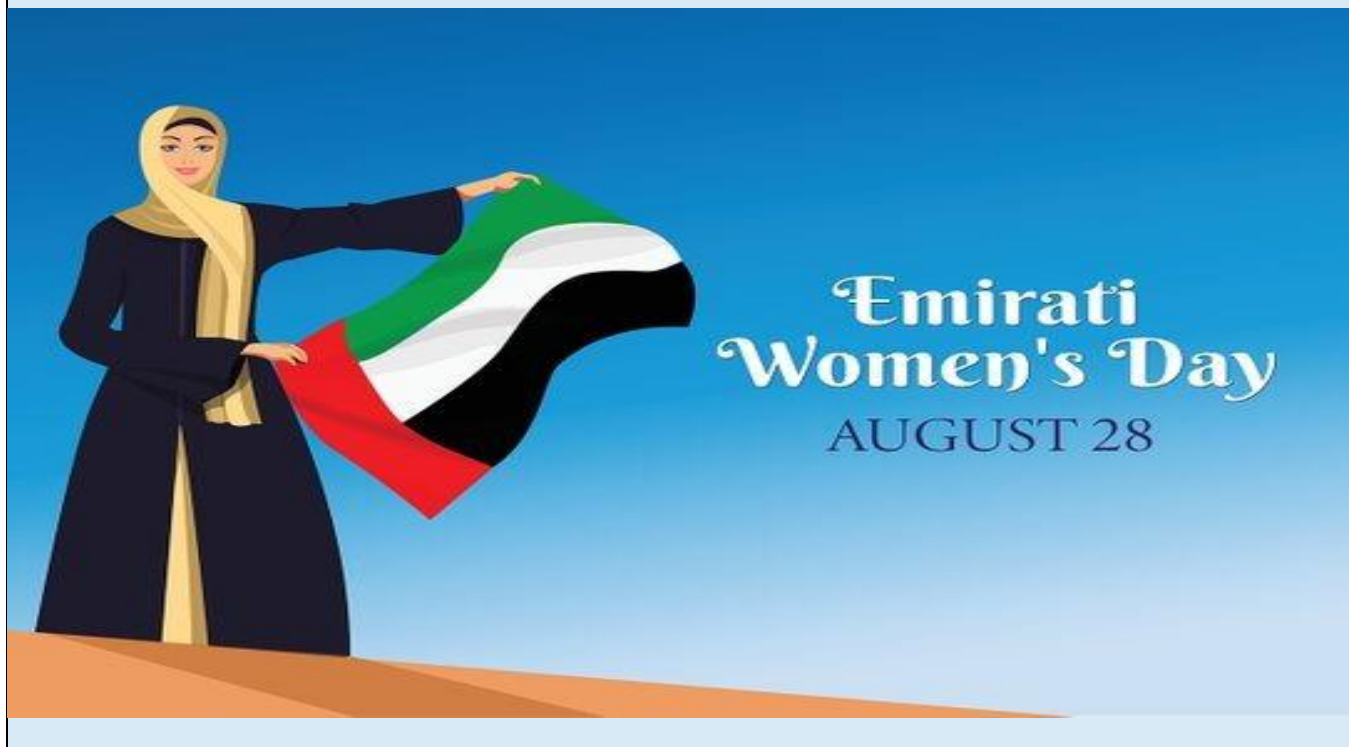


# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES IN UAE SINCE LAST DECADE

## Worth Practicing in Other Islamic Countries

Author	Ravi Mohan KHARKA
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Over the past decade, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has made remarkable strides in promoting women's empowerment. With a strategic vision supported by robust policies, programs, and initiatives, the UAE has become a beacon of gender equality in the region. The country's success in empowering women offers valuable lessons and practices that can be adopted by other nations seeking to enhance gender equality and women's participation in various sectors.

#### Strategic Vision and Policy Framework

The UAE's commitment to gender equality is enshrined in its Vision 2021 and the National Strategy for Empowerment of Emirati Women 2015-2021. These frameworks set clear goals for increasing women's participation in the workforce, leadership, and decision-making roles.

Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, known as the "Mother of the Nation," has been a pivotal figure in driving these initiatives. She stated, "Empowering women is a key national priority, and we will continue to support them to be active partners in building the future of our country." This strategic vision has paved the way for significant legislative and institutional reforms.

## Legislative Reforms

Several legal reforms have been introduced to protect and promote women's rights. The UAE has implemented laws ensuring equal pay for equal work, combating domestic violence, and extending maternity leave. The UAE Gender Balance Council, established in 2015, plays a crucial role in promoting gender balance across all sectors.

## Educational and Professional Development

Education is a cornerstone of the UAE's women empowerment strategy. Today, Emirati women constitute over 70% of university graduates in the country, a testament to the nation's commitment to female education.

## Scholarships and STEM Initiatives

The UAE offers numerous scholarships and programs to encourage women to pursue higher education and careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. The "UAE Space Agency's Space Science Research Center" has specifically targeted women, resulting in a significant increase in female participation in the space sector.

Dr. Maryam Matar, Founder and Chairperson of UAE Genetic Diseases Association, remarked, "Investing in women's education and development is investing in the future of our nation."

## Leadership and Political Participation

The UAE has made significant progress in enhancing women's representation in leadership and political roles. In 2019, the UAE government mandated that 50% of the Federal National Council seats be occupied by women. This move has positioned the UAE among the leading countries in terms of female parliamentary representation.

## Corporate Leadership

The private sector in the UAE is also witnessing a growing number of women in leadership roles. Initiatives such as the "Emirati Women Leadership Program" are designed to prepare women for executive positions.

Reem Al Hashimy, Minister of State for International Cooperation, highlighted, "Women's leadership in all sectors is crucial for sustainable development and innovation."

## Economic Empowerment

Economic participation is a vital aspect of women's empowerment. The UAE has launched several initiatives to support female entrepreneurs and enhance women's economic contributions.

## Business Incubators and Funding

Programs like "Dubai Business Women Council" and "Sharjah Business Women Council" provide training, mentorship, and funding opportunities for women entrepreneurs. These initiatives have resulted in a significant increase in female-owned businesses in the UAE.

Mona Al Marri, Vice President of the UAE Gender Balance Council, stated, "Empowering women economically is essential for the overall prosperity and growth of our nation."

## Social and Cultural Empowerment

The UAE's efforts to empower women extend beyond the economic and political spheres to social and cultural domains. The country has implemented initiatives to promote gender equality in sports, arts, and media.

### Sports and Arts

The UAE has seen an increase in female participation in sports, supported by initiatives like the "Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies Sports Academy." Additionally, women are making their mark in the arts, with platforms like "Women's Heritage Walk" celebrating their contributions to cultural heritage.

Alia Al Mansoori, an emerging artist, emphasized, "The UAE provides a nurturing environment for women to express their creativity and contribute to our rich cultural tapestry."

### International Recognition and Influence

The UAE's efforts in promoting gender equality have not gone unnoticed on the international stage. The country has received accolades and recognition for its progressive policies and initiatives.

### Global Partnerships

The UAE collaborates with international organizations, such as UN Women, to further the cause of gender equality globally. These partnerships enhance the UAE's influence in shaping global gender policies and practices.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Executive Director of UN Women, lauded the UAE's efforts, stating, "The UAE's commitment to gender equality serves as an inspiring model for other countries."

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the UAE's comprehensive approach to women empowerment over the last decade offers valuable lessons for other countries. By combining strategic vision, legislative reforms, educational and professional development, leadership promotion, economic empowerment, and social and cultural initiatives, the UAE has created an environment where women can thrive and contribute meaningfully to society.

The success stories from the UAE underscore the importance of political will, robust policies, and inclusive programs in achieving gender equality. As other nations look to enhance women's empowerment, the UAE's initiatives provide a blueprint for creating a more equitable and inclusive world.

**--KHARKA Ravi, PhD Research Scholar.**