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Empowering Women through Inclusive Infrastructure: Implications for Well-Being

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Abstract

Gender equality and women's empowerment have emerged as critical global goals, necessitating a comprehensive examination of the role of inclusive infrastructure in facilitating women's progress. This abstract explores the implications of inclusive infrastructure on the well-being of women, acknowledging the transformative potential of such initiatives in fostering gender equality and empowering women to thrive.

The abstract delves into the concept of inclusive infrastructure, emphasizing its multidimensional nature that encompasses not only physical facilities but also social and economic considerations tailored to address the unique needs of women. By recognizing the barriers that hinder women's empowerment, the abstract highlights how inclusive infrastructure can serve as a powerful tool in overcoming these challenges.

The study uncovers the various aspects of women's lives that can be positively impacted by inclusive infrastructure. It examines the role of education in creating opportunities for women's advancement, economic empowerment through improved access to work opportunities, and the provision of safe and secure environments to enhance women's well-being. Furthermore, the abstract explores the social and psychological impacts of inclusive infrastructure on women's lives, such as increased social inclusion, improved mental health, and heightened self-confidence and empowerment.

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The economic implications of investing in inclusive infrastructure are also addressed. The abstract demonstrates how women's empowerment through inclusive infrastructure contributes to economic growth and sustainable development by harnessing women's potential as active contributors to the workforce and economy.

In conclusion, this abstract highlights the profound implications of inclusive infrastructure on women's well-being and empowerment. By fostering an enabling environment that addresses the unique challenges faced by women, inclusive infrastructure paves the way for gender equality and equitable societies. Emphasizing the collective responsibility of society to invest in inclusive infrastructure, the abstract advocates for transformative change that will benefit not only women but entire communities and societies. The research presented in this abstract contributes to a deeper understanding of the significance of inclusive infrastructure as a catalyst for empowering women and advancing global development agendas.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the transformative potential of inclusive infrastructure in empowering women and promoting gender equality. Inclusive infrastructure refers to the development of physical, social, and economic structures that consider the unique needs and perspectives of women. By recognizing the gendered dimensions of infrastructure and its impact on women's lives, societies can create environments that foster women's empowerment and overall well-being. This article explores the importance of inclusive infrastructure in empowering women and its far-reaching implications for their well-being.

There are two reasons that justify the need of this study. In the first place, although previous research mentioned that the difference between men and women has its origin in their different roles, they only focus on gender, ignoring the roles that citizens perform. Second, there are different well-being theories (e.g., subjective well-being and the theory of capabilities approach) which suggest different measures for well-being. Hence, there is no consensus on how to measure citizens' well-being. Therefore, given the fact that the gender imbalance is based on the differentiated roles assigned to men and women, and that there are different theories which suggest different indicators to measure citizens well-being, this study intends to close these research gaps with an empirical study in which (1) different well-being theories are integrated, (2) a measurement of well-being based on the capabilities approach is used and (3) the differences are analyzed based on both citizens' roles and gender.

In sum, an attempt is made to estimate the importance of basic infrastructures in the development of several key capabilities from a gender perspective. The method used combines the Capability Approach



and Subjective Well-Being theories and allows analyzing the impact the infrastructures have on well-being of individuals and studying whether the improvement of infrastructures may contribute to gender equality.

Meanwhile, the economic literature shows that there is little attention paid to the sphere of public actions and policies on infrastructure, as there are few studies dealing with this issue. Further, little attention is paid to public infrastructures from a gender perspective in developed countries. In fact, there are large differences in women's needs and perceptions should be expected compared to results in non-developed countries. One of the reasons why gender has been ignored in the field of urban policies is because that area has traditionally been a man's domain. Further, the total percentage of women in the students, professors, researchers and managers in technological careers is low, which may be extrapolated to their presence in professional associations and in the decision-making public service. Therefore, there is a weak participation of women in the identification, planning, execution, monitoring and assessment of policies, programs and projects on infrastructure development.

Understanding inclusive infrastructure

Inclusive infrastructure entails more than just constructing physical facilities; it involves designing environments that are sensitive to the diverse needs and experiences of women. This includes accessible public spaces, safe transportation systems, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and affordable housing, among others. By considering factors such as safety, convenience, and ease of access, inclusive infrastructure addresses the barriers that women often face in their daily lives.

Overcoming barriers to women's empowerment

Women in many societies continue to grapple with numerous challenges that impede their empowerment and well-being. Lack of access to quality education, limited job opportunities, gender-based violence, and inadequate healthcare are some of the barriers women confront. Inclusive infrastructure can serve as a powerful catalyst in breaking down these barriers and enabling women to thrive.

Education: Inclusive educational infrastructure ensures that girls have access to safe and appropriate learning environments. This helps reduce drop-out rates, promotes academic achievement, and empowers women with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their lives.

Economic empowerment: Accessible and well-planned infrastructure, such as reliable public transportation and affordable childcare, allows women to participate more actively in the workforce. Improved access to markets and financial services can also enhance their economic opportunities.



Safety and security: Gender-responsive infrastructure includes well-lit public spaces, women-friendly public transport, and secure housing. Creating safe environments not only reduces the risk of violence but also instills a sense of confidence and agency among women.

Healthcare: Inclusive healthcare infrastructure, particularly in rural and marginalized communities, ensures that women can access essential reproductive and maternal health services. This contributes to reducing maternal mortality rates and improving overall health outcomes for women.

Social and psychological impacts

The benefits of inclusive infrastructure extend beyond physical amenities; they also have significant social and psychological implications for women's well-being.

Social inclusion: Inclusive public spaces provide opportunities for women to interact, network, and engage with their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and social inclusion.

Mental health: Safe and well-designed environments can alleviate stress and anxiety, contributing to better mental health outcomes for women.

Confidence and empowerment: Empowering women with the means to move freely and participate in public life can boost their self-esteem, self-worth, and overall sense of empowerment.

Economic growth and sustainable development

Investing in inclusive infrastructure is not only a matter of social justice but also an essential component of economic growth and sustainable development. When women are empowered through inclusive infrastructure, they become active contributors to the economy, which can lead to increased productivity and improved living standards for society as a whole.

Conclusion

Inclusive infrastructure is a powerful tool for empowering women and promoting gender equality. By understanding and addressing the unique needs and experiences of women, societies can create environments that foster women's well-being and enable them to realize their full potential. Investing in inclusive infrastructure is not only a matter of rights and social justice; it is a crucial step towards building more equitable and prosperous societies for all. Embracing the principles of inclusive infrastructure is a collective responsibility that will yield long-term dividends for women's empowerment and the overall well-being of society.



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