



THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S ROLE IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 4 th August 2023 Accepted: 4 th September 2023 Published: 8 th October 2023	Women have long played an important role in diplomacy, but their efforts are often underestimated. It is time to acknowledge and celebrate the ways in which women are breaking down barriers and making a difference in diplomacy. This article will discuss the role of women in diplomatic relations.
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In the context of changing paradigms and approaches to global affairs, the question of women in foreign affairs and international security is becoming increasingly significant. Scholars, policymakers, and civil society are collaborating in novel ways to increase women's engagement in various policy areas and at all levels on the ground, from conceptualization to implementation.

A rising amount of research shows to the benefits of having women represented on an equal footing with men in social, political, and economic life, as well as creating gender diversity. Gender diversity, for example, 'when encouraged by gender-supportive norms and legislation within a sector, leads to improved productivity and better interchange of varied ideas,' according to research. Furthermore, there is strong evidence that women's standing, especially their representation in decision-making, is a major predictor of state peace.

Under former Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, Sweden was the first country to outline the idea and implementation plan for a feminist foreign policy in 2014. This notion, which later gained traction, prioritizes women's rights, human security, and equal representation in diplomatic activity. It is founded on the assumption that gender-equal societies enjoy better health, faster economic growth, and more security, as well as proof that gender equality promotes peace. Individual and personal security, rather than state security, is a distinguishing feature of this policy goal. The three points of foundation for feminist foreign policy are as follows:

Rights: The Swedish Foreign Service must support the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, particularly by resisting all kinds of violence and discrimination that limit their freedom of action.

Representation: The Swedish Foreign Service must encourage women's involvement and influence in decision-making processes at all levels and in all fields,

as well as seek interaction with women's representatives at all levels, including civil society.

Resources: The Swedish Foreign Service will endeavour to ensure that resources are given to promote gender equality and equal access to human rights for all women and girls. In addition, the service will advocate specific initiatives for certain target groups.

The development of peace ministries is also supported by Sweden's feminist foreign policy, proving that peace is as vital to foreign policy as national defense. Since 2014, 79 other countries have developed national plans of action to improve women's participation in foreign policy and peace and security processes. In this environment, exciting changes continue to occur in the EU as well as in nations as different as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates. The United States government most recently announced its plan for Women, Peace, and Security in June 2019, the first such plan under President Donald Trump.

Women contribute a distinct viewpoint and set of abilities to diplomacy, and their participation may result in more successful and inclusive outcomes. Gender-balanced teams are more innovative and make better judgments, according to research. Despite these advantages, women continue to confront substantial obstacles in diplomacy. They are underrepresented in high leadership roles and endure workplace harassment and hostility. This is unacceptable and must be corrected.

Women are paving the path for gender equality and women's rights all across the world. They are utilizing their positions to advocate for women's and girls' progress in all aspects of life, as well as to oppose gender-based violence and discrimination. Women are very important in creating peace and security. They negotiate peace treaties, mediate wars, and promote disarmament. Their leadership has been found to result in more inclusive and long-lasting peace processes.



Women are also leading initiatives to solve global issues such as climate change, poverty, and illness. They are in charge of delegations, drafting international treaties, and campaigning for action on these critical concerns. Women are making an impact not just in conventional diplomacy, but also in the employment of new and creative technology. They are using social media and other digital technologies to interact with people and effect change.

The epidemic of COVID-19 has underlined the essential role of women in diplomacy. Women diplomats and ambassadors have been in the vanguard of the reaction, securing supplies, coordinating relief operations, and advocating for the most vulnerable.

Despite advances, more work needs to be done to ensure that women have equal opportunities and are adequately represented in diplomacy. This involves expanding chances for women to enter the sector as well as establishing legislation to support their work. Women's participation will impact the future of diplomacy. Their vision and leadership will be vital in resolving today's issues and establishing a more peaceful, just, and equitable world.

Involving women in international security procedures and high-level peace talks, as well as appointing them to key diplomatic positions, implies more than just equal representation. In reality, there is a growing body of research demonstrating that women's engagement in peace and security processes may have a substantial impact on the success and sustainability of peace agreements, as well as the longevity and quality of peace. According to studies, peace treaties signed by female delegates had a greater rate of execution.

Data demonstrate that women are frequently viewed as 'honest brokers' during peace discussions, allowing for more lasting and fair peace, as evidenced, for example, in the conflict resolution in Northern Ireland prior to 1998. Women also have access to crucial information because of their societal roles and duties. Women in Afghanistan and Northern Ireland, for example, have gained access to data networks through conversing with members of the community. According to a research conducted by the US think tank Council on Foreign Relations, including women and civil society groups in a peace negotiation makes the resultant deal 64% less likely to fail and 35% more likely to survive at least 15 years. These and other statistics demonstrate unequivocally that gender diversity and the involvement of women in peace discussions yield longer-lasting and better results.

Longer-lasting peace treaties, enhanced human security, and equitable representation are only a few of

the outcomes of feminist foreign policy and women's engagement in security. Women frequently take a collaborative approach to peacemaking and coordinate across ethnic and sectarian lines. It has been argued that such an approach, which incorporates the concerns of diverse demographic groups (for example, religious, ethnic, and cultural groups) affected by a conflict and interested in its resolution, increases the chances of long-term stability while decreasing the likelihood of state failure, conflict onset, and poverty.

Experts have sharply criticized the fact that promises and announcements about advancing the WPS agenda and equal participation of women in foreign and security policy are frequently more rhetoric than actual execution, resulting in minimal progress on the agenda's aims across the world. While, as previously stated, a large number of states have established national action plans for WPS, just 43% of them have a budget for execution. This is made worse by the general fall in global foreign aid.

While administrative, institutional, and training frameworks have advanced in terms of gender balance, they are still far from being able to function as real facilitators of a balanced gender equation in leadership roles. Furthermore, some experts argue that gender equality has yet to be regarded a top priority, which is required for it to become a key part of foreign policy.

Reconfiguring public attitudes is a significant problem. While the WPS agenda emphasizes human security and civil society participation, conventional security is generally associated with military action and economic stability. A transformation in public perception of what security genuinely means, with a strong emphasis on human security, might be the key to a more inclusive and well-rounded security agenda. Raising gender imbalance awareness, notably via the portrayal of women in public spaces; addressing institutional culture and underlying sexism; and fostering mentoring and role models for women are some of the major difficulties ahead.

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