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Gender Equality in and through Social Entrepreneurship in Ghana

Abstract

This article identifies key priorities and challenges that lie in the path of achieving gender equality targets, particularly in Ghana where there is poverty and limited knowledge about Social Entrepreneurship. Although a growing body of research emphasizes the role of women in Social Entrepreneurship in developing countries, gender inequality is still persistent.

In particular, we analyze the hindrances and implications of formalization policy for the attainment of SDG 5 in and through Social Entrepreneurship in Ghana. We also review Government policies, official documents, journals and propose solutions to government sector agencies and call attention to policy gaps with regard to the gender equality goals set by the international community and make recommendations for Ghana's formalization regulations.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Policies, Gender Equality, Social Entrepreneurship, Ghana,

Introduction

Largely, women still face discrimination and inequality in Ghanaian society. This situation is still occurring decades after the first women's international conference and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Ghanaian Constitutional provisions of women's rights and equality.

Gender inequality is pervasive in many countries, including Ghana. Despite efforts to promote gender equality through various means, such as laws and policies, progress has been slow. Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a potential solution to address this issue. This literature review examines the role of social entrepreneurship in advancing gender equality in Ghana.

Social entrepreneurship provides a critical analysis of the intersecting factors of the inequalities that result from inherent gender roles and the power relations that exist in Ghana's social and cultural structures. These inequalities are the result of the lack of decision-making power, the lack of freedom of choice, the restricted mobility of girls, poverty, and cultural beliefs (Opare, 2015; Porter et al., 2011).

Background of Ghana

According to the World Bank, the population of Ghana was estimated to be 31.5 million in 2021. The population of Ghana has been increasing steadily over the years, and it is projected to reach 47.5 million by 2050. The population growth rate of Ghana is 2.1%, which is slightly higher than the global average of 1.1%.

According to the World Bank, the female population of Ghana is slightly higher than the male population. As of 2021, the female population was estimated to be 50.6% of the total population, while the male population was estimated to be 49.4%. This trend has been consistent over the years, with the female population remaining slightly higher than the male population.

To provide a visual representation of the population and gender statistics of Ghana, I have created the following graphs:
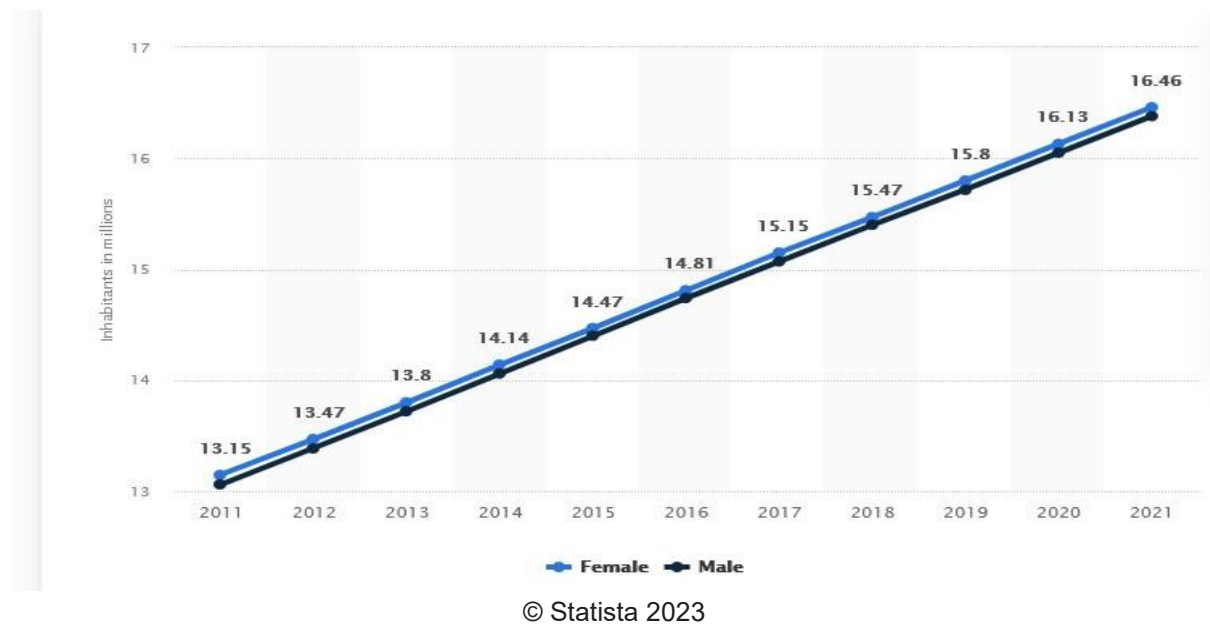
Population Growth Rate of Ghana (1960-2020)

Population Growth Rate: Ghana
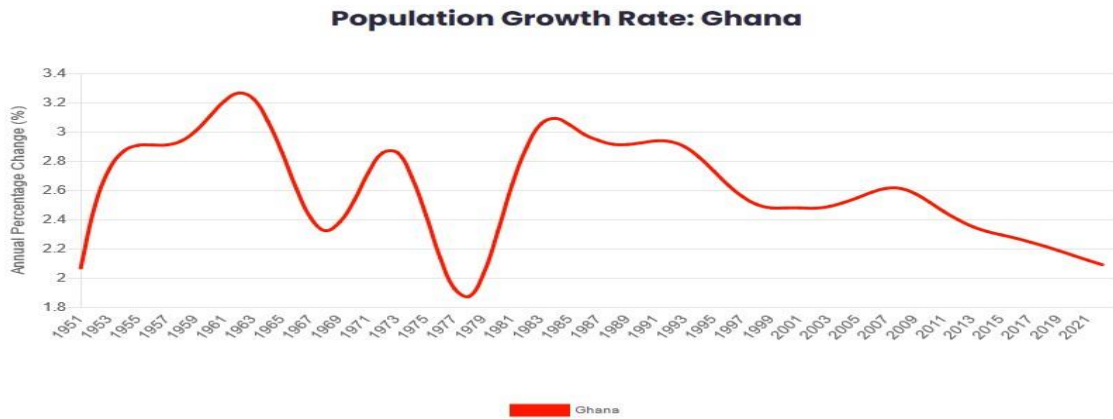
The population of Ghana is estimated to be 32.4 million in 2022 using United Nations estimates. Ghana grew at 2.1% in the last year and is ranked the 14th most populated country in Africa, ahead of Madagascar.

Population Distribution by Gender (2021) in millions

The above graph shows the population distribution by gender in Ghana as of 2021. As you can see, the female population is slightly higher than the male population, with females accounting for 50.6% of the total population.

These systemic challenges and implementation gaps in achieving gender equality, social protection and women empowerment answer the research question as to why, despite several efforts made by successive governments of Ghana, gender inequalities remain rooted in the social structure. Consequently, the next chapter demonstrates how these inequalities resulting from inherent gender roles and power relations limit and impede women and girls' access to education and healthcare facilities.

Socialisation; women are restricted from access to equal opportunities and resources such as land, credit, education and training opportunities due to the patriarchal social structure, systemic male domination and female subordination and socio-cultural and discriminatory institutions.

Some of the specific challenges faced by women in Ghana include:
1. Education: While the gender gap in primary education has largely been closed in Ghana, there is still a significant gap in secondary and tertiary education. According to the United Nations, only 37% of women in Ghana have access to secondary education, compared to 48% of men. Similarly, only 6% of women in Ghana have access to tertiary education, compared to 10% of men.
2. Employment: Women in Ghana face significant challenges in accessing formal employment opportunities, particularly in leadership positions. According to the Ghana Statistical Service, women make up only 36.4% of the formal workforce, and only 11.3% of top management positions are held by women.
3. Political representation: Women are severely underrepresented in political leadership positions in Ghana. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, only 13.9% of seats were held by women.
4. Violence against women: Gender-based violence is a significant issue in Ghana. According to the Ghana Statistical Service, 27% of women in Ghana have experienced physical violence at least once in their lifetime, and 13% have experienced sexual violence.
5. Cultural and traditional beliefs: As mentioned earlier, cultural and traditional beliefs in Ghana often perpetuate gender inequality. For example, some beliefs dictate that women should prioritize their roles as wives and mothers over pursuing education or career opportunities.

Understanding Gender Roles
This chapter analyses gender roles and power relations to provide the basis for the understanding of how gender as a system of power facilitates, constraints, determines and affects women's and girls' positions in society. However, it is important to make a distinction between gender and sex, which are usually interchangeably used, to understand the roles of gender in a family and society.
Zevallos (2014) describes gender as how society determines and manages sex categories, the cultural meanings attached to the roles of men and women, and how individuals perceive their identity as being a man, woman, or other gender positions. She further explains that gender involves social norms, attitudes, and activities that a given society considers appropriate for each sex.

Additionally, Newman and Grauerholz (2002) posit that gender is associated with masculinity and femininity and define sex as a biological classification of male and female. They also state that most people match sex and gender by assuming that if a person is male, he will be masculine, and if female, feminine; which is not usually the case. Importantly, they indicate that understanding the distinction and relatedness of gender and sex helps us realise that male and female behavioural differences do not automatically emanate from biological differences but are also socially constructed. Nevertheless, all behaviour is gendered or affected by gender.
Hence, how others treat us is determined by their beliefs about gender and vice-versa. This is evident in the example below. Beliefs about gender also determine people's position in the family, with others commanding more power based on their gender. Accordingly, the fate of a female child is determined right at birth, from the short sentence, "It is a girl!" This sentence changes everything for the child. Everyone treats the child in a stereotypical gendered manner. I will illustrate this with my personal experience.

The reason you can easily guess is simply due to the fact that who we are and how we think and behave are the final product of socialization. Society shapes us into the person it wants us to be, teaching us what is appropriate and inappropriate for both sexes, through gender roles (Crespi, 2004). These roles are attitudes and behaviours that are accepted by society and are usually stereotyped.
They are performed according to social norms and shared rules that provide guidance on how females and males should dress, talk, express emotions, work and socialise with others, in specific situations. Social norms determine the privileges and responsibilities of a status. In this case, the status of mother, father, daughter and son comes with specific roles (Lindsey, 2005). For example, the traditional gender roles position the man as the breadwinner of the family, who is expected to be aggressive and the

decision maker, while a woman is expected to be loving, nurturing, home-making, and submissive (Crespi, 2004).

Even though there have been some changes in these traditional roles (for example, women joining the labour market), these roles remain as guidelines for appropriate behaviour for both genders (Lindsey, 2005). Hence, it is essential to understand how these gender roles are acquired and maintained and recognise how they are ingrained in our social structures in such a way that they reinforce inequalities for women in various societies.

Gender Stereotypes

A stereotype is a widely held and widely recognised association between a social group and an attribute(s). Stereotypes can be positive, negative, or neutral depending on the context in which they are being used; they can be derogatory, complementary, or indifferent (Fricker, 2007). However, stereotypes are mostly represented by the negative attributes that result in discrimination, stigmatisation, and inequalities. This often affects the vulnerable members of society, among them, women and the poor (Beeghly, 2014). Significantly, Blum (2004) describes stereotypes as rigid, false generalisations about a particular group.

From this description, Blum (2004) indicates what he calls bad stereotypes. Firstly, by not seeing members as individuals, all members of the group are considered alike and treated as such. Secondly, the internal diversity of group members is masked by stereotypes, such as seeing members of a given group through an attribute, for example, weakness in women. Drawing from Fricker (2007), this generalisation can present an injustice, especially when individual members of a stereotyped group are judged based on a stereotype that does not apply to all of them, considering that we usually use stereotypes to make credibility judgments of people.

For example, women being stereotyped as emotional or illogical puts them at risk of being denied the chance to make decisions or be in high job positions. Moreover, males and females are usually stereotyped based on the characteristics they are expected to possess due to their biological nature (Crespi, 2004). The matching of biological traits with stereotypical gender roles is particularly problematic for females, as they are usually stereotyped by traits which are meant to silence them by limiting their ability to make decisions and choices concerning their lives, family, and society at large. In affirmation, Lindsey (2005) states that negative stereotypes targeting females can result in sexism, the belief that the female status is inferior to the male.

This belief is perpetuated by systems of patriarchy, male-dominated social structures whose norms operate and have become the standard to which people adhere, throughout all social institutions. Sexism leads to the oppression of women and thus, the limitation of social and economic opportunities. Likewise, Manne, in her 2015 draft paper on misogyny, posits that patriarchal social structures and the ideology that governs them work to make women into men's attentive social subordinates and conceal many of the forms of dominance and power which men have over women. Thus, there is a general expectation that women will amicably function in social roles serving men's interests.

Gender Power Relations

Gender is a social construct that society uses to organise itself (Cornell, 2009). It involves social interaction through which power relations exist. According to Foucault, a French philosopher (as cited in Balan, 2010), power relations exist between spouses, parents and children, employers and employees, as well as members of society and political institutions. These power relationships usually involve masculinity versus femininity, represented by male dominance and female subordination.

This is historically and culturally constructed through gender roles. Foucault also reasoned that power relations among members of society are intended for the political system to work (Balan, 2010). Gender power is not an exception. A patriarchal system, which is the majority of systems globally, will have men in possession of power. This is not something for which men fight women; it exists as a cultural norm that we are familiar with from our socialisation.

Gender power operates within social norms, which perpetuate the ideology of traditional gender roles and encourage negative stereotypes. This power disadvantages women by directly or indirectly limiting their opportunities. Likewise, Fricker (2007) states that power is our capacity to influence how society operates. It can be exercised actively or

passively by an agent or can be purely structural. When power operates through an agent, one party controls the actions of the other or others.

When purely structural, the aim is to create and maintain a given social order. Thus, this power may have no agent, but there is always a social group controlling actions (Fricker, 2007). For example, we can relate this to the power of gender roles: a woman is more likely to let a man make the final decision regarding a problem based on her gender-role knowledge of what action is expected of her in that particular situation. Undoubtedly, her conduct is based on the internalized social order (role) that has already been created and maintained.

The power relations in gender can also be seen in the agents of socialisation through their roles as instructors, reinforcers, and disseminators of gender-role knowledge (Lytton & Romney, 1991). However, this does not only involve the agents transmitting their knowledge of gender roles in coordination with their recipient; it also involves the whole social and cultural structure that governs these shared norms and values. Likewise, Fricker (2007) refers to Thomas Wartenberg's concept of social alignment, which indicates that the significance of social power is to effect social control, whether through an agent or purely structurally. His idea is that power is socially situated.

Thus, any power relationship depends on the coordination with social orders there as well as on the functioning of shared institutions, meaning, and expectations. In the same vein, Foucault's view is that power should be understood as a network of relations that encompass the whole society (Balan,2010). Clearly, this chapter has brought us to an understanding impact of of the construction of gender roles regarding socialisation and power play. However, further implications of gender roles will be discussed within Ghanaian society.

Figure 2 presents data on the gender gap in labour force participation in Ghana, based on data from the World Economic Forum (2020). The graph shows that the gender gap has decreased over time but remains significant, indicating that women are still underrepresented in the labour force.

Gender gap index in Ghana as of 2021, by category
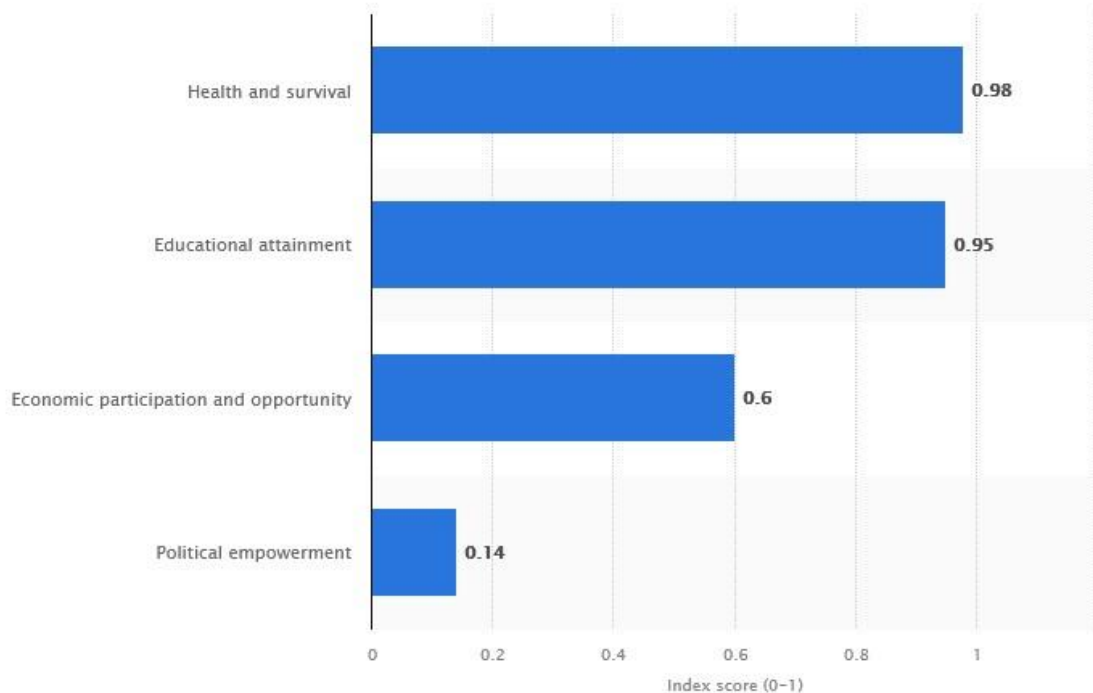
Entrepreneurship

Any definition of the term "social entrepreneurship" must start with the word entrepreneurship." The word "social" simply modifies entrepreneurship. If entrepreneurship does not have a clear meaning, then modifying it with social will not accomplish much, either. Dess (1998) pointed out that the word entrepreneurship is a mixed blessing. On the positive side, it connotes a special, innate ability to sense and act on opportunity, combining out-of-the-box thinking with a unique brand of determination to create or bring about something new to the world. Joseph Schumpeter, a renowned economist described entrepreneurs as the innovators who drive the "creative-destructive" process of capitalism (Schumpeter, 1961).

According to Schumpeter, the function of entrepreneurs is to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production. Entrepreneurs can do this by exploiting an invention or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply. Although social entrepreneurship (SE) is an emerging field of academic inquiry, the phenomenon is not. Social entrepreneurs have always lived in communities, even if they have not been called by that name.

Social entrepreneurs originally built many of the institutions that are now taken for granted. The origins of social entrepreneurship may be traced to two different sources: that of income generation by a non-profit venture and, a more general interpretation that defines social entrepreneurship as a process that involved identifying, addressing and solving societal problems (Desa, 2007). Social entrepreneurs look for the most effective methods of serving their social missions.

What is Social Entrepreneurship?

Schuyler (1998) describes social entrepreneurs as 'individuals who have a vision for social change and who have the financial resources to support their ideas'. Thompson, Alvy and Lees (2000) describe social entrepreneurs as 'people who realize where there is an opportunity to satisfy some unmet needs that the state welfare system will not or cannot meet, and who gather together the necessary resources (generally people, often volunteers, money and premises) and use these to "make a difference". One of the most frequently cited definitions of social entrepreneurship comes from Dees (2001).

Mair et al (2006) noted that this definition combines an emphasis on discipline and accountability with the notions of value creation taken from Say, innovation and change agents from Schumpeter, the pursuit of opportunity from Drucker, and resourcefulness from Stevenson. In brief, this definition can be stated as follows: Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector, by Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value), Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission, Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning, Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and Exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created (Dees, 2001: 4).

Although social sector leaders will exemplify these characteristics in different ways and to different degrees, the closer a person gets to satisfying all these conditions, the more that person fits the model of a social entrepreneur (Ergul and Johnson, 2011). Those who are more innovative in their work and who create more significant social improvements will naturally be seen as more entrepreneurial. Wennekers and Thurik (1999) were emphatic that true Schumpeterian social entrepreneurs will significantly reform or revolutionize their industries. Each element in this brief definition (Dees, 2001) deserves some further elaboration. These elements are explained as follows:

Social entrepreneurs as change agents in the social sector: Dees (2001) acknowledges that social entrepreneurs are the reformers and revolutionaries as described by Schumpeter, but with a social mission. In other words, social entrepreneurs make fundamental changes in the way things are done in the social sector, and because their visions are bold, they attack the underlying causes of problems rather than simply treating the symptoms. Further, they seek to create systematic changes and sustainable improvements. Dees and Hass (1998) also added that social entrepreneurs may act locally, yet their actions have the potential to stimulate global improvements in a variety of areas – education, healthcare, economic development, the environment, arts, etc.

- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value: According to Dees and Hass (1999), this attribute is the core of what distinguishes social entrepreneurs from business entrepreneurs even from socially responsible businesses. For a social entrepreneur, the social mission is fundamental. This is a mission of social improvement that cannot be reduced to creating private benefits (financial returns or consumption benefits) for individuals. Making a profit, creating

wealth, or serving the desires of customers may be part of the model, but these are means to a social end, not the end in itself

- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities: Dees (2001) further explained that where others see problems, entrepreneurs see opportunity. Social entrepreneurs are not simply driven by the perception of a social need or by their compassion, rather they have a vision of how to achieve improvement and they are determined to make their vision work. They are persistent.

- Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning, Entrepreneurs are innovative. They break new ground; develop new models and pioneer new approaches. Innovation can take many forms. It does not require inventing something wholly new; it can simply involve applying an existing idea in a new way or to a new situation. Dees and Hass (1998) explained further that entrepreneurs need not be inventors. They simply need to be creative in applying what others have invented.

- Their innovations may appear in how they structure their core programs or in how they assemble the resources and fund their work. On the funding side, social entrepreneurs look for innovative ways to assure that their ventures will have access to resources as long as they are creating social value (Dees 2001). This willingness to innovate is part of the modus operandi of entrepreneurs. It is not just a one-time burst of creativity. It is a continuous process of exploring, learning, and improving while taking into consideration the risk of failure. Entrepreneurs tend to have a high tolerance for ambiguity and learn how to manage risks for themselves and others. They treat the failure of a project as a learning experience, not a personal tragedy (Dees and Hass 1998).

- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand: Social entrepreneurs do not let their own limited resources be inimical to the pursuit of their vision. They are skilled at doing more with less and at attracting resources.

The Key Attributes of Social Entrepreneurs

Some of the characteristics of entrepreneurs as outlined in the literature are attitudes, motivations, capabilities, skills, perspectives, behaviours and origins (Dees and Hass, 1999). It would be logical to do the same for social entrepreneurs, and some incipient efforts along this line have occurred in the literature. Mair et al (2006) observed that social entrepreneurs are one species in the genus entrepreneur. They are entrepreneurs with a social mission.

However, because of this mission, they face some distinctive challenges and any definition ought to reflect this. For social entrepreneurs, the social mission is explicit and central. This obviously affects how social entrepreneurs perceive and assess opportunities. Mission-related impact becomes the central criterion, not wealth creation.

Distinguishing between social entrepreneurs and business entrepreneurs, Dees and Hass (1999) argued that wealth is just a means to an end for social entrepreneurs. With business entrepreneurs, wealth creation is a way of measuring value creation. This is because business entrepreneurs are subject to market discipline, which determines in large part whether they are creating value. If they do not shift resources to more economically productive uses, they tend to be driven out of business.

Markets are not perfect, but over the long haul, social entrepreneurs work reasonably well as a test of private value creation, specifically the creation of value for customers who are willing and able to pay (Dees and Hass). An entrepreneur's ability to attract resources (capital, labour, equipment, etc.) in a competitive marketplace is a reasonably good indication that the venture represents a more productive use of these resources than the alternatives it is competing against. The logic is simple.

According to Johnson (2000), social entrepreneurs who can pay the most for resources are typically the ones who can put the resources to higher-valued uses, as determined in the marketplace. Markets do not work as well for social entrepreneurs. In particular, markets do not do a good job of valuing social improvements, public goods and harms, and benefits for people who cannot afford to pay. These elements are often essential to social entrepreneurship. That is what makes it social entrepreneurship. The reasons behind the popularity of social entrepreneurship are many. On the most basic level, there's something inherently interesting and appealing about social entrepreneurs and the stories of why and how they do what they do. People are attracted to social entrepreneurs like Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus for many of the same reasons that they find business entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs so compelling – these extraordinary people come up with brilliant ideas and against all the odds succeed at creating new products and services that dramatically improve people's lives (Martin and Osberg, 2007).

In relation to studies examining the hospitality and tourism industries, there are several articles on corporate social responsibility. Holcomb, Upchurch, and Okumus (2007) revealed that eight (8) out of the top ten (10) hotel companies reported socially responsible activities relating to some form of charitable donation. The authors also noted that hotel corporations reported on five major areas:

Globally, Social Entrepreneurs are increasingly becoming solutions to complex social problems in economies. The innovative enterprises they create are fast becoming highly sought economic enterprises by many developing economies due to their numerous social and economic benefits.

Women's participation in this sector has also attracted attention in recent times as it can potentially challenge gender norms and offer new role models. In a recent study by the British Council in Ghana (2021), 39% of women in entrepreneurship were identified to be social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurship has been defined as entrepreneurial activities that tackle social and environmental problems; create jobs and generate income like other businesses, but instead of channelling their profits to owners, they reinvest them to support their social mission, thereby improving people's lives in our communities and societies (British Council, 2021).

Many of these women social entrepreneurs have been found to operate in the education sector in Ghana (36%) whilst only 1% operate in the construction industry of Ghana's economy. The rather low proportion of women in social entrepreneurship produces a vicious cycle of gender equality. This is because the scenario tends to give men a significant household income urge, further widening the gap in decision-making power, including the decision to participate in social entrepreneurship (Bymolt et al, 2018). This, in turn, tends to further marginalize women and increase their vulnerabilities and disadvantages.

Unless this patriarchal system is curbed, the achievement of the seventh target of the 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5.7) will be farfetched. SDG 5.7 enjoins nations to "undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws" (UNDP, 2021). The United Nations Development Report (2021) found that more females are in the labour market today than ever as compared with their male counterparts. It further recognizes that huge inequalities still exist in some geographies and industries, including the construction industry. In acts, the global picture of gender inequality in entrepreneurship is a fundamental cause of inequality in many other aspects of life (Price et al, 2019).

In 2015, all the United Nations Member States adopted the SDGs with the main objectives of ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that everyone enjoys prosperity and peace by 2030 (UNDP, 2021). The SDG agenda articulated 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality (SDG 5) has the potential of achieving some of the other Sustainable Development Goals.

Food security, for instance, is one target under the Sustainable Development Goal that Gender Equality has the potential of achieving (Agarwal, 2018). A goat-rearing project by women in Zambia funded by the United Nations Development Program shows that such investments can turn poor, marginalized, and malnourished women and their families into economically self-reliant, well-nourished, and resilient women while also improving food security in their communities (Zanga, 2021).

This is proof that investments that aim at breaking the barriers that inhibit the progress of women towards their economic ambitions, which equip them with valuable skills for economic empowerment, can yield profitable results, not only for the women but also for the communities in which they live and grow.

The McKinsey Global Institute (2015) indicated that the potential gain for South-Saharan Africa in addressing the gender gap by 2025 is an estimated additional 12-27% of GDP. In sum, gender inequality will remain a great challenge for Africa, and the continent would benefit by focusing on the economic opportunities arising from improving parity between women and men (African Development Report, 2015). The question, therefore, is what Africa should do to rectify its development path and make economic development more inclusive.

The African development report (2015) concluded that a new development trajectory should enable Africa to provide decent jobs, including, in particular, to the majority of the youth and women, Studies (Adeyemi et al 2006; Adogbo et al 2015) have identified barriers inhibiting women's entry into the construction industry in developing economies. These include mainly sociocultural barriers.

The lack of access to support and advisory services has also proven to be a challenge for women social entrepreneurs among numerous others such as obtaining grant funding, capital (debt-equity), and the

shortage of critical technical skills. This chapter, therefore, explores women's social entrepreneurship in the construction industry in Ghana focusing on four major areas: the background of these women, their achievements as well as the challenges encountered. It also proposes key areas scholarly and practitioners' discussion on women's social entrepreneurship should focus on.

Contributions to the realization of SDGs

Furthermore, the successes of these women social entrepreneurs were measured based on the extent to which they have contributed to addressing social problems and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Questions were therefore asked to elicit responses to that effect. It was evident from the study that the achievement of these women contributed towards attaining the SDGs. These findings are in sync with the findings of a study by Plewnia and Guenther (2018) which indicated that social entrepreneurship is considered to be a contributor to sustainable development.

Access to Education and Healthcare Facilities in Northern Ghana

The concept of social entrepreneurship has been widely reported in the mass media and is seen as an emerging discipline within many business schools. According to Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern (2006) social entrepreneurship is innovative, a social value-creating activity that can occur within or across the non-profit, business, and public sectors.

Entrepreneurship is a creative process that pursues an opportunity to produce something new. Replicating an existing organization, activity, or process is an important managerial activity, but unless it brings an important new dimension or element, it is not very entrepreneurial. The second key element is social value creation. This is the fundamental dimension differentiating social entrepreneurship from commercial entrepreneurship (Austin et al, 2006). While both forms are socially valuable, generating social value is the explicit, central driving purpose and force for social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship transcends sectors and organizational forms. It can occur in all sectors and their collaborative interactions. For social entrepreneurs, the value is found in the form of large-scale transformational benefit that affects either sector of society or society at large. In terms of personal characteristics, social entrepreneurs may be described as visionary change-makers who implement innovative ways of addressing pressing social problems (Grenier, 2007).

Social entrepreneurship signals the imperative to drive social change, and it is that potential payoff, with its lasting, transformational benefit to society, that sets the field and its practitioners apart. Social entrepreneurship, as a practice and a field for scholarly investigation, provides a unique opportunity to challenge, question, and rethink concepts and assumptions from different fields of management and business research. Social entrepreneurship is seen as differing from other forms of entrepreneurship in the relatively higher priority given to promoting social value and development versus capturing economic value. While there are many possible definitions that have been set forth in the early literature, the foregoing definitions have the fundamental virtue of creating a broad umbrella for this study on social entrepreneurship.

The empowerment of women is critical to sustainable development and the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Ghana, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a promising tool for promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment. This literature review examines the role of social entrepreneurship in advancing gender equality in Ghana, with a specific focus on SDG 5: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering all Women and Girls.

Gender equality is a crucial issue in social entrepreneurship, especially in developing countries like Ghana, where women constitute a significant portion of the population. This literature review explores the state of gender equality in social entrepreneurship in Ghana, including the challenges women face and the initiatives in place to address them.

Social entrepreneurship has been recognized as a potential catalyst for advancing gender equality in Ghana. This literature review examines the role of social entrepreneurship in advancing gender equality in Ghana, with a particular focus on the contributions made by social entrepreneurs to promote gender equality in the country.

Several studies have examined the role of social entrepreneurship in promoting gender equality in Ghana. A study by Appiah-Sekyere and Amponsah-Tawiah (2021) identified social entrepreneurship as a key driver of women's economic empowerment in Ghana. The study found that social entrepreneurship initiatives have led to increased access to finance and resources for women, as well as the creation of new economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

Studies have shown that social entrepreneurship can provide opportunities for women to break out of traditional gender roles and contribute to their families and communities. A study by Nti et al. (2018) found that social entrepreneurship can empower women and reduce gender inequality in Ghana. The study showed that female entrepreneurs in the social sector have the potential to challenge gender stereotypes and create more equitable social structures.

Furthermore, research by Adjei et al. (2020) highlights the importance of social entrepreneurship in improving the livelihoods of women in Ghana. The study found that women who engaged in social entrepreneurship reported improved economic outcomes and greater decision-making power within their households. This suggests that social entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool for promoting gender equality and empowering women to take control of their own economic futures.

Additionally, a study by Owusu-Ansah and Oduro-Kwarteng (2020) explored the role of social entrepreneurship in promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector in Ghana. The study found that social entrepreneurship initiatives have contributed to increased participation of women in the agricultural sector, as well as improved access to resources and markets for women farmers.

Overview of Women in Social Entrepreneurship in Ghana

Ghana has a vibrant and growing social entrepreneurship sector, with many women playing a crucial role in driving innovation and social change. According to a report by the British Council, women constitute 38% of social entrepreneurs in Ghana, a higher percentage than in many other countries. These women are working on a wide range of issues, from education and health to agriculture and environmental sustainability. Many are focused on creating solutions that benefit underserved communities and marginalized groups. Despite the many challenges facing social entrepreneurs in Ghana, including limited funding and a difficult regulatory environment, women continue to make important contributions to the sector.

Conclusion/Recommendations:

Overall, the literature suggests that social entrepreneurship has great potential for advancing gender equality and empowering women in Ghana. By providing opportunities for women to break out of traditional gender roles, challenge gender stereotypes, and create more equitable social structures, social entrepreneurship can play a significant role in achieving SDG 5. Moving forward, it is important for policymakers and stakeholders to continue to support and promote social entrepreneurship as a means of promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment in Ghana

This may help the concept to gain wider recognition to inspire more social entrepreneurs regardless of the industry in which they operate to identify effective methods of solving societal problems. However, the gender gap in self-employment and labour force participation remains significant, highlighting the need for continued efforts to promote gender equality through social entrepreneurship and other means.

It is therefore recommended that:

- Society, institutions, and governments should play key roles in encouraging women to venture into male-dominated sectors.
- Professional bodies should organize periodic workshops and seminars to address issues in male-dominated industries to encourage females. This will provide opportunities for mentoring, networking, and professional development that would lead to the entry and retention of women in this male-dominated industry.
- Traditional beliefs especially on access to land that is detrimental to women should be abolished.
- Structures that support, advise, finance, identify markets and provide information should also, be considered and put in place. Providing these structures is capital-intensive and the time involved therefore difficult for private individuals to provide. Therefore, the duty of the government is to put in place structures to make the transition easier and more enjoyable for women. These structures will also benefit women in other male-dominated sectors and encourage more women to become social entrepreneurs.
- Incentives could also be considered to get more women to enter the construction industry.
- A few women could therefore form a business that is all female-dominated to demonstrate what they can do. These partnerships can equally make a conscious effort to sensitize and encourage young females about the prospects and opportunities in the field while contributing their quota so social development.

Future research directions.

1. The impact of gender quotas on corporate leadership and business performance.
2. The role of intersectionality in promoting gender equality in the workplace.
3. The effects of parental leave policies on gender equality and work-family balance.
4. The impact of gender stereotypes on career aspirations and job satisfaction.
5. The effectiveness of training programs in promoting gender equality in the workplace.
6. The impact of gender diversity on team performance and innovation.
7. The role of social media in perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes and bias.

Addressing these challenges will require a concerted effort from both the government and civil society. This may involve policies that promote gender equality, education and awareness campaigns, and efforts to address violence against women.

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