

Obstacles To Women's Work In Jordanian Society

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ABSTRACT

The study dealt with the reality of women's political participation in Jordan, and the historical method was used, to gather as much information as possible that documents the Jordanian women's march within the context of their historical, political and social reading. And to identify the obstacles, the researcher used the addition of a deliberate sample of women and men who have completed postgraduate studies in order to support the hypothesis of the existence of obstacles that take mostly the nature and cultural heritage and some legal obstacles, and obstacles related to educational curricula and education paths for females, and the employment of religious texts in proportion to the general mood, and with the aim of answering On the main question of the study, which is: What are the obstacles that prevent the participation of Jordanian women in political life, and what are the ways to treat them? The study found that the legal obstacles had less impact on political participation than the social cultural heritage and the impact of the school curricula that overlooked women being in decision-making positions and reflecting their image as subservient to men. Its health and in line with the inferior social view of women is one of the most important obstacles to women's political participation and their presence in decision-making positions. The study also developed a set of recommendations classified within ways to address obstacles, including the need to adopt long-term strategies and plans by organizations concerned with women's affairs in order to change the social view of women in its various dimensions, and also focus on women's involvement in academic fields that are not limited to the field of care and services and help them to They assumed their place and position in political participation, and that the concerned authorities from civil society organizations, ministries and legislative councils work to develop plans and programs that would raise the status of women by changing the stereotypical image of women in the societal mentality, and for the quota system to remain in place until the desired change is brought about, as recommended The study conducts more research and studies that discuss the basis and causes of obstacles stemming from the culture of society and search for practical ways to address them.

INTRODUCTION

Developed societies witnessed great developments in the fields of economic, industrial and technological life during the past three centuries, and these developments contributed to changing the patterns of social and political life. These developments also contributed to increasing women's participation in public life in their social, economic and political fields. Women faced multiple forms of discrimination and exploitation. They struggled for a long time to obtain their social, economic and political rights. It took three centuries for advanced societies to achieve civil, political and social indicators of human development.(Agtash, 2008).

Jordanian women constitute a segment of more than half of the population, and they were limited in all areas of life because in the past they

represented the role of the surrounding culture, the traditional view at the time, and the spread of ignorance and illiteracy. These challenges that women faced prevented them from exploiting their energies in assuming administrative positions and political practice. At the present time, Jordanian women sought democracy and equality between them and men, which gave them equal opportunities to learn and work, but these efforts were ineffective. Because of the subordination of women and the culture of society in light of the traditional political systems granted to men, and when we talk about reality, we do not mean by political participation in women's political participation in parliamentary elections or membership in parliament or the ministry or any other political position. We mean the activities that women carry out in order to change the circumstances they are going through, and these

activities come in the form of decisions and actions that guarantee a privileged position for women, not only in the family environment, but also in the community.” (Ashour, 2003).

Political Participation

Citizens' political participation plays a major role in the processes of modernization and political development in developing societies. Political participation is a right of citizens to exercise their roles in society by contributing to decision-making and influencing the actions and decisions of officials. We cannot imagine a democratic political system in society without the presence of political participation by citizens, whether this participation is in the form of voting in general elections, or affiliation with political parties, or any other forms. Human societies vary in the extent of political participation among their citizens. Multiple political participation characterized by repetition and stability at various local and national levels. The modern state is also characterized by a wide range of political participation through large-scale political units. (Al Jidara, 2008).

The concept of political participation, like other concepts in the social sciences, is shrouded in a lot of ambiguity, so there have been many definitions of this concept to reflect ideological and political backgrounds.

political participation as a set of legal activities undertaken by citizens with the aim of influencing the choice of officials and their behavior, actions, and decisions. The importance of political participation is based on the ability of citizens to influence government decisions. (Al Manar, 2006).

Political participation takes two basic forms, namely: institutional participation and non-institutional participation. Institutional participation is represented in the acceptable ways of implementing citizens, which are seen as legitimate by the prevailing political system, such as voting in general elections, writing letters to politicians, affiliation to political parties, and demonstrating in peaceful ways. Political participation indicates Non-institutional activities indicate that activities that are not recognized by the political system, and are seen as illegal activities such as civil disobedience, violent

confrontations with the authorities and the overturn of the existing political system.

The members of society in their behavior for political participation stem from several motives, such as psychological motives in order to achieve self-confidence and tranquility, or as an expression of political awareness that reflects participation as a national duty, or as a tool for expressing political or social demands with the aim of achieving them, or religious or ethnic motives, fear of authority, or a request for a position Or as a policy of defense against an anticipated danger, or as a manifestation of familial or tribal solidarity.(Bardak, 2007).

Sociologists consider the inequality in the distribution of power and authority in society as a form of social inequality in it. Some groups in society have the ability to participate in government more than others. Participation in high political positions or decision-making centers is not evenly distributed among the various segments of society. Where the majority of governmental, educational and military organizations and institutions distribute power on a hierarchical basis, meaning the higher the level of the individual in the job hierarchy in these organizations, the greater his income and authority in setting laws, the basis for promotion and penalties. A higher level in the hierarchy means more influence or influence on the goals and activities of these institutions. In distributing the hierarchical power, the organizations prefer some groups over others, and women occupy a large proportion of the jobs that fall at the lowest rank in the organizational hierarchy. (Khazali, 2005).

Women's Participation In Education, Work and Political Life

After this quick review of the concepts of political participation and gender roles, it becomes imperative for us to know the reality of women's participation in education, work, economic activity in general, and political life in particular, in order to identify the obstacles to Jordanian women's political participation.

Education

The educational policies related to compulsory education, its dissemination, the distribution of higher education institutes in all regions of the Kingdom, and the citizens' demand for education

and its transformation into a value in Jordanian society. (Al-Ayla,2007).

Women's participation in economic activity brings benefits at both the micro and macro levels. In order to be employed, women need skills for which there is a demand in the labour market. It is normally expected that labour force participation rates increase with rising levels of education and training. Furthermore, in general, the more education one has, the greater one's individual income potential is. While lot of progress has been made regarding women's education, women around the world are less well represented than men in the labour markets. In macroeconomic terms, this lesser presence of women in the labour market leads to low returns on investment in education and training and underutilisation of productive capacity, and as a result, less economic growth. In social terms, the fact that there are fewer women earning a formal wage undermines efforts to reduce poverty. And for the individual women concerned, this state of affairs works against their economic and social empowerment and signals a lack of freedom to fulfil their full potential. Women's labour force participation rate is very low in Jordan. The activity rate in 2009 was 73.9% for men and 23.3% for women according to the ILO (KILM, 2009)¹. Although the enrolment of females at all educational levels still lags behind that of males, the educational gender gap is too small to explain the gender gap in labour force participation. Women's skills and qualifications are not utilised to their full extent in Jordan. It is the desire to help solve this riddle, which is very present in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries – that is, why women's greater educational achievement has not translated into proportionally greater employment – that has motivated the ETF to undertake Women and Work project (2008–10) in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. The main aim of the project is to try and promote greater gender equality in education, training and employment in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia by encouraging the authorities, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to adopt more female-friendly policies in these areas, in line with the commitments made by the European Union (EU) and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries within the framework of

the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean and, in particular, the Istanbul Framework for Action for strengthening women's role in society. In order to do so, the study investigates women's opportunities in education, training and employment from a gender perspective in the three countries. The study concentrates on formal employment in the private sector – the focus is on formal employment because it offers opportunities for decent work that the informal sector does not, and on the private sector because public sector cuts in the countries studied mean it is this part of the economy that has the greatest potential for creating jobs. The study concentrates on two sectors – tourism and information and communication technologies (ICT) – chosen due to their priority status within national development strategies and for their potential to create economic growth and to generate employment. Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia were selected as case studies in the region as they are among the priority countries of the Italian government cooperation that co-financed the project, and of the European Union. Given that youth unemployment is a serious problem in the region, indicating problems of transition from education to work, it was decided that the study should focus on young women between 15 and 29 years of age. The study is based on a mixed methodology using both quantitative and qualitative data. It has three main components: desk research, a survey and focus groups. On the demand side, a face to face survey with employers in tourism and ICT was conducted to find out about female work in these case study sectors, and to explore employers' attitudes, skill requirements and recruitment policies towards women. On the supply side, focus group discussions were organised with young women in order to understand how the transition from education to work takes place, how education and career choices are made, how young women search for jobs, what their unemployment and initial work experiences are like, and what they perceive as the major difficulties and opportunities for joining the labour force. (Society, (2005)).

Results

In light of the foregoing, the obstacles to Jordanian women's political participation can be summarized as follows:-

1- The Jordanian social structure is a traditional structure characterized by the dominance of patriarchal authority with the support of family, religious, economic, educational and political institutions that reinforce traditional gender roles. Despite the changes that occurred in the functions of traditional units (such as the family and the tribe), these units still play a central role in resolving many aspects of political participation in favor of men and marginalizing the role of women. Women lack financial and moral support in their electoral campaigns, lack of support from informal political leaders, and their limited movement within society.

2- The prevailing Jordanian culture is a traditional and conservative culture, based on an organization of values, customs and traditions that stereotypes women through socialization and defines cultural beliefs that are appropriate and not appropriate for the roles of men and women. What is appropriate for women is their interest and care for their children, husband and family, and what is appropriate for men is their assumption of political and legislative positions and positions. Jordanian culture also includes a negative view of women's work in politics.

3- The instability and maturation of political participation in Jordanian society in general, and women's lack of experience in political work in particular, so women have been enslaved for decades from political participation in the country.

4- The weakness of civil society institutions in Jordan, which affects their role in activating and strengthening the political participation of citizens, male and female, as modern units that can be alternative units to traditional units.

5- Weak political awareness of Jordanian society members in general and women in particular about the importance of women's political participation.

6- Women's economic dependence on men due to their low participation in economic activity and men's ownership of scarce resources and resources in society.

7- Slow social change in the system of values, customs and traditions (culture), especially those related to the roles of women in political work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above, the researcher recommends the following:

1- Continuing to maintain the proportional representation of women in parliament and municipal councils and increasing proportional representation quotas to achieve justice at the level of the Kingdom's regions.

2- Adopting the number of votes instead of the percentage of voters in the electoral district to determine the women who win parliamentary seats on the basis of the proportional representation of women (the quota).

3- Reconsidering the electoral law by canceling the one-vote system to prevent the perpetuation of tribalism in the elections. The abolition of this system will encourage alliances and create new opportunities for women to compete in the parliamentary elections and accelerate social change in Jordanian society.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the chronically low participation of women in the Jordanian labour force requires a holistic approach. It is well noted by the reports analyzed that Jordan's low female labour force participation rate is a complex issue that cannot be addressed through stand-alone interventions. Indeed, the reports address a significant number of areas and successfully reflect the complexity of the barriers to women's workforce participation in Jordan. However, the lack of improvement over the past years also reveals the need for a more coordinated and strategic approach to address and monitor this. Although the extensive work on women's economic empowerment including women's economic participation have certainly improved the quality of women's employment, her social and economic engagement, control over resources, increased voice, agency, and overall quality of life in Jordan, there is room for improvement if one aims to achieve progress. Based on the evidence base the meta-analysis identifies a number of areas for consideration to enhance women's labour force participation.

Obstacles to Women's Political Participation

Jordanian society has witnessed rapid social and economic developments during the past four decades. Social and economic development programs have contributed to improving the educational and health levels of citizens. Women have made great achievements, especially in the fields of education and health. Despite the high level of education and the low rate of illiteracy among citizens (both male and female), women's participation is still Low in economic activity and very low in political participation.

The transformation of Jordanian society from an agricultural pastoral society to a service society undergoing a transitional phase between tradition and modernity. Tradition and modernity in various areas of life still coexist with each other. Also, some traditional units (family, tribe, region or region) still play a decisive role in many forms of life. Political participation (such as parliamentary and municipal elections).

Gender is one of the many variables that can determine the individual's position and participation in public life in its social, economic and political aspects in Jordanian society. Males enjoy power, authority and social status. The opportunities available to males to own scarce resources (especially political centers and centers of high social status more of opportunities available to women.

Certainly, the involvement of Jordanian women in political life helps to integrate them into the development process in a holistic sense. It is worth noting that the issue of Jordanian women's political participation is not an isolated or separate issue from the issues of Jordanian society. The experience of political participation in Jordan is one of the experiences of developing Arab countries that lack maturity, and stability. Therefore, promoting women's political participation is linked primarily to political development in society as a whole and to achieving political reform in it. Jordanian political life suffers from weak performance and affiliation with political parties, weakness of civil society organizations, their inability to compete with traditional units in society in the field of political

participation, and the failure of women to compete with men in elections at the national (House of Representatives) and local (municipalities) levels.

The relative absence of Jordanian women's political participation is not due to legal obstacles, but rather to structural and cultural obstacles that prevent the achievement of equality between men and women. Despite the reforms and political transformations that took place in the country during the past two decades, the political opportunities available to women remained very limited. Women failed miserably in free competition in the parliamentary and municipal elections, and this is a clear indication of the Jordanian society's lack of confidence in the ability of women to engage in political work that is the prerogative of men. To confront this reality, the Jordanian state has used some positive discrimination methods to compensate for this failure of Jordanian women in political participation, through the proportional representation of women in parliament (quota) or their appointment to municipal councils and some political and leadership positions. What is certain is that positive discrimination measures in favor of women do not mean Women necessarily possess political power and authority, due to their lack of popular bases, support for public opinion, and support for informal political leaders who influence the processes of political participation.

One of the striking things is that there is a clear difference between Jordanian citizens' attitudes and practices towards women's participation in public life in general and political life in particular. There are liberal and positive trends towards the political participation of Jordanian women, but the practices and behavior of individuals in this field are almost conservative and do not accept the political participation of women. The evidence for this is the failure of women in the parliamentary and municipal elections because they were not elected by men and women. On the contrary, there is a great congruence between the attitudes and practices of Jordanian citizens in some areas of basic participation, such as voting in elections due to the support of women and men's support to win these elections.

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