

Women in Development and Peace



- **Women and the Way to Social Development**
- **Women in Yemen and Environmental Changes**
- **Yemeni Women and Empowerment in the Field of Education**
- **Repercussions of the Conflict on the Situation of Women in Yemen**

Issue (6)

December - 2022

Yemen Information Center 2022
www.yemeninformation.org



Editorial Board:

Editorial board presidency:

- Dr. Mohammad Hadi Al-Akhrash

Editorial board

- Yasmine Abdulhafeez.
- Afrah Borji.

Translators:

- Abdullah Obad.
- Samar Faisal.

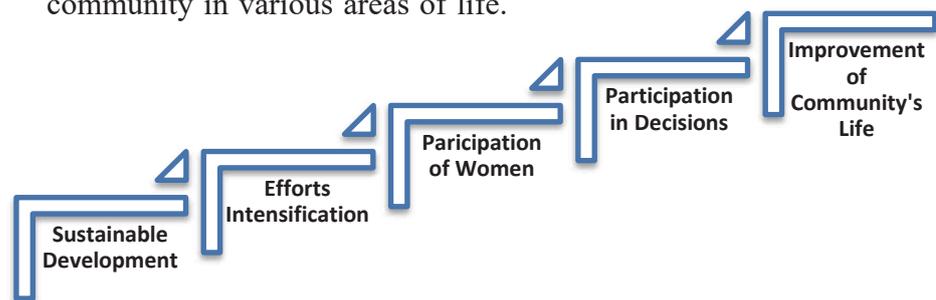
Proofreading:

- Hajar Al-Samei.

Women and the Way to Social Development:

When we talk about peace, we talk about economic, security and food stability. These can only be achieved through development, a large part of which falls on women. Development is defined as a set of means and methods that are used to improve the standard of life in various aspects through positive participation. Positive participation is not complete unless each of us realizes his role.

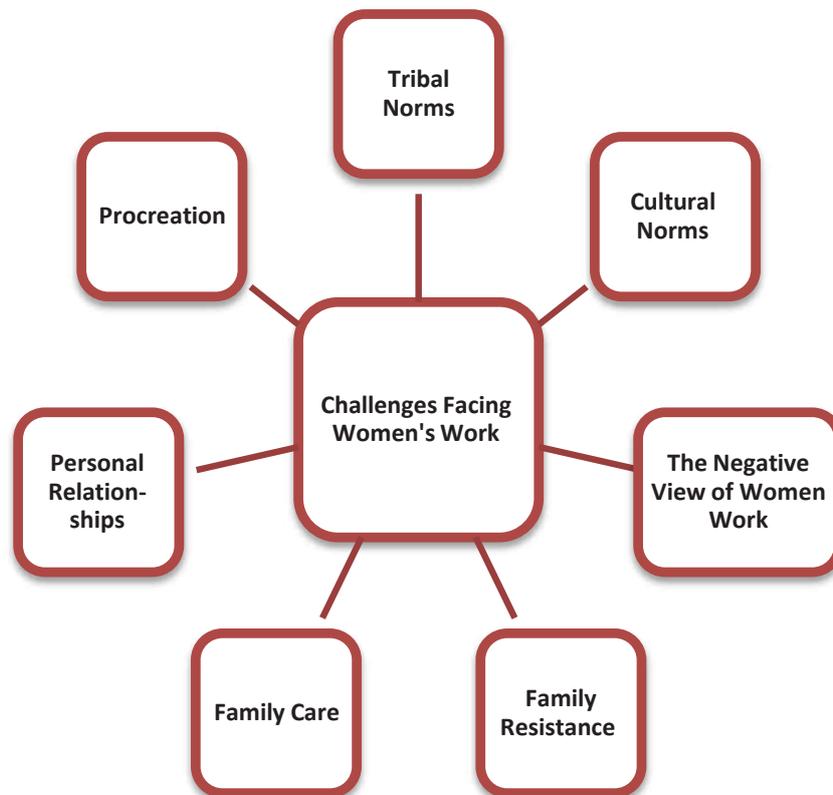
In light of the interest in sustainable development, women play an important role in concerted efforts, participation in achieving development and social responsibility and making all decisions related to society. Women's development mission is primarily a mission of realistic and community service that aims to improve the life of the community by contributing to the growth and development of the community in various areas of life.



Based on the realization that the most important types of development are human development. It can be achieved by preparing, educating and motivating women to give, innovate and increase their efficiency, in addition to developing their capabilities that is based studied methodology to raise the standard of life and make a change of thinking method. Hence, the importance of the great role of women presences in the development process that related to serving the human being and his activities on the earth.



indicates to significant gender-based disparities. Yemen's tribal and male norms are a key factor contributing to low women labor force participation. Women access to paid employment has been challenged by widely-held beliefs that women's roles are primarily domestic, entailing procreation and family care, as well as a negative view around women who work outside the home. When the International Labor Organization conducted a survey, most women indicated that they did not participate in labor force for personal reasons, such as family responsibilities or resistance from families, rather than due to the lack of available jobs.

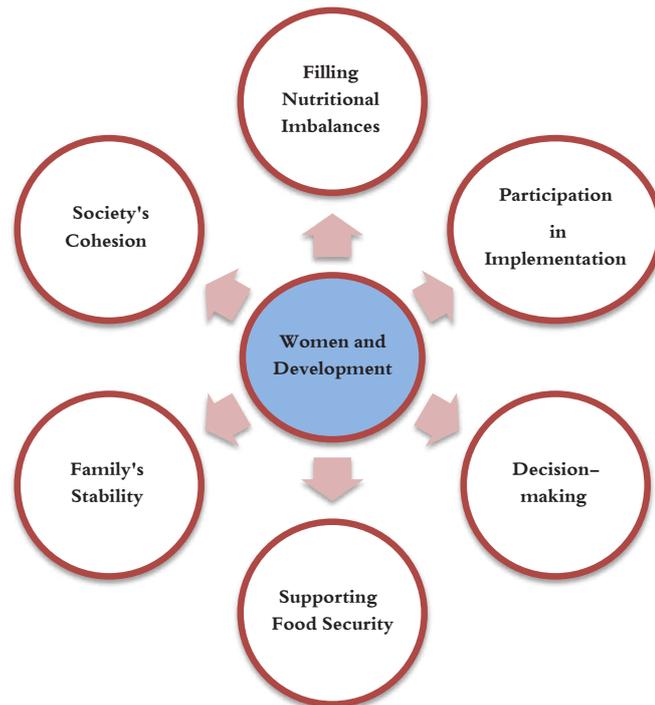


A study conducted in 2010 found that 76.9% of Yemeni women outside the labor force were economically inactive because they were engaged in household chores. There are those who believe that cultural customs limit women's interaction with the field of work outside the family. Female's employment options have been largely restricted to "feminine" occupations, such as clerks, teachers, and nurses. Often in Yemen, many jobs are recruited through personal relationships, as well as concern and fear for women from their families about what may happen to them in terms of annoyances or abusive harassment, depriving many of them of their right to work, and to participate in community development and growth.

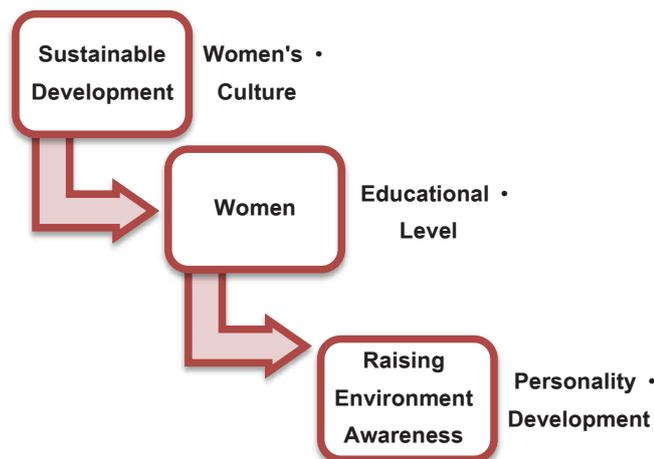


Women's contribution to the development process begins with their role in upbringing and in the home economy by rationalizing consumption, not being extravagant and finding alternatives in times of disasters and crises. They also have the ability to meet the psychological and material needs of her family members. They always set a strategy for employing the family budget and set priorities. They also try to create the appropriate environment for family members to carry out their roles in a positive and effective way.

Because of the importance of the human element, many countries have begun to pay more attention to women in assuming their responsibilities. Many studies have shown that women have a great positive influence in decision-making and participation in implementation. The positive influence of women also contributes to the performance of their active role and the transition from their traditional role, which limits their supportive achievements in the development and growth of society, to more roles. While it is noted that women are ingenious in filling nutritional imbalances, and providing alternatives to family members in cases of scarcity. The availability of food helps stability of the family, which means the stability of society. It is known that if the society is more stable, it will be more interconnected and cohesive, thus providing political and social stability, and supporting food security.



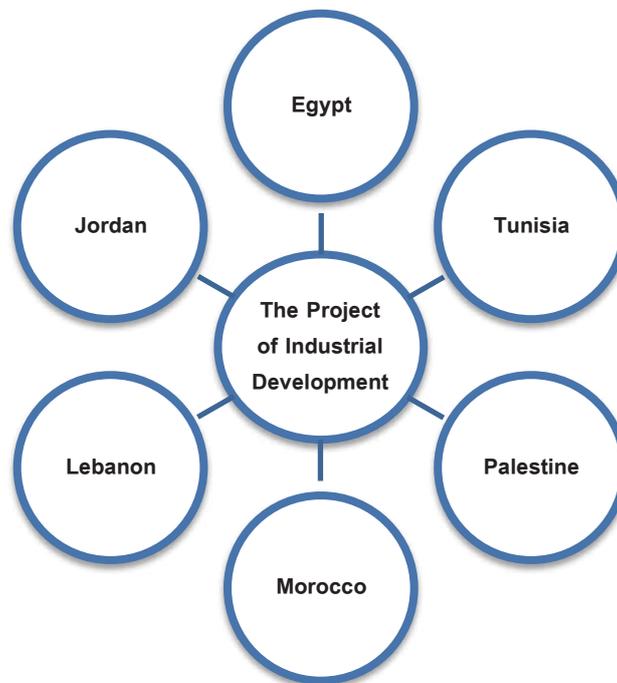
In order to achieve real development, it is necessary to work on raising environmental awareness among women, especially rural women. Their roles are affected by the extent of their culture, level of education, and the extent of their personality development. Education has a strong impact on the personality of women, which makes them able to evaluate the knowledge they receive in order to keep pace with the continuous global development. It is also necessary to raise awareness and educate community members about the importance of preserving the environment in all its forms that threaten human resources, weaken people and prevent them from work.



The progress of societies is measured by the level of women’s progress and their awareness of the great role they have to play, socially, economically and culturally. By performing this role, they are a truly influential forces on all aspects of life. This leads to achieving the concept of comprehensive development that achieves the renaissance of society and get it out of the traditional backward frameworks to more distinctive and positive frameworks.

Women Empowerment in Industrial Development:

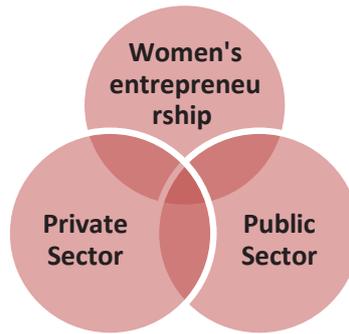
The process of empowering women in the field of comprehensive and sustainable industrial development at the level of the Arab region and North Africa represents an important humanitarian project implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The project aims to develop women's economic participation and thus create conditions for the overall and sustainable growth of the region by benefiting from the great potential of business women in many Arab countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.



This project is in line with the declared sustainable development goals worldwide.

A study was carried out on women's entrepreneurship in the six target countries within the framework of the project's planned activities. Its objectives focused on the following:

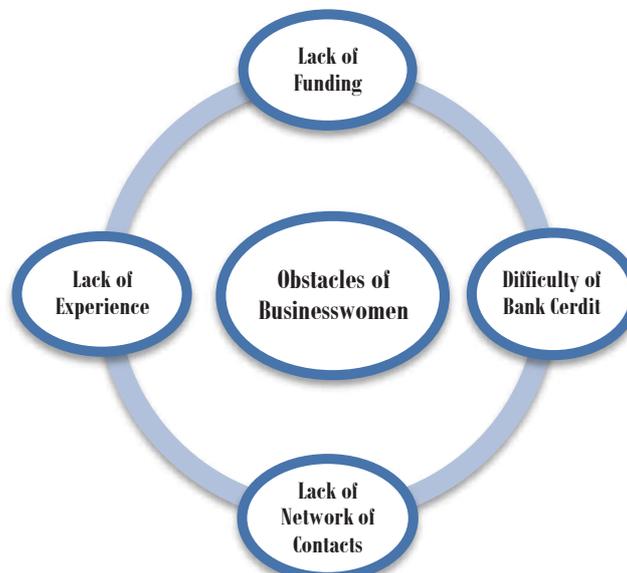
- 1- Providing an updated set of information on the status of the development of women's entrepreneurship in the target countries.
- 2- Identifying the challenges that women face when creating and developing their projects.
- 3- Providing recommendations for a business environment that is more suitable for women.
- 4- Providing evidence-based inputs to support dialogue between stakeholders from the public and private sectors.



The preliminary results of this study were summarized in the working document presented at the Women's Economic Empowerment Conference, which was organized by UNIDO in Milan on October 14, 2014. Since then, the second repetition of data collection was carried out in April and May 2016. The second phase of the study included some modifications to the methodology, including translating the questionnaire into Arabic, and hiring researchers. In addition to the previous group, 810 businesswomen were consulted, bringing the total number of participants to 1210.

Distinctive Characteristics of Women-Run Business Companies:

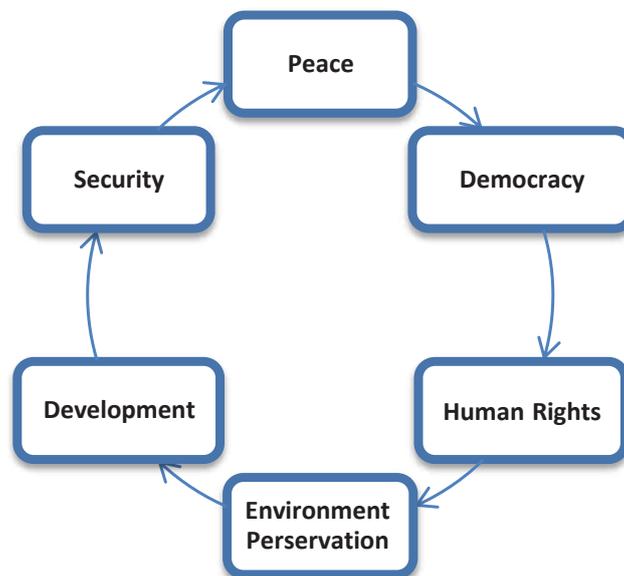
- ◆ They work mainly in the service, trade and craft sectors. A small percentage of them work in agriculture and manufacturing industries.
- ◆ The share of sole proprietorships is relatively low among 50% of Moroccan companies and 9% of Tunisian companies.
- ◆ The management structures of these companies and the number of shareholders are closely related to their size, and the shareholder structure depends primarily on the family.
- ◆ A large percentage of businesswomen, in Palestine 67.5% and Egypt 94.3%, carry out their economic activities from home.
- ◆ The main obstacles mentioned by businesswomen in the sample, in order of importance, were lack of funding, lack of experience, and lack of a network of contacts in some countries.



At the start-up stage, these tasks were primarily financed using the capital of the project, with significant differences between Egypt (8.80%) and Jordan (6.58%). There is also a large discrepancy in cases between Morocco (5.46%) and Tunisia (6.36%) on the one hand, and Palestine (8.14%) on the other. During the launch phase of the project, access to bank credit is very difficult. There are also different levels of participation according to the type of funding, as single businesswomen were more committed and got bank credit, while married women were more committed when they financed their businesses using equity capital.

Women in the Millennium Goals:

In September 2000, the heads and representatives of the member states of the United Nations met and approved the Millennium Declaration, which identified the central issues of the international community: peace, security, development, environmental preservation, human rights, and democracy. The Declaration also identifies a set of related and aspiring goals to achieve sustainable development.

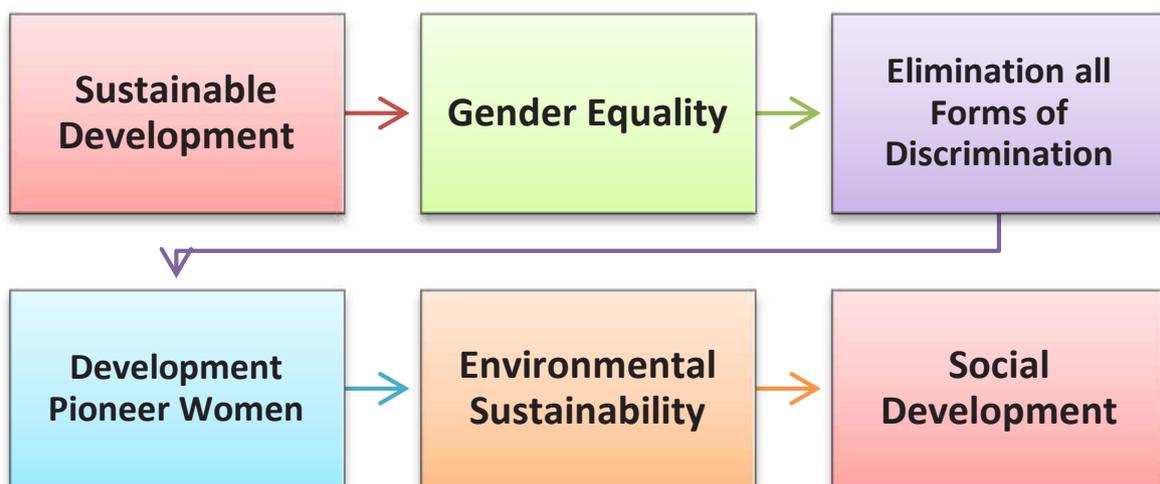


The Millennium Goals are based on the main goals and targets that were established at various United Nations conferences in the 1990s, such as the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 Cairo Population Conference, and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing 1995. The Millennium Declaration commits the international community and states members of the United Nations achieve eight main goals:

- 1- Elimination of extreme poverty and hunger.
- 2- Achieving universal primary education.
- 3- Promoting gender equality and women empowerment.
- 4- Reducing the infant mortality rate.
- 5- Improving mothers’ health.
- 6- Elimination of AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- 7- Ensuring a sustainable environment.
- 8- Establishing an international partnership for development.

Although the Millennium Goals limited gender equality and women’s empowerment issues to only one goal, which is the third goal. The Millennium Declaration affirms that governments “should promote gender equality and empowering women as an effective means to eliminate poverty, hunger and diseases, and achieve real sustainable development.” The declaration also discusses the equal rights and opportunities of men and women, and urges states to “resist all forms of violence against women and implement the convention against all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW).”

As countries adopted the new 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the world once again recognizes the important role of women in achieving sustainability. The report indicated that there is no social development without real gender equality, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. In addition, there is no environmental sustainability without an active role for women as important agents of change.



In a statement by Dr. Thani Al-Zeyoudi, the Director of the Department of Energy and Climate Affairs Change, which was mentioned in one of the media reports published on the United Nations News website, he noted, “women are the nucleus of society. They have a great impact on children and men, and can work to change our consumer culture. We can say that the prevailing thinking about environmental initiatives is only to reduce emissions. But, it has a great economic return represented in providing financial resources to the family, and then to society. Moreover, it can be developed and used in other areas to advance society, build and develop the sustainable cities, and accelerate economic growth in those countries.

However, what is the role of men in supporting women for a sustainable future? Dr. Nawal Al- Hawsani, the Director of Sustainability at Masdar and the Director of the Zayed Future Energy Prize, said: “the man is an important partner, and that is why the forum’s advisory board is not limited to the female component. The man is present in all the conference sessions, in order to find a solution to the challenges that we are facing, including the lack of women in many of these areas. This is a shared responsibility between women and men.”

As countries adopted the 17 new sustainable development goals for 2030, the fifth goal of them focused on “achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.” Based on this, the international community once again acknowledges the importance of the role of women in achieving sustainable development, as Rachel Kyte, Director-General of the “Sustainable Energy for All” initiative, said: “the Paris Agreement would not have been held without the strong presence of women among the various official delegations. They expressed the urgent need to act immediately to reduce climate change. I hope that in the new economy we will play a decisive role, and there will be many women who will play a decisive role in making decisions.”

This increased recognition of the dimensions of gender in development thought and policies during the 1990s created an agreement confirming that integrates gender in all aspects of development, in theory and practice, which is the best strategy for achieving gender equality. On the other hand, there is a clear connection between the Millennium Goals and other international mechanisms related to gender equality, such as: the Beijing Platform for Action, the CEDAW Convention (UNIFEM). Unlike the rest of the goals, the third goal is not specific to a special sector, because gender equality and women’s rights constitute the norm task for the rest of the goals.

References:

- 1- Nadia Mohammed Al-Bathani: The Role of Women in Social Development, Regional Network for Social Responsibility, <https://www.regionalsr.com>
- 2- Repercussions of the War on the Women Workforce, Policy Briefing, Yemen, July/2019.
- 3- The Role of Women in Achieving Development and Sustainable Future, United Nations website, 2016, <https://news.un.org>
- 4- Promoting Women Empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), 2017.
- 5- Women and Social and Economic Development, Yemeni Parliament Monitor, 2007.

The “UNMHA Mission” Expresses Its Concern about the Continuing Civilian Casualties due to the Remnants of War in Hodeidah

In a statement issued by the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement “UNMHA”, the mission expressed its deep concern about the continuous deaths and injuries among civilians due to explosive and deadly ordnances in Hodeidah Governorate, west of Yemen. The Mission reported 15 casualties due to landmines and explosive remnants of war, including the death of 1 child and the injury of 12 children.



The UN mission noted that this unfortunate outcome reminds us with the devastating impacts of the remnants of war on the civilian population in the governorate. It renewed its call to take urgent and realistic measures to cleanse the mine-contaminated areas. The mission affirmed its commitment to support and assist the parties, and provide coordination and technical support for this, including support for awareness of landmines risks and explosive remnants of war.¹

Continuation of Humanitarian Aid to Yemen due to the Conflict and the Aggravated Human Suffering

Many humanitarian organizations continue to deliver assistance to affected people by the war and minimize human suffering inside Yemen, in

1- United Nation Website, Peace and Security, <https://news.un.org>

light of the difficult reality full of challenges due to economic decline, conflict, natural disasters and various social and political impediments. In the first half of 2022, about 170 humanitarian organizations delivered aid to more than 11 million people every month, according to reports on the situation in Yemen.



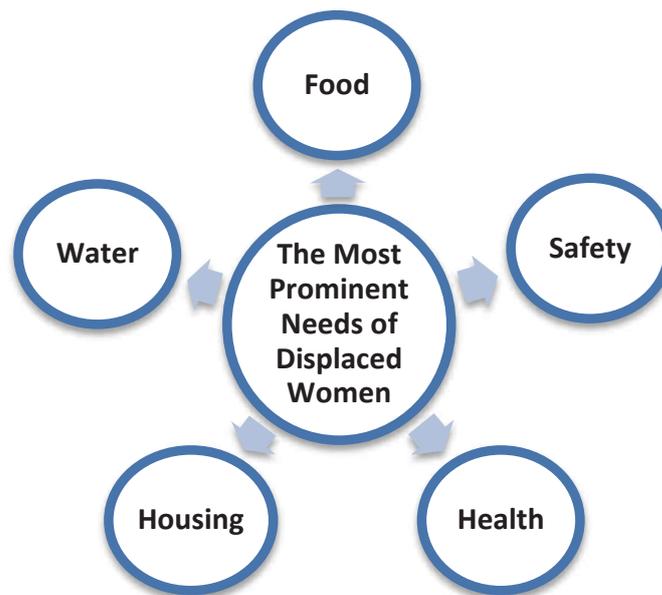
However, the number of people received aid remained low due to the severe lack of funding. Aid reached an average of 9,300,000 people per month. Over 3,900,000 people were provided with water, sanitation and hygiene services. On the other hand, over 574,000 people were supported with healthcare services and nearly half a million people received nutritional support.²

It is worth noting that despite the continuous attempts of humanitarian support provided by humanitarian organizations in Yemen, millions of Yemeni families are still in dire need for the minimum necessities of life, and are suffering from difficult economic conditions. The details of the lives of many of these families speak of painful human scenes as a result of the years-long conflict inside Yemen.

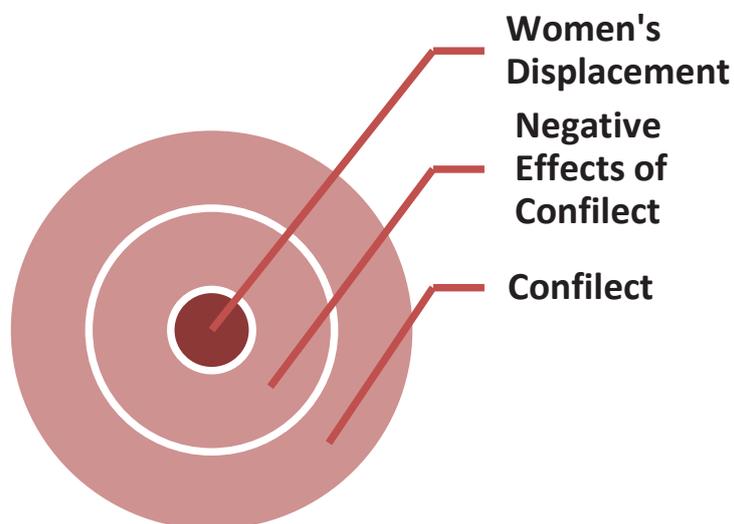
2- Report about Situation, Yemen, <https://reports.unocha.org>

Women in Yemen and Environmental Changes:

The United Nations estimates that over 4,600,000 women urgently need some form of humanitarian assistance (food, water, housing, health, etc.), including nearly 4 million internally displaced women across Yemen. They face daily risks in search for safety and shelter. They also encounter more difficulties and deprivation of the basic requirements of life.

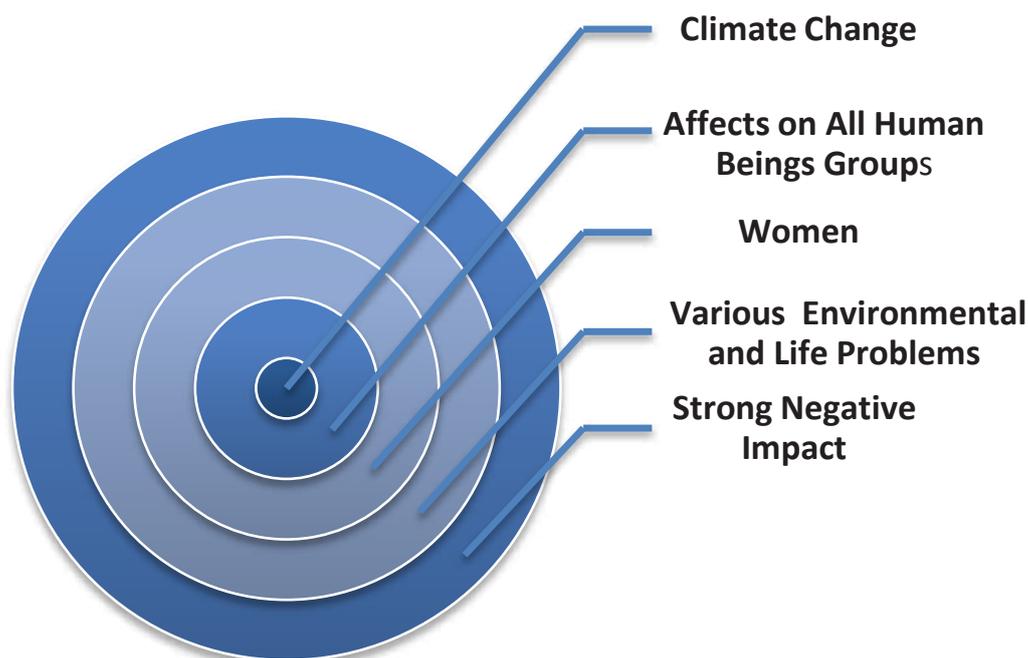


It is certain that women and girls in Yemen are the most affected groups by the ongoing conflict and its consequences, such as displacement, deprivation of services and daily suffering in all aspects of life. In addition, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the dire conditions of women and girls who are already suffering from unemployment and disproportionate loss of livelihoods. These increasing crises have pushed them to levels below the extreme poverty line and hunger, leading to increase their vulnerability.



Climate Change and its Problems:

The various changes of climate affect all human beings, but it is the world's poorest peoples, with their different groups, primarily women, who bear the impact of disasters and environmental, economic and social problems. At the same time, women are the most affected of disasters. They are the important decision-makers at home about energy and waste. So, climate action cannot be successful or sustainable if it does not involve women.



For example, in some parts of Africa, women were growing concerned and discouraged by increasing degradation of land and natural resource, which threatened their livelihoods in the agricultural field. The United Nations program introduced sustainable agriculture techniques to help them modernize their farming techniques and master environmental conservation practices.

Esmeralda is a girl from Peru. She works as a delegate of the National Movement for Children and Adolescents Working Organizers in Peru. She tells about the impact of climate change. Her family are farmers accustomed to living with the effects of climate change on a daily basis. She said: “family farming is not what it used to be. Our production has fallen. It is replaced by large corporations that use toxic fertilizers. Climate change and other drastic changes in temperatures cause frost, forcing women and girls to work hard for income and resources for their families.”

While speaking about the impact of climate change on women, Esmeralda emphasized that the lack of drinking water forced many of them to look for water in rivers or in the depths

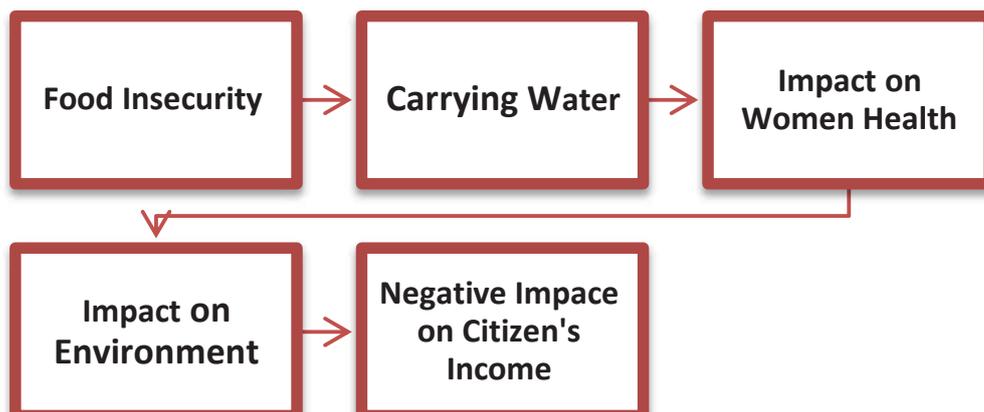
of forests. This increases their risk of being victims of sexual violence. She added that in areas of illegal logging, women and girls are a prime target for criminal groups. Many of them have been lost in these areas.

Locally, climate change has a strong impact on Yemeni women's access to water, food and energy, as it is a war-devastated country. This negative impact leaves women vulnerable to the consequences of the absence of vital resources, especially rural women who depend entirely on natural and agricultural resources for their livelihood. This has escalated the high levels of women suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition.



Water insecurity is a constant concern for Yemenis, particularly for women and girls who are responsible for collecting and fetching water. Many of them walk long distances in some areas for 6 or more hours per day, while others resort to drinking from unclean sources, or pay large amounts of money to get water.

The disparity in seasonal rainfall across the country due to climate change leads to soil erosion and environmental degradation, which leads to the loss of fertile topsoil. This directly affects the main source of income for rural Yemenis, who constitute 70% of the total country's population (30 million).

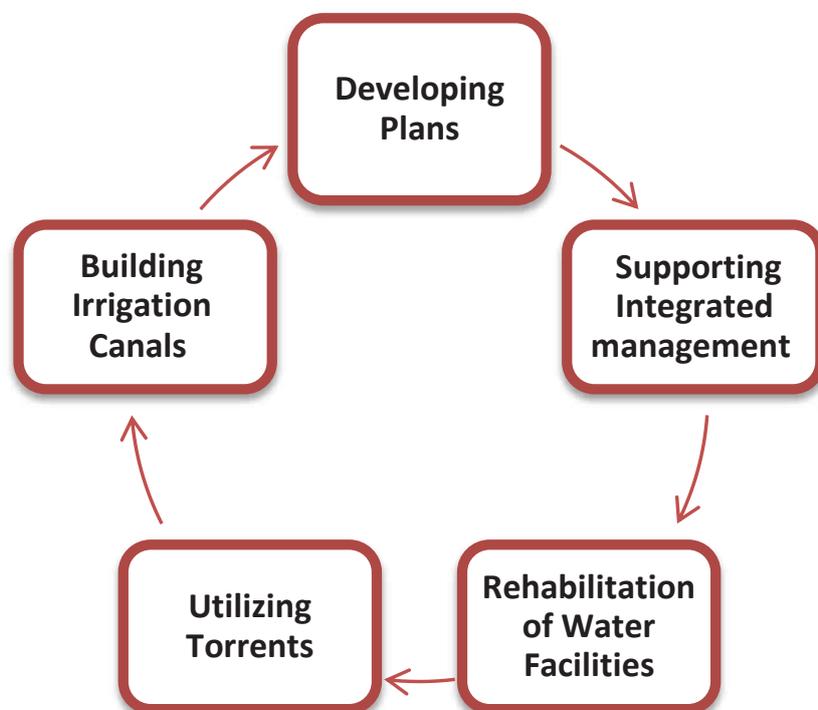


Overcoming Difficulties:

A number of UN humanitarian programs, led by the United Nations Development Program in Yemen, focused on the main role of women in building capacity to deal with climate change. This program put women at the center of the response to empower them to face challenges and lead local development with their participation in the local community through decision-making and implementation processes.

By leading the Women's Climate Justice Action Coalitions, the United Nations Development Program in Yemen is trying to mitigate the impacts of climate change on women in relation to water, food and energy and align the contribution of both women and men.

Based on the suffering of the Yemeni rural community from water scarcity because it depends heavily on seasonal rainfall, the United Nations Program has sought lasting solutions to mitigate and overcome the negative effects of water scarcity resulting from climate change. Consequently, the program tried to develop rainwater collecting plans, build irrigation canals and networks, utilize flood water irrigation, support integrated watershed management practices and reclaiming degraded agricultural lands. In 2021, the United Nations Program in Yemen supported the rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities in the cities of Aden and Mukalla, benefiting more than 130,000 people.



These interventions have improved the water and sanitation fields. They ensured that women and girls have access to safe and quality water sources. They also try to enhance the physical and psychological health of rural women, as they would not have to fetch water from far places anymore.

With the prevalent food insecurity in Yemen, women's participation is becoming more important in preventing hunger and malnutrition and trying to strengthen resilience in food security. The United Nations Development Program supported the rehabilitation of more than 24,000 hectares of agricultural land, benefiting 50% of women. Moreover, 750 women farmers were trained on how to use seeds, fertilizers and productive agricultural methods.

Building towards Sustainability:

The Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project - World Bank, with the support of the United Nations Development Program, led to the rehabilitation of irrigation canals and agricultural terraces, and the construction of flood protection walls, benefiting nearly 4,000 women. The program helped about 3,000 families to establish private home gardens that benefited about 1,500 women. The United Nations Development Program also supported more than 275,000 women and about 404,000 children with cash-for-nutrition services.

Energy is essential for the daily life of Yemeni women, in particular for the women who depend on energy for livelihoods, including the small food industries that are led by women. Many women have benefited from clean energy as they have access to uninterrupted services in health centers, schools and other public services.

Small solar power grid business, run by women, was established with the support of the Livelihood and Food Security Support Program in Yemen. It was called "Rural Resilience" to provide energy supplies to households and markets. It supported 185,000 families, including 38% families headed by women. They have become able to access clean energy sources for lighting and other purposes.

Continuing efforts to enhance the role of women and mitigate climate change problems for women is a required and urgent task. An integrated approach has been adopted focusing on the water, food and energy sectors to build resilience to climate change and resilience, coordinate interventions, and improve sustainability in all areas. As women work to overcome vulnerabilities, affirm productive roles and increase decision-making opportunities, they can also be leaders in action on climate change in Yemen. In other words, they can participate in leading the world towards a sustainable future.

References:

- 1- Women as Agents of Change, Climate Action, United Nations <https://www.un.org>
- 2- Yemeni Women, Facing Climate Change and Leading Toward Yemen's Future 2022: <https://www.undp.org>
- 3- Climate Change Exacerbates Violence Against Women and Girls, Human Rights, United Nations website July 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org>

Yemeni Women and Empowerment in the Field of Education:

Women Empowerment in education means that more than 55% of the world's 80 million women have to be represented in the educational field. The number is expected to increase further, as studies indicate. The abundance of female teachers is particularly apparent in the nursery school and the primary stage. This enhances their roles in personality development. There are already 94% girls in pre-primary stages, 67% in elementary education and 54% in secondary education. In the Arab World, these figures largely correspond with global statistics. The figures indicate that the female component has advanced to 64% of primary education and 48% of secondary education, compared to 38% and 29%, respectively, in 1970.



Important Principles in Women Empowerment:

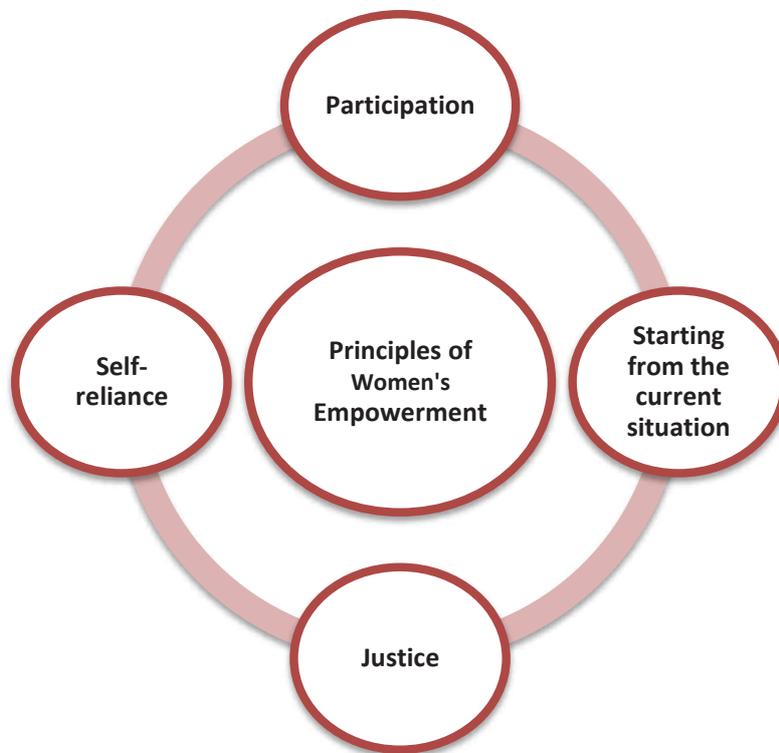
Every field of life must be based on a number of principles. Hence, the process of women's empowerment had to be based on a number of important foundations and principles that revolve around the following:

- 1- Participation: is the most important principle of empowerment because it builds the basis of the participation process on the part of women, sense their problems and participating in solving them based on their capabilities and investing their resources.
- 2- Self-reliance: the empowerment approach seeks to work on developing women's personal

capabilities in order to be able to face her problems and with the least possibilities available to her.

3- Social justice: the empowerment approach seeks to bring about and achieve equality and justice among members of society, and to defend disadvantaged and weak individuals in an objective manner away from personal bias.

4- Starting from the current situation: empowerment deals with women as they are, and trying to help them develop their capabilities and deal with them according to their available resources only, then try to develop them and find other sources to support them.



In different societies, being a woman is a challenge in itself. Yemen is a good example of such challenge. As a male-dominated society which is heavily influenced by tribal traditions and religious values, women are raised to play specific roles in life: wives and mothers. It may even go beyond to be a farmer or shepherd in her area. The process of education and career development remains not important for most. Many parents are also likely to invest any income they do have in their sons' educating because they are expected to support their families later in, unlike their daughters.

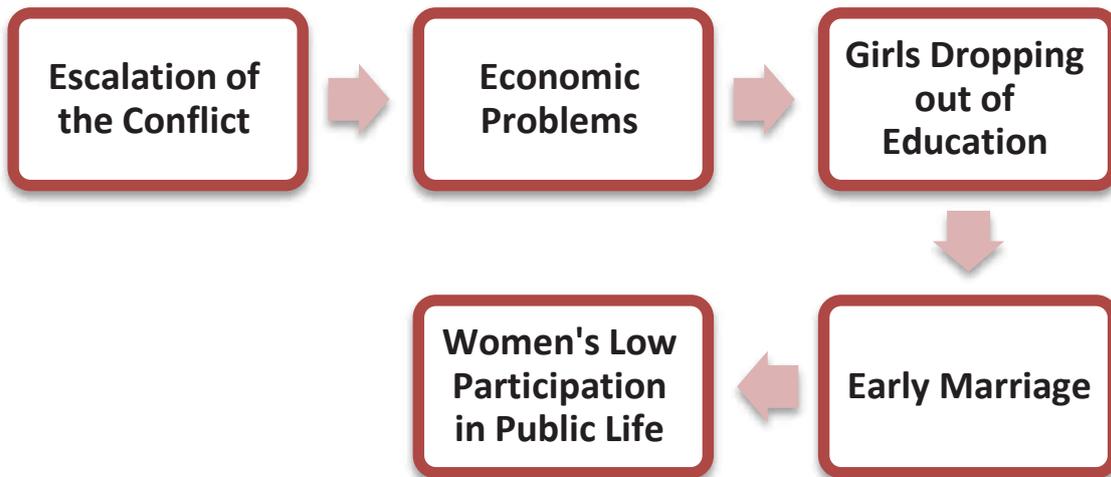
It is also difficult for women to be independent in their daily life because their male relatives are able to shape their lives socially and financially. Many Yemeni women cannot leave their houses, apply for jobs, or even visit their extended families without the permission of the man.

A Yemeni woman recounts her experience in this, and in the impacts of restrictive socio-cultural traditions of women. She said, “although my immediate family supported my desire to continue higher education via a university summer course abroad, my family did not agree. They tried to discourage my father’s decision, arguing that it went against our cultural, tribal and religious norms for woman to travel without a male guardian. What was most disappointing was that it was not only my male relatives who took this stance, but also women. Fortunately, my father allowed me to move on. Anyway, it was a formative experience. Living alone outside my hometown changed me significantly, opening my eyes to how women in other societies could occupy different roles in society and prompting me to pursue a post-graduate degree and a career as a researcher.”

Some specialists and researchers indicate that the main obstacle to education for Yemeni women, especially in the countryside, is when they reach the age of puberty, in many peoples’ view. Younger girls have a modestly high educational attainment rate, but this falls significantly around puberty. At this age, most parents require their daughters to start wearing the veil (hijab) and start monitoring their interaction with the opposite sex, with various freedoms gradually reduce. This is because any hint of sexual activity outside marriage would damage the girl’s social standing and her family. Hence, many parents are keen to avoid mixing between the sexes in their daughters’ schools to avoid any interaction with boys. This is confirmed by figures which date back to 2016. The number of girls enrolled in primary schools was approximately 90%, but their numbers in secondary schools are reduced to approximately 40%.

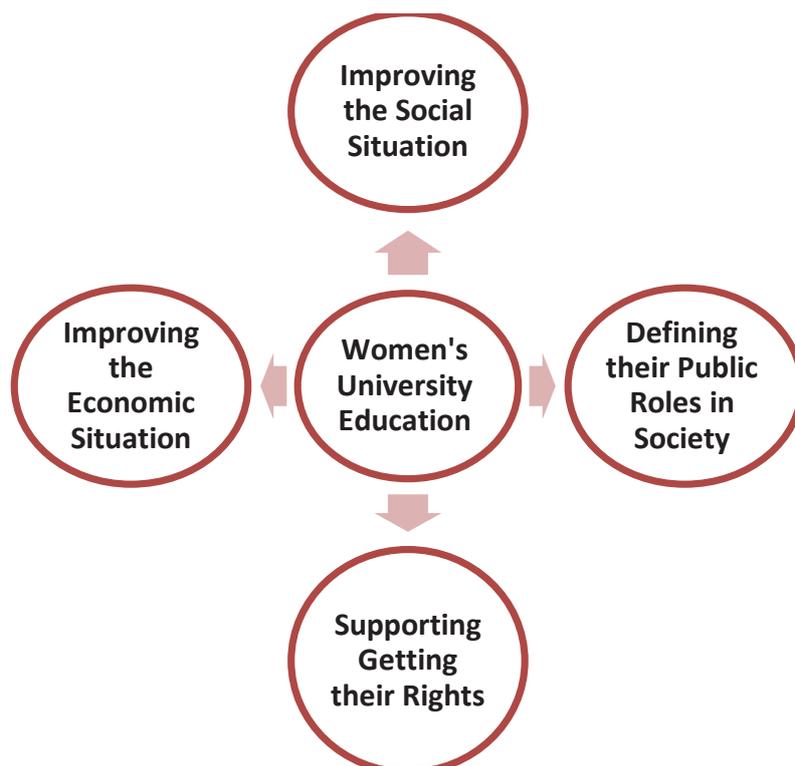
Early marriage is seen as a major factor behind the high rates of dropping out of education, and this may be due to economic situations. A study by the Monitoring and Protection Center of the Seyaj Organization for Childhood showed that more than 60% of Yemeni girls got married before the age of 18, while others got married before the age of 15, at a rate ranging between 30% and 40%. The conflict has exacerbated this further by reducing families’ incomes. According to UNICEF, before the crisis began, half of the girls got married before the age of 18, a figure which has increased to two-thirds in the current period. For married women who were fortunate enough to continue their studies to secondary school, their roles as wives continue to take priority over education issues.

On the other hand, the responsibilities associated with marriage, such as pregnancy, childcare, cooking, and cleaning, are usually too much to handle in addition to the burdens of education, especially if they live with their husband’s extended family. As a result, most women become unable to participate in the country’s wider public and political life, because their lives now revolve around their husbands, children, social events and housework.



University Education and Women’s Empowerment:

Although the number of universities in Yemen has increased significantly, the enrollment of women in university education remains very low. According to the latest available data from 2011, the females enrollment rate in higher education was only 6% of the total female adults at university education age. Only a third of those enrolled in higher education were females. These rates have decreased over the past six years of conflict. In addition, most of the female students study in limited majors to avoid mixed-gender education environment, according to their views. For example, when it comes to choosing a major, most families prefer to enroll their daughters in the field of education because most female teachers have limited contact with men. In contrast, very few women enroll in public policy majors.



University education plays a significant role in improving the social and economic conditions of women in society and provides them with the important needs to obtain their plundered rights. In general, it also affects determining the roles women are able to perform outside their homes. If female access to higher education does not increase, Yemeni women's political participation is also unlikely to increase.

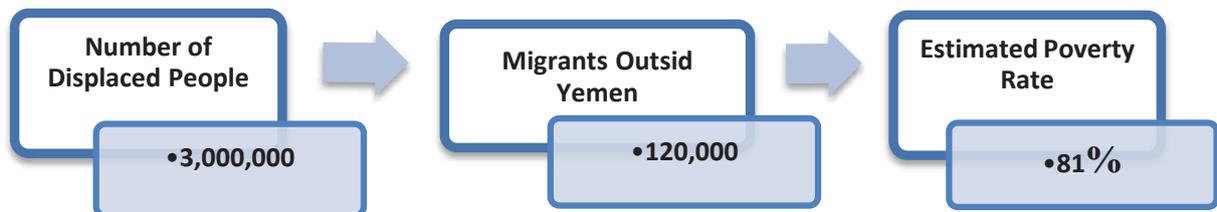
In all cases, the educational process is extremely important for girls. It is difficult to empower women and confirm their position without education, whether at the level of their maturity in dealing with life or at the level of demanding their rights. Education helps confirm their required role in the reality of life and at the level of their positive participation with their male colleagues in the areas of comprehensive development to develop their nation and their country. All of this occurs in light of the successive global changes affecting the lives of peoples.

References:

- 1- Women Empowerment, 132022/3/: <https://www.edu-nation.net>
- 2- Yemeni Women in Wartime, Information and Rehabilitation Center for Human Rights: <https://hritc.co/wp-content>
- 3- Asmaa Abu Al-Majd, Education: A Portal for Women Empowerment, Edu Fikra website, 2022.
- 4- Higher Education: the Way to Women Empowerment: <https://www.yemenpolicy.org>

Repercussions of the Conflict on the Situation of Women in Yemen:

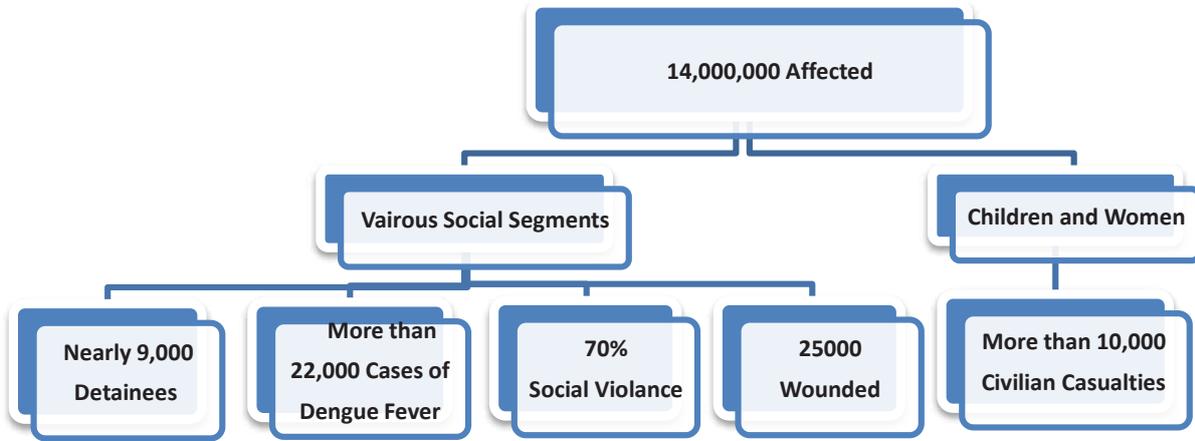
At the headquarter of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Yemeni coalition organized a series of scientific meetings. One of them referred to the situation of Yemeni women at the stage of the conflict in Yemen. The Director of the Yemen Program at the Arab Organization for Human Rights, Nabeel Abdulhafeez, discussed in this meeting the repercussions of the conflict in Yemen on economic and social rights, noting that the approximate number of internally displaced people due to conflict and war has reached about 3,000,000, and the number of migrants outside Yemen has reached to 120,000. While the poverty level in Yemen has reached more than 81% of the total population.



Abdulhafeez explained that the statistics indicate that more than 14,000,000 people have been in the stage of food insecurity. The dead and wounded civilians in the conflict during a year and a half have reached nearly 10,000 people, 30% of whom are children and women. He also added, «the number of wounded and injured reached more than 25,000, and nearly 9,000 citizens are illegally detained or forcibly disappeared.»

On the health level, Abdulhafeez pointed out that many diseases have spread due to the lack of medicine and the suspension of many health facilities, which has led to an increase in the number of people with dengue fever to more than 22,000 cases. There has been also an increase in the number of people suffering from cancer, liver diseases, diabetes, and the death of many of them due to the siege and war.

Humanitarian reports also indicated that nearly 5,000,000 Yemeni women and girls of childbearing age suffer from the absence of reproductive health services. In September, 2021, the United Nations Population Fund reported that every 2 hours a woman dies in Yemen due to complications of childbirth. It also claimed that the phenomenon of underage marriage is on increase in poor families as long as the conflict continues.



Social activist Rasha Jarhoun spoke about the increase in cases of social violence, which amounted to about 70%, in light of a wide gap in the funding process for women’s protection programs. As journalist Bushra Al-Amiri presented the image of women covered by the media in the context of conflict and war, which came to corrupt the achievement of Yemeni women over many years. So, this doubled their suffering, made their fate ambiguous amid clear disregard by all the forces surrounding them. She indicated that: “the war is threatening their right of life, exposing them to displacement, migration, raids, and other violations. It has also led to other problems, such as: dropping out of thousands of female students from education, poverty, unemployment, beggary, and the absence of guarantees for the success of any dialogue between the national forces.”



At the same time, some activists denounced the weak role of many civil society organizations concerned with women's issues. The organizations repeat statements, express disapproval, and conduct protests on gender and human rights issues. However, they remain completely and shamefully silent and never issue any statements condemning violation of women's rights, especially activists, media professionals and women of civil society.

Jarhoum indicated that some media outlets deliberately distort the image of women and depict them as supporters of war who sacrifice their children and money. These means cancel and ignore the image of Yemeni women that has been ingrained in the minds since the time of Queen Belqees, striving for peace and coexistence.

She also added that "some parties do not hesitate to raid and break into homes and violate their sanctities. The tribal customs preserve many of the rights of women that are not provided by Yemeni law. They describe violators as perpetrators of the "black defect". It is tribally known that every assault on women, whatever its cause or its justification and whoever commits it shall be punished with a complete boycott of all members of society."

The long lasting conflict inside Yemen, and the difficult social conditions faced by many families, prompted many women to go to the labor market in different ways. Some of them started establishing small projects from their homes, most of the time. Some others resorted to strenuous and low-paid physical work in line with the complex economic conditions or because of the loss of the man who supports the family. On the other hand, the war imposed additional restrictions on the previously limited participation of women in the labor market. Hence, some parties in this aspect recommended that micro-economic initiatives to attract women to the labor market shall be accompanied by long-term efforts to address the social and economic structures that constrained the transformation of women into the labor force in the last period.



Interventions should be administered in local consultation with women and men from all segments. Furthermore, they should promote good-income employment opportunities for women, while ensuring safety and social protection. On the other hand, the quota system can give women an active role in the recovery and reconstruction stages. Women must participate in the various levels of decision-making, both in peace-building efforts and post-conflict reconstruction in Yemen.



References:

- 1- Women Living in the Worst Catastrophic Situation in History, Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations, <https://ymhrv.co>.
- 2- Fawzia Al-Ammar, et al. Implications of War on the Female Workforce, Policy Brief, July/2019
- 3- Global Report, Yemen, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org>.



YIC@yemeninformation.org
yemeninformation.org