration during his second term. Modise's name is said to be high on the list of female leaders in Ramaphosa's faction. He is considering lobbying ANC structures to support the creation of the post of deputy president when the ANC elects new leaders next year' (Shoba 2021).

In America, they have elected a woman as Vice President. 'Kamala Harris made history on Wednesday when she was sworn in as Joe Biden's Vice President, becoming the first woman, the first Black American and the first Asian American to hold the second-highest US office' (Oliphant 2021). In Germany, Angela Merkel was elected as the first female Chancellor, and has been serving in her role since 2005.

We recognise women's power in affecting change and enforcing laws that have changed and made history. This change is a clear affirmation of the significant value of women as they rise in power and politics globally. Women have made progress in adding value to

leadership roles by breaking barriers and patriarchal stereotypes. For example, women are good mentors and listeners as they are more empathetic and compassionate. Women bring attention to issues in the workplace, such as the importance of mental health, and find solutions to all parties' benefit during disputes by focusing on the finer details (Megan 2020).

Women are the root of existence, they are life-givers, the foundation as home builders and creating sustainable societies. They are leaders and activists within their rights while building businesses as entrepreneurs such as farmers, and most of all, they are revolutionaries and history makers. There is, therefore, no difference between traditional and modern women. They complement each other by holding on to conventional ways while fighting for the same values and recognition in the contemporary stance in society.

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