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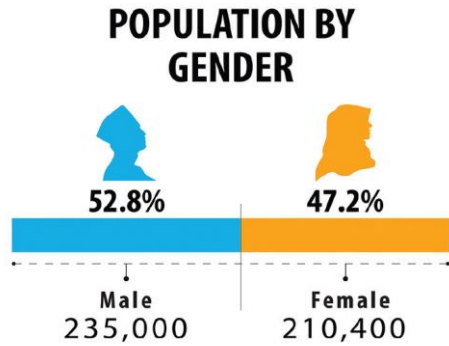
“Promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at the national and local levels in Asia and the Pacific”

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INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY COMMITMENTS AT THE NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL LEVELS



Harnessing **women's leadership capabilities** is key to unlocking the full potential of Brunei Darussalam's national development efforts.



Women are given **high priority** in the national agenda

- Since 2009, the promotion and protection of women's rights is coordinated through a **Special Committee on Family Institution, Women and Children** under the **National Council on Social Issues**.
- However, Brunei Darussalam does not have a comprehensive or "unified policy" that is explicitly targeted as a gender policy or women's policy.
- Support of gender balance in the country is approached through a combination of religious, cultural dan legal frameworks within the parameters of the 1959 Constitution of Brunei Darussalam and the national philosophy of **Malay Islamic Monarchy**.



COMMITMENTS AT THE NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL LEVELS



- With equal access to education at all levels, leadership positions are attained based on a **merit-based system** that focuses on individual qualifications, regardless of age and gender.
- Average **LFPR** for women over the last five years :**54%**
- Brunei's **GPI** for labour participation: **83%**.
- **High representation of women in policy and decision-making.**
- **56%** of the public sector workforce are women, with **the proportion in senior levels and heads of departments increasing to 65%**.

Legislation and regulations to promote gender equity in employment:

- **Employment Order 2009**
 - addresses labor rights and maternity leave regulation
 - contains some elements for the protection against discrimination,
- **Maternity Leave Regulation 2011**- allows for 105 days of paid maternity leave for women compared to 56 days previously.

1. Brunei Darussalam's Constitution (1959)

- Broad cultural and social ethos of the community, which influences women's willingness, agency, self-governance, and ability to participate in politics and public life.

2. National Development Plans

- 1st National Development Plan (1953-1958):
 - Female education was emphasized : *“Educating a boy means educating one person, but **educating a girl means educating the whole family**”*
 - **High literacy rates and women’s high achievement in education** have become launchpads for women’s greater political and economic participation.
- National Development Plan (2007-2012):
 - Emphasized the need to enhance a more **active participation of women in national development** by providing them opportunities to hold higher positions in the public and private sectors including at the level of **policy makers and legislators**.
 - Clear indication and acknowledgement that women are not left out in the national strategies for development, by way of becoming **more inclusive and participatory in decision-making positions**.

3. Brunei Vision 2035

- Key aspect and priority for Brunei Darussalam in the long term has always been focused on **human development for all**, identified through the three goals of Brunei Vision 2035:
 - Accomplished, educated and highly skilled people
 - High Quality of Life
 - Dynamic and Sustainable Economy
- Alignment with the deeply rooted cultural values and traditions encapsulated within the national philosophy of Malay Islamic Monarchy means that women can achieve excellence in all areas of life.

4. Community Leadership and Civil Society

- NGOs led by Bruneian women - promote **increased involvement of women in diverse sectors**, including community engagement and social welfare.
- Voluntary civic engagement, advocacy and involvement through local governance structures and subdivisions - **expanded role and representation of women in society**.



Challenges:

- cultural and societal norms;
- lack of representation and visibility;
- prioritization of family over career;
- gender discrimination;
- lack of career development opportunities and career progression;
- a need for work-life balance and flexibility to manage work and family life and
- better support for health and wellbeing issues.

Recommendation (Some proposed core strategies and key initiatives for National Plan of Action on Women in Brunei Darussalam):

Core Strategy	Build a more supportive workplace for women	Eliminate gender disparities in professional development and workplace	Increase female leadership opportunities	Transform societal attitudes and expectations to uplift the status of women
Key Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and exercise flexible working arrangements where appropriate • Provide adequate creche, child care and family-friendly facilities in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand training, education and professional development for women employees • Reduce gender disparities for the low-medium skills jobs in the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and develop skills and competencies framework for women at all job levels • Increase female leadership participation at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address gender bias and stereotyping through formal education and community awareness. • Promote men's active engagement in all areas of women's development.



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