

## The Impact of Managing Transformation Process in the MENA Region

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### Abstract:

*The drive of reform in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region takes a real transformation from the governments to quote the necessary investment to upkeep growth. Overcoming the challenges of the region faces is that must be accompanied with change. Change which provides a good foundation and establish a strong and transparent governance system that will breathe life into the regions hidden potential. But again, corruption is just a part of the whole problem, and if any significant results of change management is to be realized in the region, then the whole problem causing political stir in this region should be identified and uprooted. Moreover, the rapid and incessant economic and industrial changes in the MENA region, strict but cautious steps should be taken by various countries throughout the region in order to efficiently manage the changes. Structural change proves to be highly effective when labor productivity growth is aimed, as seen from various successful countries which used the same strategy; that is, the within-effect out-shines the between-effect (Autio, 2010). Steps towards managing industrial changes in the MENA should therefore not be focused on structure, but should be more dynamic- encompassing all the causes of the changes.*

*In spite of that, reforms in governance cannot fully cater for the demands of the citizens if their living standards are not improved. The current governance state of the MENA region provides a good foundation to establish a strong and transparent governance system that will breathe life into the regions hidden potential. In a bid to conquer these challenges, several factors have been identified as sources of political predicaments in the MENA region some of which include: power wrangles, dictatorial leadership, religious conflicts, lack of clear governance policies and tribalism.*

**Key Words:** Corruption, governance, leadership, power, transformation.

### Introduction:

The MENA acronym refers to the Middle East and North Africa jurisdictions; a vast region stretching from Egypt, including Morocco in North Africa to Kuwait and other Arab League nations in Asia. The population of the MENA region at its least extent is about 381 million people, approximately 6% of the total world population, (World Bank, 2009). The region is made up of about 22 countries in total, which make up 60 per cent of world's oil reserves and 45% of the world's natural gas reserves. It is also important to note that some of the OPEC countries fall within the MENA region. These jurisdictions continue to be included into the MENA region list of countries and, therefore, there is no conclusive documentation of all the countries making

up the region. However, some of the countries currently part of the region include: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia among others, including eight of the OPEC countries (World Bank, 2009). This region came into being based on perceived similarities in culture, religion, language and shared history, for instance, in terms of religion, the locality is Islam dominated and economically almost all the countries within the region are oil-rich.

However, the region contains resource-poor countries in comparison to their population, for example, Morocco in North Africa and Yemen in Asia. Environmentally, patches of semi-arid climate and scarcity of water characterize the MENA region and cases of drought are rampant in the region. At the same time, pockets of internal conflicts occasionally rock member-states of the region; tribal wars, boundary wrangles, and terrorism are among the conflicts that work to stabilize the region. In addition, the region is characterized by politically-unstable member states, which are always in leadership wrangles. These among other challenges, necessitate the need for not only regime but also environmental adjustment; change being the tricky element it is; careful management is crucial else it can serve to fuel the challenges rather than quell them.

Change, in general, refers to a transformation from one state to another. Change management involves the perspective with which the transition is approached, and its resultant effect to transition. This point of view is backed by Autio (2010) according to whom, management of change is a procedural tactic to tackling the change; both its effects and benefits, either at an individual or an organization's level. He further adds that change management has at least three different aspects, including; adapting, controlling, and effecting change. For organizations, Chamlou feels that change management means defining and implementing procedures and/or technologies to deal with adjustments in the business environment and to profit from the changing opportunities (Chamlou, 2010). In light of some of the foregoing challenges, successful adaptation to change appears to be crucial within the MENA region and those with prospected transformations when it comes to management. Thus, this article seeks to highlight some of the challenges in the MENA region that require the need for change and how these events are managed.

A critical examination of the region reveals that, a significant number of governments in the MENA region have initiated an overhaul and complete transformation of some of their institutions both public and private, all aimed at giving room for development and economic up-surge (Arab Financial Forum, 2011). This institutional and governance overhaul characterize some of the changes currently undergoing in the MENA region and whose management cannot be emphasized enough. One of the organizations facilitating and helping in managing of these changes is The Commission of European Communities-OECD. So far, the progress of the reforms is impressive but more effort should be put in place for more favorable results. For instance, the public sector will have to set new laws for the private organizations; it will need to come up with diversified regulation which not only takes into account private concerns but also public mandate, that prevents excesses and manages risks adequately, but that does not inhibit entrepreneurship and innovation (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2010). Apart from the man-made changes, the adjustments imposed by mother-nature on the MENA region should also be managed- such changes include environmental and climatic changes. Some of the major variations and how they have been managed are outlined in the following discussion.

### **Changes in Governance**

Political agitation is common among the MENA member states, particularly in countries like Egypt, Syria, Libya and Bahrain. Terrorism, demonstrations, military coups, and wars constantly alter the political environment in these countries leading to political instability. In addition, the MENA nations occasionally witness civil unrest accompanied with mass disruptions which not only disturb businesses in those countries but also hamper development. Egypt for example has with time risen through the ranks to become an industrial hub

while Tunisia, on the other hand, is a renowned tourist destination. Despite the unlimited potential in these countries, these recent political problems and uncertainty around the old and new incoming governments have had great implications on businesses as well as humanitarian activities (Heintz, 2012). Thorough and effective political reforms in the MENA region are still unprecedented in the near future but the on-going slow economic reforms witnessed in the region are results of little reforms already taking place.

Some of the rampant structural limitations currently witnessed in various countries across the MENA region, such as: high rates of unemployment, unfair competition in the private sector, male chauvinism, relatively slow and insignificant developments in the private sector and weak governance; will require a counter-action (Cranfield, 2012). In spite of that, reforms in governance cannot fully cater for the demands of the citizens if their living standards are not improved. The current governance state of the MENA region provides a good foundation to establish a strong and transparent governance system that will breathe life into the regions hidden potential. In a bid to conquer these challenges, several factors have been identified as sources of political predicaments in the MENA region some of which include: power wrangles, dictatorial leadership, religious conflicts, lack of clear governance policies and tribalism. Unwillingness to quit leadership particularly, has led to several presidents being ousted; Zine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and the famous Muammar Qaddafi of Libya (ERF, 2013).

However, all is not lost for the MENA region as such radical and drastic changes in the political arena can be managed in a way that they will not result into severe repercussions. The major factor that motivated reforms and transformations in Morocco for instance, as pointed out by Moroccan bigwigs, was the rampant cases of corruption both in the public and private domains (United Nations, 2013). Agreeably, corruption is one of the factors that upset the political whirlwind in the MENA region; any efforts towards curbing corruption, is a major step to managing the rapid changes in MENA politics. But again, corruption is just a part of the whole problem, and if any significant results of change management is to be realized in the region, then the whole problem causing political stir in this region should be identified and uprooted. Analysis of origin of corruption in Morocco led the reform team to focus on some other aspects of public governance; a move which widened their scope of reforms. One undeniable fact is that extremely complicated procedures can usher in corruption; according to Salter (2014), this can be avoided through administrative simplification along with using online administrative strategies to restructure and align procedures as well as draw a line between a service provider and the consumer. In addition, loose links between performance systems and payment modes together with extremely inflexible human resource management system exposed civil servants and other government employees to corruption and prevented them from efficiently delivering services to the people (Peneder, 2013). In this regard, the circumstances agitate the citizens who begin to vouch for revolutions thereby creating a political turmoil.

Unfortunately, it is not only Morocco that is grappling with corruption as a starting point of their governance reforms; Yemen too has had its fair share of corrupt leadership. Within its reform program, it placed eradicating corruption as their major agenda in order to strengthen its democratic institutions. Inside the focal point of upholding accountability and mitigating corrupt deals, the administration picked on 11 items which had some internal similarities: transforming the political scene, carrying out a nation-wide campaign against corruption, creating efficacious financial governing policies, analyzing and amending government procurement policies, creating a constitutional law against corruption, and instituting penalties for the violation of the same, formulating concise guidelines on government activities and services, adopting a biometric system of identification, making the Central Organization for Control and Audit (COCA) an independent institution, being shareholders in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), formulating and executing an effective strategy for managing of government revenues, as well as encouraging transparency and honesty in exploration

of oil (Abegaz, 2012). Actually these countries are using corruption as a way of managing the frequent, sudden and violent turn political events in such countries; and truly, managing corruption has benefited some of those jurisdictions to manage their political scene.

Besides managing corruption, some of the MENA member states seek to strengthen and stabilize the organization. This was the main reason for launching reform program strategies in Bahrain and the Palestinian National Authority. Unfortunately, the process of developing and stabilizing Bahrain's economy hit a dead end just a little while after its independence, when civil unrest resulted in parliament disbandment in 1975 and a decree-rule period that derailed the process (Aiginger, 2011). Reforming the state as a way to manage political changes can, therefore, be fatal if not monitored; instead of yielding desirable results, it can energize the political whirlwind making the situation worse than before. Determined and not seeming to give up, Bahrain continues the state reform process by enacting suitable laws, particularly, with respect to the country's politics and governance.

Needless to say, in any political conflicts ever witnessed, poor service to the citizen is usually a central cause. With average governance, such challenges in the MENA region have always worked against its political good, leading to very drastic regime changes. But fair enough, most governments within the region have seen the light and as Caree (2013) observed, all governments place a certain emphasis on delivering services to citizens, from education and healthcare to water, electricity and other utilities. This way, the citizens feel cared for by the leaders they elected and less agitated to call for political changes. In addition, the running of the government calls for frequent one-on-one interaction with the citizens to look for feedback, and enable the government improve service delivery to them. This method particularly, has enabled most MENA nations monitor and manage political changes as well as reduce governance challenges. According to Denton (2012), MENA countries have simplified their administrations and included online administration techniques to enhance service delivery to their citizens, reduce their cost to government, and promote integrity- a very effective step to change management.

Talking of political changes, the economy can never be ignored as one of the factors necessitating the vicissitudes - poor economy can lead to conflicts and vice versa. Apparently, the MENA governments are aware of this and intent on stabilizing the economy; according to (United Nations, 2011), the region's volume of total exports as a share of GDP grew from around 35 per cent in 1990 to 39.2 per cent in 2000 and to around 53 per cent as at 2009. At first glance, this reveals high and improved levels of exports as compared to other countries. This is a good progress and seemingly, the region has prospects of a brighter future, but a closer examination reveals the burden carried by the resource-rich countries as the others just bask in the glory of economic success. The Arab Spring particularly, rank low economically-a fact which means no good for the region's economic improvements; export are expected to decrease as a result. On the bright side, however, the Arab Spring is also goal-set to pull-up the economy and not be seen as riding on the backs of their counterparts. While Tunisia is getting more intent on ameliorating its export volumes, the Ministry of Finance in Egypt is already boasting impressive results in payment balances caused by improved receipts from the Suez Canal, reliable remittances from the private sector, and a reduced depreciation of the Egyptian pound with respect to the euro and the US dollar (ERF, 2013). Considering the economic up-soar in the region, the MENA governments appear to be more concerned about managing the changes, and certainly, this is an effective way to stabilize the states and a positive step towards change management.

Political changes not only affect the normal citizen but also pose risks to firms and foreign-organizations operating within the affected country. Such changes should, thus, be managed by the government, the citizens, and the business organizations. Steps such as acquiring insurance policies, using control

procedures, and in-depth analysis of the political environment can assist firms manage the changes and avert possible risks. On the overall thought, the MENA region is taking effective steps in dealing with and managing changes in its political atmosphere; such steps as corruption mitigation, improved service delivery to the citizens, and significant economic catch-ups have proven quite beneficial in this quest.

### **Climate Change and Water Challenges**

As earlier hinted, the MENA region consists of typically arid and semi-arid regions. In addition, the climate of the region is quite unpredictable, which is largely due to emissions of green-house gases from the plants of major industrial countries of the northern countries: USA, Europe and also China, India and Russia (World Bank, 2009). These changes in climate of the region largely affect its water sources and if not dealt with in time, the sources might be endangered in future. It is unfortunate, however, the MENA region have less than 1 per cent of the planet's renewable freshwater reserves (Gleick, 2014). To make the situation even worse, the rapid industrialization in this region has seen the water reserves decline-a situation expected to continue into the unforeseeable future if control checks are not fixed to counter the effect of industrialization on water sources.

Already, The MENA region -relative to other regions- is considered the poorest in the world -in matters renewable water; countries like Jordan and Libya, among others are experiencing a situation of acute shortage (less than 500m<sup>3</sup>/an/habitant). Autio adds that the case of Saudi Arabia is even more serious due to the fact that 75% of resources are non-renewable fossil water. Despite its pioneer efforts to desalinate sea water, Saudi Arabia's demand for water cannot yet be met. In his examination of the water reserves in the MENA region; with an average of only 1400 cubic meters of renewable sources of water each capita and per year in 2006, the MENA region is far from the world average of 8500 compared to 23 000 m<sup>3</sup> in South America (Heintz,2012). From the statistics, the situation is already grave and watching it progress into the future is a suicide mission.

Ignorant of the situation, MENA demand for fresh water keep on growing day by day; partly, due to rapid population increase and the current invigorated industrial revolution in the region. The MENA countries consume nearly 80% of the water within their jurisdiction, as opposed to other regions like the Caribbean and the Latin America, in which the state-consumption approximates to just 2% of the total water capacity (Heintz, 2012). This means one thing- water consumption has to be regulated; otherwise, the sources might be depleted completely. With changes in the agricultural sector, it becomes one of the major water consumers in the region and the consumption is expected to rise. This might not only slow down the growth process in the region, but also completely impede the efforts aimed towards the same. At the same time, Salter (2014) thinks that the unforeseen end to water scarcity will not only lead to mushrooming of new conflicts, but also fuel the already existing ones, based on the fact that 80 per cent of surface resources in the MENA are shared between at least two countries . To manage such conflicts, availability of water can be counted on; moreover, construction of mega water reservoirs like dams can also help with the situation.

Climatic changes too are not left out in the list of environmental changes within the MENA region. Truly speaking, the climate of the earth, as a whole, keeps on changing-and be unpredictably. The climate change issue is, therefore, not a monopoly of the MENA, but again, it is within the region that climatic changes bring some of the most adverse effects. A look at the factors causing such climatic changes points to the region itself as a major source of its climatic troubles. Constituted of rapidly developing countries- most of which are oil and gas dealers- the rate of emission of green-house gases is humongous. In a not-so-distant past, the anthropogenic climate change causes have been on an upward trend, this is largely caused by fossil fuel activities as well as deforestation; resultant greenhouse gases and the highly dangerous carbon monoxide are emitted in the process which directly depletes the ozone layer of the atmosphere; this causes global warming which negatively impacts on the climate of the earth (Cranfield, 2012). With scientific evidences backing up the

proposition that climatic changes will single-handedly, be the root cause of water stress to people in future, the MENA region comes out as the most endangered due to the already stretched water resources.

According to Peneder (2013), this change in climatic conditions in the MENA region will create very lethal weather changes; the annual temperature rise will soar to between 2 to 2.5 degrees Celsius as at 2100; such increase will not only reduce aquifers charge but also raise the rate of evapo-transpiration. And this is not-so-good news to the coastal zones of the MENA region. The rise in sea level accompanied by such climate changes, brings with it floods and unimaginable destruction. In addition, warmer water will have also impact on biodiversity with higher salinity of surface especially in lakes, reservoirs, and dams (Gleick, 2014). Also, some of the most developed countries contribute to pollution and the resultant climate changes in the MENA region. On the other hand, even though the MENA region is one of the most exposed to fluctuating climatic changes, it is still above the ranks as the least polluting worldwide with very little emission of GHG- 84% of these GHG emissions are linked to oil activities (Aiginger, 2011). Aiginger further adds that the concept of ecological debt becomes very pertinent in this case especially when the poor, MENA countries, are financially indebted to the developed countries and the debt services continues to absorb much of their budgets. This calls for inclusion of some of those developed countries in the management of climate changes in the MENA region.

Despite the various in-house challenges, governments in the region have received the alarm and are beginning to take actions against the changes; actions which mostly focus on managing the changes and possibly eradicating the effects. Many, according to Abegaz, are working to update or establish a national water agenda and to take water policy initiatives. In this case, government action has mainly focused on investments to improve infrastructural developments such as, irrigation initiatives, water treatment plants in urban areas, and dams. Certainly, the management action taken does not really matter, provided the goal of containing the changes is fully achieved. As Denton noted, various governments have embarked on awareness and other means to achieve efficiency and have begun to improve their systems in order to, mitigate losses and make groundwater management strategies a success (Denton, 2012).

Apart from MENA, other liberal parties have also joined forces with the region in managing such changes. Led by the World Bank, these parties have supported the region and helped come up with some strategies to solve the existing challenges; their suggestions and views border on the concept of private-public partnership with respect to water services (Cranfield, 2012). A good gesture it may seem, but is it able to wholly solve the problem at hand? Maybe- owing to the fact that private management has always proved its worth over public management. While the World Bank and its affiliate partners are encouraging water privatization, some countries like Egypt have fully resisted the proposition. On the other hand, Morocco has embraced the privatization approach and evidently, it is working for her. This brings the thought that managing this challenge should differ from one country to another, and each country should adopt just what work best for them- after all, they are geared towards the same goal and despite the various ways used, the proverbial cat will still be dead.

As usual, a good initiative is never short of drawbacks. In its struggle to manage the climatic changes and water challenges in the region, the MENA has encountered several obstacles. Some of the obstacles include: weak water-policy implementation resulting from the absence of monitoring tools and ineffective mechanisms; unclear role definition among various water service agencies; lack of strategies to monitor and contain the growth of demand for water among others (Heintz, 2012). adding to that pile of hindrances are, according to Caree (2013), limited human resource within the government sectors and little awareness on matters water by the general public, and unwillingness by the stakeholders in the water sector to participate on making and enforcement of water policies, including gender considerations.

## **Economy and Industrial Changes**

Similar to several other regions throughout the world, the MENA region has seen blooming growth in its industrial sector for quite some time till now; a trend which is expected to increase even more in the coming years. Manufacturing industry has always led the growth ranks, contrary to its counterpart- labor productivity, which always seem to lag behind. However, the changes in the growth rate of labor productivity are never predictable, and have always consisted of crests and troughs all this time. Similarly, industrial growth rate is catching up rapidly, but the progress is hampered by non-existence of science based industries, which would otherwise expedite the growth. Another striking similarity in the industrial sector in the MENA region is very low existence of a special type of industries known as supplier-industries that are more techno-intensive industries; only Malta, among MENA countries, has a developed industrial structure; where manufacturing industry value added is almost equally distributed among different categories of industries (Arab Financial Forum, 2011). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2010) also adds that, especially after the 1990s, the structure of manufacturing industry in Turkey and Egypt, and, to some extent, in Tunisia, has shown positive changes. One never stops to wonder the main factors behind the industrial structural changes. Before seeking to manage the changes, such knowledge is critical as it will determine the methods employed in change management.

According to Peneder (2013), Industrial development literature perceives structural change as one of the sources of productivity growth; the reason behind this perception is the fact that there can be gains from factor reallocation if factors returns differ across industries. Indeed, industrial changes are not similar across the MENA region; the resource-poor countries are lagging behind in industrialization as their rich counterparts bask in the glory of the same. The major cause of this industrial revolution and persistent growth is oil and gas production in some of the MENA countries; countries that neither produce oil nor gas therefore have to find alternative ways to initiate and support their economic transformations. This means they experience very slow industrial growth and almost unperceivable structural changes. It is possible to measure structural change on the basis of the industries technology orientations; While we measure structural change as the change in employment, we can also be measure it with respect to industries' technological intensity (ERF,2013). That said it is important to note that structural changes do not really increase productivity in manufacturing industries by a large margin, but despite that observation, structural change is still an important player in industrial development; basically since it directly affects productivity.

In light of the rapid and incessant economic and industrial changes in the MENA region, strict but cautious steps should be taken by various countries throughout the region in order to efficiently manage the changes. Structural change proves to be highly effective when labor productivity growth is aimed, as seen from various successful countries which used the same strategy; that is, the within-effect out-shines the between-effect (Autio, 2010). Steps towards managing industrial changes in the MENA should therefore not be focused on structure, but should be more dynamic- encompassing all the causes of the changes. In addition, diversified production and assorted exports can be one more effective way to manage such changes successfully as in the case of Morocco. Moreover, strict industrial policies and proper governance can not only help monitor and track industrial changes but also contain them. All these implemented, can result in sudden economic boom across the region.

## **Social and Gender Changes**

At the helm of changes in any particular region, gender vicissitudes are always dominant. According to Denton (2012), most governance professionals recognize that women and men have different interests and derive diverse benefits from a country's governance and management, and ample global evidence supports the need to involve women in the design and management of resources. The potential in gender considerations

cannot be downplayed in a region where development and effective change management is central. Both men and women alike should be given opportunity and the necessary support to bring their contributions. The MENA region understands this just too well and as evident from Aiginger (2011), gender mainstreaming efforts in the leadership sector have focused primarily on increasing the number of female project staff, providing gender sensitive training to staff members, ensuring that women are among project beneficiaries, inducting women as participants and service providers at the grass-root level and supporting women's role in a country's management. Interestingly, the trend is almost similar in all the countries across the MENA region; from North Africa to southwest Asia, women empowerment takes center stage. Since gender equality comes with a host of merits, this appears to be a good change management tactic for the MENA region and a positive step to the regional prosperity.

As noted by Abegaz (2012), the management community has realized some crucial progress with respect to tailoring programs and stipulating policies that consider the differences in male and female duties. This, among other supporting evidences, reinforces the impossibility of ignoring gender considerations. Indeed, one achievement, as is always said, usually leaves more to be done; considering the situation of the MENA region, much still remains to be done, particularly with respect to gender inclusion and equity in various countries. Most so, in the rural areas where gender disparity is still rampant and male chauvinism is dominant. It is in such places where the concept and theory of gender justice should be put to use. The concept argues that the failure of some gender mainstreaming initiatives is due to its evolution from being a process of transformation to being an end in itself (Caree, 2013). However, there is a major drawback to this concept as well. As noted by Gleick (2014), the core drawback has always been and is likely to remain limitations of gender inclusion in policy making, and projects implementations. These not only deter women inclusion in a country's management but also act as major obstacles to their participation in the same- considering the MENA region. Actually, these factors are major contributors to the gender woes faced in the region.

However, gender mainstreaming alone has been found to be unable to address the magnitude of the current gender injustice in the MENA region despite consolidated efforts to see it through. Managing such a change, therefore, becomes a challenge. Salter (2014) notes that Gender justice, as an outcome, implies equal access between men and women to, and control over, resources combined with the ability to make choices. It also brings in an additional essential element: accountability, which implies the responsibility and accountability of precisely to dispense justice. In light of the benefits and the outcomes, this view of gender and justice might sort out some of the MENA's challenges and help in managing various changes in the region. Still, the accountability schemes and techniques by the leading elites to the public across the MENA region are weak; elements, which obscure the way for gender equity and the resultant changes. According to United Nations (2013), the voices of some groups such as environmentalists, social change actors, and women are not sufficiently heard by decision-makers. Furthermore, insufficient consultation and provision with and for women jeopardize a project and affect its efficiency and delivery, particularly when the project implies a change in peoples' roles and responsibilities. Now that some problems hindering such changes have been identified, it is now easy for the MENA region to devise ways and means of countering such detracts.

There are mounting evidence on the positive long-term effects of sustained economic development and income growth on gender equality on the one hand and equally strong evidence that gender inequalities hamper efficient economic development and negatively affect livelihoods on the other (World Bank, 2009). From this statement, it is apparent that managing gender changes through mainstreaming, equality, and gender justice might just be another way of eradicating poverty in the MENA region. Most countries, however, have strong policies to tackle poverty, but in contrast, very weak gender-related policies.



Indeed, the importance of gender inclusions and equality cannot be downplayed; it features various and a large range of benefits covering most of a country's sectors, both public and private. Aiginger (2011) found that a gendered perspective in management of resources is necessary to ensure both women's and men's participation for improved resource management practices- involving both women and men enhances the results of management initiatives and improves the likelihood of their sustainability with an eye on leadership enhancement; it also contributes to ensuring that no unintended negative effects on men or women occur. An observation made by the United Nations (2011) states that, The role of women in country management in MENA has been so far mostly neglected and limited information is available to fully understand the role women play in achieving management efficiency and sustainability in spite of the fact that women convey knowledge, attitudes, and practices that promote conservation, pollution prevention, and sustainable governance. So again, literally reversing the situation will serve to help manage such changes in the MENA region. Another way of managing such changes is proposed by Heintz(2012), the fundamental first step to addressing the role of gender and women in management is to support research and capacity development efforts of both the researchers and policy-makers to undertake social and gender analysis and look beyond the technical aspects of resource-management toward a greater understanding of the social gender issues, power relations, and contribute to the notion of social justice- with gender analysis, planners gain a more accurate picture of communities, natural resource users, households among other aspects of management. Applying some of these tactics will greatly help manage gender transformations particularly in those MENA countries where male chauvinism is the order of the day.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

The MENA region is made up of developing countries; as mega-transformations alter the MENA environment, strict and working management strategies should be developed for such changes. Despite being good and sometimes extremely beneficial, change-both positive and negative- can be deceiving. If control-checks are not fixed for it, the wheels of change can roll way beyond the boundaries in which case it might turn into a crisis. The MENA region is already experiencing change in various aspects- industrially, economically, socially, religiously, and climatically- and the trend is expected to continue into the distant future. From the foregoing discussion, various tactics with respect to managing the changes have been highlighted. Some of the tactics are already in place and as observed by Abegaz (2012), taking a whole-of-government approach is one such strategy towards managing some changes. Denton supports this approach, he denotes that the time is now right to deepen engagements with the line ministries—education, health, housing, commerce, and others—and to reach out to the judicial and legislative branches of government to extend the reform process and build on the gains made to date. This change management approach has already shown fruits in some MENA countries like Egypt. Moreover, the MENA region can also adopt a citizen-centered management perspective, where consultation with the citizen before carrying out a project is given priority. Also, the civil society as well as the private sector and various stake holder should also be engaged and made part and parcel of the reform processes; this way, everyone feels included and valued thereby preventing governance conflicts.

Besides, using evidence-based analysis to drive policy and empowering initiatives at the local level are other useful approaches to managing the change (United Nations, 2013). To sum everything up, change in the MENA region is all-round; it encompasses aspects of a country from politics to religion, economy to the society. Tactics that are applied in managing the change should, therefore, not be general tactics but more aspect-specific. Despite how hard and inapplicable some of these change-management strategies may seem, the benefits of managing the change still override the cost of employing those hard tactics as well as the risks of ignoring the same.

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