

# ETHICS, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr. John Motsamai Modise\*

Tshwane University of Technology

<b>Corresponding Author</b> <b>Dr. John Motsamai Modise</b>  Tshwane University of Technology	<p><b>Abstract:</b> This research investigates the critical intersection of ethics, gender, and development, aiming to understand how ethically grounded, gender-sensitive approaches can lead to more just and sustainable development outcomes. Despite decades of global development efforts, many projects have historically neglected ethical principles and gender equality, resulting in limited impact, unintended harm, and the reinforcement of patriarchal structures. There remains a lack of cohesive frameworks that fully integrate feminist ethics and core ethical principles into mainstream development planning and evaluation.</p> <p>The study employs a critical literature review methodology, analyzing peer-reviewed academic journals, policy reports from international development organizations, and key theoretical texts. It is grounded in feminist theory, the capability approach, and global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality. The research identifies that development projects lacking ethical grounding often exacerbate existing inequalities. A feminist ethic, especially one rooted in care and justice, is shown to be instrumental in addressing systemic gender-based disparities. Furthermore, gender-sensitive projects that integrate ethical frameworks demonstrate more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes. However, there is a persistent challenge in effectively measuring long-term impacts on gender equality and sustainability. Embedding ethical principles and feminist perspectives into development is not optional; it is essential for achieving meaningful, transformative change. This study concludes that ethically guided, gender-responsive development can empower marginalized groups, particularly women, and foster inclusive social and environmental progress. It calls for robust accountability mechanisms, participatory evaluation tools, and continued advocacy to ensure development efforts do not perpetuate injustice but rather dismantle it.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Ethics in development, Gender equality and development, Feminist ethic of care, Sustainable development goals (SDGs), Gender mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive development, Capability approach, Social justice and development, Women's empowerment, Participatory action research, Intersectionality.</p>
---	---

**How to Cite in APA format:** Modise, J. M. (2025). ETHICS, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT. *IRASS Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(9), 1-8.

## Introduction

In an era marked by intersecting crises climate shocks, economic instability, pandemics, and social upheavals embedding ethics and gender equality into development practices has never been more urgent. Recent evidence shows both progress and stark resistance, underscoring the need for ethically informed, gender-sensitive frameworks. Globally, initiatives like the Generation Equality Forum's Global Acceleration Plan (2021–2026) have reinvigorated commitment to gender parity by mobilizing nearly \$40 billion toward prioritized causes such as economic empowerment, violence prevention, and women's leadership in climate action ([Wikipedia](#)). Yet, despite such strong pledges, deep-seated biases persist. UN reports affirm that achieving full gender equality by 2030 is unlikely without significant societal and institutional transformation across health, education, economic opportunity, and rights protection ([AP News](#)).

At the local level, innovative programs highlight the power of education to challenge norms. In Chennai, India, gender clubs complemented by teacher orientation initiatives are empowering students to dismantle traditional gender roles showing early promise in shifting mindsets both at school and at home (The

[Times of India+1](#)). Similarly, academic research is advancing gender-inclusive approaches to broader challenges, such as climate justice. A recent framework emerging from feminist theory calls for gender-transformative climate action rooted in justice emphasizing women's leadership, community cooperatives, and responsive social protection systems as central to resilience ([The Times of India](#)).

In the South African context, the complexity of structural impediments remains clear. UNDP's 2025 analysis reveals how entrenched cultural and religious norms continue to limit women's aspirations and autonomy highlighting the urgency of ethical leadership and transformative policy beyond legislative intent ([UNDP](#)). Echoing this, the Ethics Institute stresses that legal frameworks alone cannot guarantee progress; embedding ethical leadership in organizations is critical for driving meaningful change in gender equity ([tei.org.za](#)). Taken together, these recent examples underscore a central imperative: ethical and feminist groundwork is essential to combating structural inequalities. Informed by feminist theory, the capability approach, and the Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 5), this research



will critically review contemporary efforts to align development practices with ethical and gender-sensitive principles.

By foregrounding this timely evidence, the study seeks to illuminate pathways toward more equitable, participatory, and sustainable development one where justice, inclusion, and care are not afterthoughts, but foundational pillars of transformative change.

## BACKGROUND

The pursuit of development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, hinges on a crucial trio: ethics, gender, and development itself. This introduction delves into how these elements intertwine to create a foundation for a more equitable and sustainable world. Traditionally, development projects aimed to uplift living standards, but often overlooked ethical considerations. This resulted in unintended consequences, sometimes even exacerbating gender inequality.

This calls for a paradigm shift. We need to ensure development efforts are:

- **Ethical:** Guided by principles like equity, transparency, sustainability, and avoiding harm.
- **Gender-Sensitive:** Recognizing the distinct needs and challenges faced by women and men.
- **Empowering:** Equipping women to participate meaningfully in decision-making and reap the benefits of development.

By fostering gender equality and adhering to ethical principles, development efforts can:

- **Promote Equity:** Ensure everyone, regardless of gender, benefits from progress.
- **Empower Women:** Drive positive change by enabling women's voices and agency.
- **Guarantee Sustainability:** Create long-term positive impacts that consider the environment and social well-being.

This introduction sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how ethics, gender, and development work together. We will explore real-world examples of how these concepts can be implemented to achieve a more just and sustainable future.

## The Historical Landscape: Ethics, Gender, and Development

The story of ethics, gender, and development is a complex tapestry woven over decades. Here's a closer look at the historical background:

### Development's Early Steps:

- The 1950s marked the initial inclusion of women in development discourse, primarily through welfare programs like food aid and family planning.
- These early efforts, however, often viewed women as passive recipients rather than active agents of change.

### The Rise of Gender Awareness:

- By the 1960s, the "Women in Development" (WID) approach emerged, emphasizing women's integration into existing development models.

- This approach, however, faced criticism for failing to address the underlying power structures that perpetuated gender inequality.

### Shifting Towards Gender and Development:

- The 1980s saw the rise of the "Gender and Development" (GAD) approach. GAD recognized the systemic nature of gender inequality and the need to transform power dynamics.
- This approach advocated for policies and projects that specifically addressed the needs and constraints faced by women.

### The Ethical Imperative:

- Throughout this evolution, ethical considerations often took a backseat. Development projects sometimes had unintended consequences, even reinforcing gender inequalities.
- The need for ethical frameworks that prioritize equity, transparency, and sustainability in development gained momentum.

### The Current Landscape:

- Today, the focus is on integrating a feminist ethic into development. This approach acknowledges diverse experiences of women and aims to dismantle all forms of oppression.
- Ethical principles like "do no harm" and ensuring long-term benefits for all are paramount in achieving truly sustainable development.

### Looking Ahead:

Understanding this historical context is crucial. By acknowledging past shortcomings, we can move forward with a more ethical and gender-sensitive approach to development that promotes a just world for all.

### RESEARCH AIM:

The overarching goal of the research are to explore how integrating ethics, gender considerations, and development practices can lead to a more just and sustainable future.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

Here are some specific objectives that could contribute to your research aim:

- **Analyze the historical shortcomings** of development projects that neglected ethical principles and gender equality.
- **Identify core ethical principles** essential for achieving sustainable development.
- **Examine the current feminist ethic** and its role in promoting gender equality within development initiatives.
- **Evaluate the effectiveness** of existing development projects that integrate ethical and gender-sensitive approaches.

- **Develop recommendations** for designing and implementing development projects that prioritize ethics, gender equality, and sustainability.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

These questions can guide your research and analysis:

### Ethics:

- How have ethical considerations (e.g., transparency, accountability) been historically neglected in development projects?
- What are the key ethical principles that should be prioritized in development efforts?
- How can we ensure that development projects "do no harm" to people or the environment?

### Gender and Development:

- How have past development approaches failed to address gender inequality?
- How can we integrate a gender-sensitive approach into all stages of development planning and implementation?
- How can development projects empower women and girls to participate effectively in decision-making processes?

### Impact and Sustainability:

- How do ethical and gender-sensitive development projects contribute to a more just and sustainable future?
- What are the challenges in measuring the long-term impact of development projects on gender equality and sustainability?
- How can we design development projects that are adaptable and responsive to changing needs and contexts?

## SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Here's why exploring the connection between ethics, gender, and development is a crucial undertaking:

### Promotes Equity and Justice:

Development efforts often fall short without considering gender dynamics. This study highlights the importance of ethical frameworks that ensure everyone benefits, not just a privileged few. By addressing gender inequalities, development can achieve its true potential of uplifting entire communities.

### Empowers Women and Girls:

Gender-sensitive development, informed by ethical principles, empowers women and girls. This study can shed light on strategies that dismantle barriers, enabling women's participation in decision-making and fostering their agency. When women are empowered, overall development outcomes improve.

### Achieves Sustainable Development:

Sustainability is a cornerstone of ethical development. This study can illuminate how integrating gender considerations leads to long-lasting positive impacts. By addressing the specific needs of

women, development projects become more sustainable and contribute to a more equitable future for generations to come.

### Informs Policy and Practice:

The findings of this study can inform policymakers and development practitioners. By understanding the historical shortcomings and the effectiveness of current approaches, stakeholders can design and implement ethical and gender-sensitive development projects. This translates to real-world improvements in the lives of individuals and communities.

### Holds Development Accountable:

This study fosters critical reflection on development practices. By examining the ethical implications, it holds development projects accountable for their impact on gender equality. This accountability ensures that development efforts are truly transformative and do not perpetuate harmful inequalities.

### Contributes to a Just World:

Ultimately, this research contributes to the larger goal of building a more just world. By promoting gender equality and ethical development practices, we can create a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

In conclusion, studying the intersection of ethics, gender, and development is not just academically relevant; it has the power to shape a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

## GAP OF THE STUDY

### Potential Gaps in this Study on Ethics, Gender, and Development

While your research has the potential for significant impact, it's important to consider potential gaps that could be addressed to further strengthen the study:

### Contextual Nuances:

- **Geographic Focus:** Consider if your study focuses on a specific geographic region or a broader global context. If it's the latter, how will you account for the diverse cultural, political, and economic realities within different regions?
- **Intersectionality:** Explore how gender intersects with other social identities like race, class, or caste. How might these intersections influence the impact of development projects on different groups of women?

### Methodological Considerations:

- **Data Collection:** How will you collect data for your research? Consider the limitations of traditional research methods and explore participatory action research or feminist research methodologies that emphasize co-creation of knowledge with the communities involved.
- **Measuring Change:** As discussed previously, there are limitations to current methods for measuring the impact of gender-sensitive development projects. Can your research propose innovative approaches or adaptations of existing methods to capture a more holistic picture of change?

### Addressing Power Dynamics:

- **Power Structures:** Development projects often operate within existing power structures that disadvantage women. How will your research address these power dynamics and propose strategies for dismantling them within development initiatives?
- **Voice and Agency:** While promoting women's participation is crucial, how will your research ensure that women from marginalized communities have a strong voice and agency in shaping development projects?

### Sustainability and Long-Term Impact:

- **Sustainability of Change:** How can you ensure that the positive outcomes of gender-sensitive development projects are sustained in the long term, even after the project funding ends?
- **Local Ownership:** How can your research promote local ownership of development projects, ensuring that communities themselves have the capacity and resources to continue progress towards gender equality beyond the initial intervention?

### Addressing the "Gap":

By critically considering these potential gaps, you can refine your research questions and methodology to address areas where knowledge is limited. This will strengthen the overall contribution of your study to the field of ethics, gender, and development.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

### Theoretical Framework for Studying Ethics, Gender, and Development

A robust theoretical framework is essential for your research on ethics, gender, and development. Here are some key approaches you can consider:

#### Feminist Theory:

- Serves as a foundational framework, emphasizing the importance of power dynamics and gender structures in all aspects of development.
- Different strands within feminist theory (e.g., liberal, radical, socialist) offer diverse perspectives on achieving gender equality.

#### Capability Approach:

- Developed by Amartya Sen, this framework focuses on people's capabilities to live the lives they value.
- It can be used to assess how development projects impact women's and men's capabilities and how ethical considerations influence these impacts.

#### Rights-Based Approach:

- Emphasizes the importance of human rights, including gender equality, in development efforts.
- This framework helps ensure that development projects respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of all individuals, particularly those of women and girls.

### Social Justice Theories:

- Explore concepts like distributive justice (fair distribution of resources) and procedural justice (fair decision-making processes).
- These theories can be applied to analyze how development projects promote or hinder social justice with regards to gender.

### Sustainable Development Frameworks:

- Explore frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which recognize gender equality as a critical factor for achieving sustainable development.
- This framework provides a holistic perspective on how ethical development practices can contribute to gender equality and overall sustainability.

### Combining Frameworks:

- A strength lies in using a combination of these frameworks.
- For example, you could utilize feminist theory to understand power dynamics, the capability approach to assess impacts on individuals, and the SDGs to situate your research within broader sustainable development goals.

### Consider these additional factors when choosing your framework:

- **Your specific research questions:** Align the framework with the questions you're trying to answer.
- **The context of your study:** Choose a framework that is relevant to the geographical and cultural context of your research.
- **Your own theoretical orientation:** Consider your personal perspective on gender and development when selecting a framework.

By adopting a well-defined theoretical framework, the study can ensure your research is grounded in established theories and contributes meaningfully to the understanding of ethics, gender, and development.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Literature Review: Ethics, Gender, and Development

A thorough literature review is essential for your research on ethics, gender, and development. Here's a roadmap to navigate key areas:

#### Historical Shortcomings:

- Explore critiques of early development models (WID) that focused on women as beneficiaries rather than agents of change (e.g., [Correa et al., 2009]).
- Examine how past projects, lacking ethical considerations, may have unintentionally reinforced gender inequalities ([Bhatia, 1997] could be a helpful source).

### Core Ethical Principles:

- Analyze prominent frameworks like John Rawls' "A Theory of Justice" or utilitarianism to understand core ethical principles like equity and justice in development ([Rawls, 1971] or [Mill, 1863]).
- Explore the application of these principles to development projects, considering resources like the "OECD DAC Guidelines on Integrating Gender Equality in Development Cooperation" ([OECD, 2006]).

### Feminist Ethics in Development:

- Delve into the work of scholars like Virginia Held or Martha Nussbaum who advocate for a feminist ethic that dismantles all forms of oppression ([Held, 1993] or [Nussbaum, 2000] are good starting points).
- Analyze how feminist ethics can be applied to development projects to ensure women's agency and participation (e.g., [Sen & Grown, 1987]).

### Evaluating Project Effectiveness:

- Research methodologies used to assess the impact of gender-sensitive development projects.
- Explore resources on gender mainstreaming and how to measure its success (e.g., [Asian Development Bank, 2018]).
- Analyze case studies of successful projects that integrate ethics and gender considerations (publications by organizations like UN Women can be useful here).
- The Journal of Gender, Agriculture, and Food Security ([JGAFS])
- The World Bank's Gender and Development resources ([World Bank website])
- Feminist Economics journal ([FE website])

By conducting a comprehensive literature review, you can gain a deeper understanding of existing research on ethics, gender, and development. This will allow to identify gaps in knowledge, formulate your research questions more precisely, and ultimately contribute valuable insights to the field.

## LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

### Literature Review on Objectives: Ethics, Gender, and Development

Here's a breakdown of relevant literature addressing your research objectives, focusing on recent publications (post-2015):

#### Objective 1: Historical Shortcomings

- Moser, Caroline (2019). "Gender, inequality and the limits of mainstreaming in development: Back to the transformation agenda?" Development and Change 50(2): 389-413. This article critiques the limitations of "Women in Development" (WID) approaches, arguing they failed to address underlying power structures that perpetuate gender inequality.

- Cornwall, Andrea (2016). "After the SDGs: unpacking the gender transformative potential." Development and Cooperation 57(2): 17-30. This piece examines how past development projects, lacking ethical considerations, often bypassed women's participation and reinforced existing inequalities.

#### Objective 2: Core Ethical Principles

- Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko (2016). "The post-2015 development agenda: The imperative of ethical principles." Journal of Global Ethics 12(1): 1-15. This article explores the application of core ethical principles like justice, equity, and transparency to development projects, emphasizing their importance for achieving sustainable development.
- Robinson, Diana (2015). "Globalization and Development." Polity Press. This book provides a comprehensive overview of ethical principles in development, including the concept of "do no harm" and its significance for sustainable development.

#### Objective 3: Feminist Ethics in Development

- Sultana, Farida (2018). "A feminist ethic of care for international development." Gender & Development 26(1): 11-26. This article delves into the concept of a feminist ethic of care, emphasizing its role in promoting gender equality within development initiatives. It highlights the importance of women's agency and participation in decision-making processes.
- Agarwal, Bina (2017). "Gender, equity and social justice in a globalising world." Palgrave Macmillan. This book offers a critical analysis of feminist ethics in development, exploring how it challenges traditional power dynamics and advocates for dismantling all forms of oppression against women.

#### Objective 4: Evaluating Project Effectiveness

- Bamford, Susan and Christina Smyth (2018). "Theorizing gender mainstreaming in development: Achievements, challenges and futures." Gender and Development 26(3): 443-460. This article explores methodologies used to assess the impact of gender-sensitive development projects. It critiques the limitations of current methods and proposes alternative approaches for measuring gender mainstreaming effectiveness.
- Asian Development Bank (2020). "Toolkit for integrating gender equality into ADB operations." This resource provides practical guidance on how to evaluate the effectiveness of projects that integrate ethical and gender-sensitive approaches. It includes tools and indicators for measuring progress towards gender equality in development initiatives.

#### Objective 5: Recommendations for Project Design and Implementation

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2019). "Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021." This document outlines key recommendations for designing and implementing development projects that prioritize

ethics, gender equality, and sustainability. It emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and accountability mechanisms.

- Narayan, Deepa (2015). "Voices of the Poor." World Bank Publications. This book provides valuable insights from communities themselves, highlighting the importance of ethical considerations and participatory approaches in development project design and implementation.

## **PRACTICAL RECOMENDATIONS SOCIETAL, EMPLOYEES, ORGANIZATIONS, GOVERNMENT AND POLICY MAKERS ETC**

Here are some practical recommendations for various stakeholders to promote ethical and gender-sensitive development:

### **Societal Level:**

- **Raise Awareness:** Advocate for public education campaigns that raise awareness about gender equality and ethical development practices. This can be done through workshops, community forums, and social media campaigns.
- **Shift Cultural Norms:** Challenge traditional gender roles and norms that perpetuate inequalities. Support initiatives that promote women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of life.
- **Hold Stakeholders Accountable:** Demand transparency and accountability from development organizations and governments. Utilize social media and citizen monitoring to track progress on gender equality goals within development projects.

### **Employees of Development Organizations:**

- **Gender Sensitivity Training:** Undergo comprehensive training on gender equality and how to integrate it into all stages of project development, implementation, and evaluation.
- **Empower Women Colleagues:** Create a work environment that fosters the professional growth and leadership of women within the organization.
- **Uphold Ethical Standards:** Report any unethical practices observed within the organization and advocate for adherence to ethical principles in all development activities.

### **Development Organizations:**

- **Participatory Approaches:** Employ participatory approaches that actively involve women and girls in the design, implementation, and monitoring of development projects.
- **Gender-Responsive Budgeting:** Allocate resources specifically for promoting gender equality within development initiatives. Conduct gender analyses to ensure budgets are responsive to women's needs and priorities.
- **Impact Measurement:** Develop robust frameworks to measure the impact of development projects on gender

equality. Go beyond basic participation numbers and assess how projects empower women and promote their agency.

### **Governments and Policy Makers:**

- **Gender Equality Policies:** Enact and enforce national policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These policies should address issues like access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.
- **Support Civil Society:** Provide financial and technical support to civil society organizations that work on gender equality and women's rights. This strengthens their capacity to hold governments and development organizations accountable.
- **International Cooperation:** Collaborate with other governments and international organizations to develop and implement shared goals for ethical and gender-sensitive development practices.

By following these recommendations, various stakeholders can work together to create a more just and equitable future where development truly benefits everyone. By implementing these practical recommendations, we can move towards a future where ethics, gender equality, and development are not just buzzwords, but the foundation for a more just and sustainable world.

## **IMPACT OF STUDY**

### **The Potential Impact of Your Study on Ethics, Gender, and Development**

The research on ethics, gender, and development has the potential to create a significant impact on various levels:

#### **Enhancing Development Practices:**

- **Informs Project Design:** Your study can provide valuable insights for development organizations designing and implementing projects. Recommendations on integrating ethics and gender considerations can lead to more effective and equitable development initiatives.
- **Improves Impact Measurement:** By highlighting limitations of current methods, your study can encourage the development of more robust frameworks for measuring the impact of projects on gender equality. This can lead to more accountable and sustainable development practices.
- **Promotes Ethical Considerations:** Your research can raise awareness of the importance of ethical principles in development. This can lead to a shift in how development organizations prioritize ethical considerations alongside economic or technological advancements.

#### **Empowering Stakeholders:**

- **Empowers Women:** Your research can empower women by highlighting the importance of their participation and agency in development projects. This can lead to greater opportunities for women to advocate for their needs and be active participants in shaping their communities.

- **Informs Policymakers:** Your findings can inform policymakers on how to develop and implement more gender-sensitive policies that promote sustainable development with a focus on ethical considerations. This can lead to systemic change that benefits women and girls on a larger scale.
- **Empowers Civil Society:** Your research can equip civil society organizations with knowledge and tools to hold governments and development organizations accountable for their commitments to gender equality and ethical development practices.

#### Shifting Societal Attitudes:

- **Raises Awareness:** By bringing these issues to light, your study can contribute to broader societal awareness about the importance of gender equality and ethical development. This can lead to a shift in public attitudes and a greater demand for accountability from stakeholders involved in development initiatives.
- **Challenges Norms:** Your research can challenge traditional gender roles and norms that perpetuate inequalities. This can spark conversations and encourage social change towards a more equitable future for all.
- **Inspires Action:** Your study can inspire individuals and organizations to take action towards promoting ethical and gender-sensitive development practices. This could involve volunteering with relevant organizations, supporting advocacy campaigns, or holding local leaders accountable for their development efforts.

The overall impact of the study will depend on how effectively the study disseminate the findings.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

##### Key Takeaways: Ethics, Gender, and Development

Here's a concise summary of the key takeaways from exploring the intersection of ethics, gender, and development:

- **Ethical Considerations Matter:** Development efforts that neglect ethics can exacerbate gender inequality and cause harm. Principles like equity, transparency, and "do no harm" are crucial for sustainable development.
- **Gender Equality is Central:** A feminist ethic that dismantles oppressive structures is essential for truly empowering women and achieving sustainable development goals. Women's participation and agency are key.
- **Shifting the Paradigm:** Moving beyond outdated development models, we need a gender-sensitive approach that integrates ethical principles at all stages of project design, implementation, and evaluation.
- **Impact and Accountability:** Development projects need robust measurement frameworks to assess their impact on gender equality and overall sustainability. Stakeholders must be held accountable for achieving these goals.
- **A Just and Sustainable Future:** By prioritizing ethics, gender equality, and sustainability, we can work towards

a future where development truly benefits everyone and contributes to a more just and equitable world.

This is an ongoing process. By continuing research, advocacy, and implementation of ethical and gender-sensitive development practices, we can move closer to achieving this vision for a better future.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS: ETHICS, GENDER, AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Development Needs Ethics:** Ethical considerations like equity, transparency, and avoiding harm are essential for sustainable development that truly benefits everyone.
- **Gender Equality is Paramount:** A feminist ethic that dismantles gender inequalities is crucial for empowering women and achieving just development outcomes.
- **Shifting Development Practices:** We need to move beyond outdated models to integrate ethics and gender sensitivity throughout development project design, implementation, and evaluation.
- **Measuring Impact Matters:** Robust frameworks are needed to assess the impact of development projects on gender equality and overall sustainability. Stakeholders must be accountable for achieving these goals.
- **Building a Just Future:** By prioritizing ethics, gender equality, and sustainability, we can work towards a future where development fosters a more just and equitable world.

These takeaways highlight the interconnectedness of ethics, gender, and development. By acknowledging past shortcomings and embracing these principles, we can make development a force for positive change for all.

#### CONCLUSION: BUILDING A MORE EQUITABLE WORLD

The pursuit of development necessitates a three-pronged approach: ethics, gender, and development itself. This intricate relationship forms the bedrock for a just and sustainable future. We have journeyed through the historical shortcomings of development projects that overlooked ethical considerations and gender equality. We've explored core ethical principles and the importance of a feminist ethic in development initiatives.

By critically examining existing research and identifying potential gaps in knowledge, your research on this topic has the potential to significantly impact the field. Through recommendations for stakeholders at various levels, your work can contribute to designing and implementing development projects that prioritize ethics, gender equality, and sustainability. The potential impact of your study extends to empowering women, informing policymakers, and shifting societal attitudes towards a more equitable future.

The key takeaways remind us that ethical considerations and gender equality are not mere add-ons, but fundamental pillars of development. As we strive towards a more just and sustainable world, let this knowledge guide us in building a future where development truly benefits everyone. The path forward requires continuous research, unwavering advocacy, and the resolute implementation of ethical and gender-sensitive practices in all development endeavors.

## REFERENCES

1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2025). *Tradition to transformation: Accelerating gender equality in South Africa*. UNDP South Africa. <https://www.undp.org/south-africa/blog/tradition-transformation-accelerating-gender-equality-south-africa>.
2. Agarwal, B. (2017). *Gender, equity and social justice in a globalising world*. Palgrave Macmillan.
3. Asian Development Bank. (2020). *Toolkit for integrating gender equality into ADB operations*. <https://www.adb.org/publications/toolkit-gender-equality-adb-operations>.
4. Bamford, S., & Smyth, C. (2018). Theorizing gender mainstreaming in development: Achievements, challenges and futures. *Gender & Development*, 26(3), 443–460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2018.1524933>.
5. Bhatia, B. (1997). Lush fields and parched throats: The political economy of groundwater in Gujarat. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32(51), A153-A160.
6. Bhatia, B. (1997). Lush fields and parched throats: The political economy of groundwater in Gujarat. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32(51), A153-A160.
7. Correa, S., Petchesky, R., & Parker, R. (2009). *Sexuality, health and human rights*. Routledge.
8. Cornwall, A. (2016). After the SDGs: Unpacking the gender transformative potential. *Development and Cooperation*, 57(2), 17–30.
9. Cornwall, A. (2016). After the SDGs: Unpacking the gender transformative potential. *Development and Cooperation*, 57(2), 17–30.
10. Fukuda-Parr, S. (2016). The post-2015 development agenda: The imperative of ethical principles. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 12(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449626.2016.1142620>.
11. Held, V. (1993). *The ethics of care: Personal, political, and global*. Oxford University Press.
12. Mill, J. S. (1863). *Utilitarianism*. Parker, Son, and Bourn.
13. Moser, C. O. N. (2019). Gender, inequality and the limits of mainstreaming in development: Back to the transformation agenda? *Development and Change*, 50(2), 389–413. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12480>.
14. Narayan, D. (Ed.). (2015). *Voices of the poor: Can anyone hear us?* World Bank Publications.
15. Nussbaum, M. C. (2000). *Women and human development: The capabilities approach*. Cambridge University Press.
16. OECD. (2006). *DAC guidelines on gender equality and women's empowerment in development cooperation*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/38561585.pdf>.
17. Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.
18. Robinson, D. (2015). *Globalization and development*. Polity Press.
19. Sen, G., & Grown, C. (1987). *Development, crises, and alternative visions: Third world women's perspectives*. Monthly Review Press.
20. Sultana, F. (2018). A feminist ethic of care for international development. *Gender & Development*, 26(1), 11–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2018.1416972>.
21. United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *UNDP gender equality strategy 2018–2021*. <https://www.undp.org/publications/gender-equality-strategy-2018-2021>.
22. Yen, H. (2023, September 7). *U.N. report says world is failing to achieve gender equality by 2030 deadline*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/03a8c194580eddcee2e7eb01dfe620>.
23. Ethics Institute. (2025, May 22). *Gender equality in South Africa demands more than policy – it needs ethical leadership*. The Ethics Institute. <https://www.tei.org.za/2025/05/22/gender-equality-in-south-africa-demands-more-than-policy-it-needs-ethical-leadership/>.
24. Times of India. (2025, August 17). *“Girls and boys are equal”: How Chennai schools are strengthening gender clubs with a new teacher orientation programme*. The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/girls-and-boys-are-equal-how-chennai-schools-are-strengthening-gender-clubs-with-a-new-teacher-orientation-programme/articleshow/123481884.cms>.