

The Impact of the Conflict on Women in Yemen

Women Mine Victims in Yemen: A Willpower to Confront Imminent Death

Increase in Illiteracy Rates Among Yemeni Women: A Prominent Effect of the Conflict

The Role of International Organizations in Providing Support and Protection for Conflict-Affected Women

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In the Face of Conflict, Yemeni Women Display Resilience and Determination for Survival

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has had significant negative effects on various aspects of life, including the economic and local production sectors, leading to the country's economic decline and backwardness. Yemeni women are an integral part of Yemeni society and play an important role in many fields, including the economic sector. However, they face difficulty in obtaining the necessary financial resources to start their own businesses or develop their current ones. This is a major obstacle to local women's production, as women can be an important source of revitalizing and enhancing the local economy despite the frightening decline it has experienced over the past nine years.

By: Ahmed Bajoaim
Women in Development and Peace

International Efforts

In this context, the World Bank and the United Nations Office have adopted a project to empower wo-

men entrepreneurs in Yemen. This came through a report prepared by the World Bank Blogs website on July 3, 2023, which aims to serve women-owned projects amidst the emergency project for integrated urban services in the country, to revive the women's economic pro-

jects affected by the conflict and help them.

The project is implemented in two stages, and work on the first stage began at the beginning of 2021 by identifying women-owned businesses and facilities, limiting and examining them, and then

developing a comprehensive training program implemented in the middle of the same year, and one million US dollars were allocated to this project.

The report, titled "Yemeni women are seizing economic opportunities in their conflict-torn country despite all odds," stated that this project aims to increase purchases of goods from women-owned businesses and facilities, which achieves growth and success for working women in the economy, as well as prosperity for the Yemeni economy as a whole.

In the second phase of the pro-

ject, 29 women-owned facilities were trained, and 24 of those facilities were able to register as accredited suppliers. In addition, the project awarded contracts worth 882 thousand dollars to seven women-owned companies, three of which are in Sana'a, two in Aden, and two in Hadhramout, in order to alleviate the impact of the conflict on Yemeni women and enhance their economic status.

On this side, the resident representative of the United Nations Development Program in Yemen, Zeina Al-Ahmad, said on the occasion of Inter- continuepage2

national Women's Day, "We have witnessed a significant improvement for Yemeni women on all levels during the recent period," referring to a report issued by the development program entitled 'Yemeni Women: Leadership Towards the Future' on March 16, 2023. The program recognizes the critical role played by Yemeni women in the growth of business and economic activities, and the promotion of governance, emphasizing its importance in making a difference within internal or external communities. The development program has provided Yemeni women with several courses to develop their abilities so that they can successfully manage their own projects and try to reduce the gender gap.

Experts' Perspectives

According to Adila Al-Saadi, the director of the productive family centers and community development at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor office in Hadhramout, the conflict has had a significant economic impact on productive families across the country. This is due to the decline in purchasing power for many families as a result of the poor economic situation that most Yemeni people have been suffering from in recent years. This has led to a decrease in people's interest in buying products, which has negatively affected the sustainability of productive families who own small businesses with limited financial returns. Despite the intervention of various international and local organizations through different projects, they have not been able to withstand for long periods.

Al-Saadi explained that the management of productive family centers and community development seeks to alleviate the economic effects of the bloody conflicts that Yemen has been witnessing for nine years, by providing training and qualification courses in several fields, including: pastries, hairdressing, sewing and embroidery, henna, and others.

The administration, which is affiliated with the Office of Social Affairs and Labor, targeted since January until October 2023 about 600 women working within productive families on the coast of Hadhramout, as well as involving many of them in local exhibitions with the aim of marketing their products, providing job opportunities for them, and improving the level of income. In addition, the Office of Social Affairs seeks to open marketing centers for productive families and provide all facilities in this field.

Director of the Women's Business Department at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Hadhramout, Nada bin Zaidan, explains that the indirect effects of the conflict on women in the economic side are significant, especially for novice businesswomen, products, or workers. The most prominent of these are the cessation of the work activity of many



The conflict has deprived many women of their sole source of income

of them due to their inability to bear the high costs of supplies, weak sales, and the continued collapse in the value of the local currency, and the difficulty of living. Also, the displacement factor from one area to another causes many productive families to lose many customers and market presence (trade name), and some of them lose their capital as a result of being exposed to the direct effects of the conflict, and after moving to another area, they start from scratch.

Nada bin Zaidan adds, "To alleviate the economic situation that working women suffer from, and the high rents from time to time, especially in Hadhramout, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce is making tremendous efforts. Perhaps its most prominent interventions are the qualification of businesswomen and productive families and training them on the electronic market, and the establishment of workshops. It also works on improving the situation of working women coming from displacement areas and providing the appropriate environment for them, and creating a name or presence for them in the market that helps them to launch and compete. The chamber also plays a pivotal role between international organizations, donors, businesswomen, and productive families in providing courses, activities, and needs that help Yemeni working women and encourage them to meet them; the women's section of the chamber has 178 members and a commercial register for women in the governorate.

Zahraa Is'haq, the director of the Working Women Development Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in the Hadhramout coast, points out that the economic effects of the conflict on working women have deprived many women of their only source of income. This occurs either through direct effects, especially

in unstable areas where their projects were destroyed, and some women became victims, or through indirect effects, with Hadhramout being the most prominent example. Women suffer from a lack of job opportunities and high unemployment rates. All of this is compounded by the difficulty of the living situation. Productive and manufacturing women also face many challenges in this field.

Zahraa Is'haq continues, "One of the most important challenges is the instability of the exchange rates of the local currency, which results in significant losses to women's sources of income, in addition to the decline in demand for these products. Despite this, the Working Women Development Department is making tremendous efforts to alleviate these effects by raising public awareness of issues related to working women's rights and duties. Additionally, they provide guidance and counseling through courses that focus on studying the market, its requirements, and how to market products using modern and possible means. The department also resolves disputes between working women and other entities, monitors and evaluates working women, and improves their work using available and possible methods.

Models

Um Yasin has been selling scrap and children's toys since 2012. She sits on the ground to sell her modest goods on the street adjacent to her house in Al-Sharj area of Al-Mukalla city every evening except Friday, when she moves to the "platform" exhibition area, where families gather for picnics and she sells her goods there.

Um Yasin says, "I am a mother of four children and their only provider, because my husband died about 15 years ago. After the conflict between the Yemeni parties, we, the poor and low-income

people, were indirectly affected. The most prominent of these effects are the collapse of the local economy, the continuous decline of the Yemeni Riyal, and the insane rise in the prices of food and basic commodities. All of this has exacerbated the living conditions of low-income people such as simple working women."

She continues, "My average income per day is approximately 5,000 Yemeni Riyals, which goes mostly to household expenses, while the capital for scrap does not exceed 135,000 Riyals, and the capital weakens due to the rise in wholesale prices and the collapse of exchange rates."

She confirms that at the beginning of 2023, her goods' capital was about 200,000 Riyals. Therefore, the indirect economic effects of the conflict have exhausted Um Yasin and many of her fellow working women in small and limited businesses. The situation of people like them requires urgent intervention by donors before their only job opportunity collapses, and they become a burden on society in light of the difficult and worsening living and economic conditions that most Yemenis suffer from.

Loss of Work

Adila Al-Saadi describes that the deteriorating economic conditions and the low level of wages and income have deprived many women of their simple businesses, placing them outside the labor market. This is one of the effects of armed conflicts. Some women's products did not receive much demand from people due to several factors, including the high cost of work requirements such as preparation tools, equipment, and rent, in addition to the situation that most of the society has reached, which forced them to abandon the purchase of non-essential goods to an extreme degree. However, some productive families are still struggling with all their might and strong will to improve their living conditions.

Zahraa Is'haq adds that many women have left their jobs in unstable areas due to conflicts, either because of fear for themselves and their families or due to the lack of security. Additionally, low wages and salaries that do not cover their basic needs compel them to search for other jobs, some of which may not match their mindset, just to secure the minimum necessary expenses. Some productive families have also lost their own projects in markets or public areas due to increased rents and low demand, resulting in a clear deficit. Some women have left their profession and resorted to searching for other work, while others have continued their projects from home and promoted their products through social media.

According to a recent report presented by BBC on April 17, 2023, titled "Yemen conflict: How women struggle every day to survive?", families supported by women in Yemen face the highest levels of food insecurity due to the decline in the percentage of women working outside the home. A very small percentage of women work in markets and commercial places. The report also indicated that the United Nations Population Fund estimates that one-third of displaced families in Yemen due to the ongoing conflict are mainly supported by women, and that the number of internally displaced persons in Yemen since the outbreak of the conflict until its ninth year has reached about 5.4 million, of which women and children constitute 80% of them.

The economic effects of armed conflicts have had a direct impact on Yemeni women. Since the outbreak of the conflict in early 2015, many women have lost their jobs, which has reduced local and household production. Nevertheless, international organizations, local implementing agencies, and authorities are making tremendous efforts to mitigate the impact of these effects that have weighed heavily on women and deprived them of a decent life.

Private Sector's Tremendous Efforts in Empowering Yemeni Women Economically and Enhancing Their Social Engagement

The private sector is one of the key contributors to financing and engaging Yemeni women in society, as they represent a tremendous force and an effective driver of economic and social development in the country. When women receive funding from the private sector, it enables them to start small projects or develop their current businesses, enhancing their financial independence and entrepreneurial capabilities, and enabling them to provide sustainable income for themselves and their families. Given the humanitarian situation in Yemen due to the ongoing conflict, empowering women has become more important than ever.

By: Ahmed Bajoaim
Women in Development and Peace

Private sector funding plays a vital role in supporting Yemeni women and integrating them into society in general. It promotes women's entrepreneurship, supports women-owned businesses, and contributes to providing suitable job opportunities and working conditions for them, thus enhancing their roles and positions within the local community. While allocating funding and resources alleviates economic challenges faced by women, especially those affected by the armed conflict, there are cultural and social constraints as well as a lack of knowledge about accessing funding and organizing and managing businesses that need time to overcome.

Private Projects

Iman Al-Zubairi, a Protection Officer at Coalition of Good and Project Manager in the community support sector, stated that the coalition has implemented numerous support and empowerment projects for women in several Yemeni governorates, with support from the Saudi Center or the World Food Program. These projects contribute to empowering women in handicrafts, developing their skills in sewing, food industries, photography, editing, graphics, and some specialized crafts such as leather bag manufacturing. The goal is to assist women affected by the conflict, whether directly or indirectly, in starting their own projects or acquiring specific skills to generate income.

Al-Zubairi adds, "Our focus in the Coalition of Good has been on empowering women to break free from the ordinary, because the number of enabled women in many professions are unemployed due to the surplus in this profession, and the labor market does not accommodate all of these outputs. Therefore, we targeted girls in the leather industry, which were not targeted to a large extent by the private sector. Additionally, the Coalition of Good empowered women in long-term food industries, such as yogurt and pickles, and how to create a production line and marketing plan in the local market. In addition, through empowerment projects, we provide integrated grants to the targeted women to help them launch their own projects."

For her part, the director of the Happy Family Association, Muna Bashir, pointed out that the association contributed to transforming women affected by armed conflict from being in need to being productive, through courses that economically empower them in several professions and skills that improve their living standards and alleviate the effects and causes of the conflict. The association focuses its empowerment projects on displaced women from areas and governorates directly affected by the conflict, the neediest category. Therefore, the association works on economically empowering them and contributing to providing a decent life for them through livelihood programs.

Muna Bashir explained that after the outbreak of armed conflict between warring factions, attention was drawn by donor agencies to displaced women and women who support their families due to the loss of their father due to the conflict. One of the most important programs working in this context is the Women's Protection in Yemen program, which concluded its fourth year



in a row and provides livelihood services for vulnerable women, whether displaced or host communities. The program directly benefits about 45 women in Al Mukalla each year, through needs assessment and providing rehabilitative care in the required fields to become productive in the labor market.

As part of the private sector projects implemented for women affected by the conflict, the Hope Microfinance Bank supports Yemeni women's projects by providing financial grants. 20% of the bank is owned by the private sector, and according to the report issued by it for the year 2022, obtained by the editor of Women in Development and Peace newspaper, the bank provided 875 financings to women with their own projects. These grants will facilitate the opening of projects for them, and the financial grants provided amounted to 352 million Yemeni Riyals.

According to the report, Al-Amal Bank - established as a culmination of the efforts of the Social Fund, the Arab Gulf Program for Development, and the contribution of the private sector - provided financial transfers to local displaced persons totaling 15 billion Yemeni Riyals in 2022. The majority of the displaced in Yemen are women, as indicated by international reports. These transfers will naturally contribute to alleviating the direct and indirect impacts on Yemeni women, transitioning them from being dependent and burdens on society to being productive and supportive in the local labor market.

Al-Amal Bank, which operates 16 branches in most governorates of the republic, targeted women with various banking financings, embodying gender social responsibility and achieving equality and eliminating discrimination as stated in the bank's 2022 annual report. The report mentioned that the number of women targeted for financings disbursed was approximately 5,688, totaling over 402 million Yemeni Riyals. This aims to improve the living standards of women affected by conflict and in the most vulnerable situations, in collaboration with international and regional donor organizations to enhance the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

Female Role Models

Under the pseudonym "Safia," she supports her four children after her husband was killed on the frontlines seven years ago. An employee at the Safe Space for Women in Al-Mukalla city describes Safia's circumstances, originating from the Hajr district in the western part of Hadhramaut Governorate, as difficult after her husband's death. She was forced by circumstances to work in the employees' houses for a while. In 2021, Safe Space launched a training course in

pastry making, which Safia joined. After two months of training and qualification, Chef Safia mastered the profession with precision and skill.

Safia received an empowerment kit containing all the cooking supplies and tools, similar to the 18 women in the course, to embark on the labor market with determination and defiance of her circumstances. The employee says, "Chef Safia now supplies more than five commercial outlets with a variety of pastries. She has gained the trust of the owners, and she is very close to opening her own pastry shop in Al-Mukalla city with the assistance of a developmental institution.

On the other hand, Sara Amin, a person with disabilities, arrived from Taiz Governorate to Hadhramaut as a displaced person from the ravages of conflict, along with her family. In 2019, she was able to join a training course on "photography" organized by the Coalition of Good. After completing the course, she obtained a camera as a tool to start her project aimed at improving the living conditions of her family. Iman Al-Zubairi, the protection officer in the Coalition of Good, and the director of projects in the social support sector, highlighted Sara's success story as one of the outcomes of the empowerment projects initiated by the Coalition of Good.

Challenges & Difficulties

Iman Al-Zubairi addressed the challenges that hinder the development of women's skills in Yemen in general, which include lack of awareness in society and specifically among women, about the importance of skill development, knowledge acquisition, and pursuing a profession that enables women to achieve self-sufficiency. She added, "I am specifically referring to women in rural areas where customs and traditions prevail. One of the challenges is that the majority of girls are directed towards a specific profession, reducing their interest, while there is a demand in the market for other professions that women have not pursued. Additionally, the private sector needs to focus more on remote areas and intensify support; there are tragic stories of women that require intervention."

Additionally, Muna Bashir emphasized that many women suffer from a lack of financial awareness and literacy, impacting their ability to access and effectively utilize funding. She stressed the need for private sector and civil society organizations to launch projects and educate women on how to harness funding for economic empowerment and sustainability. This is crucial as low income and limited job opportunities are significant obstacles for women. Diversifying women's vocational training courses can help address the imbalance in employment opportunities

in the markets.

Bashir added, "The country is suffering from difficult economic conditions in recent times, which negatively affects women's ability to cope with rising prices and continuous currency collapse. Naturally, this leads to a shortage of capital, and many projects may fail if they do not work on a marketing plan that helps address these problems that have become beyond their control. The private sector also faces a contraction in many funded projects, including women's economic empowerment as a result of the economic crisis in Yemen in particular."

Solutions

Bashir listed some solutions that help economically empower women and integrate them into society. These solutions include increasing the value of financial grants provided by the private sector and international donor organizations to improve the level of support for women's projects, intensifying economic empowerment programs for women by providing training, education, technical support, and necessary financial support to develop their marketing skills, understand local market requirements, develop their businesses and projects, and make future plans. Additionally, the private sector should establish bazaars and exhibitions to showcase women's products, involve the media in covering these exhibitions, and use social media to promote the products.

Bashir added, "Another solution is to expand the scope of social partnerships between women's projects, provide consultations and moral support to project owners, especially women directly affected by the conflict as most of them have lost their projects. The ultimate goal of these partnerships should be to solve the social and marketing problems facing women in the labor market, enhance their economic capacity, and provide employment opportunities for unemployed or unable women to participate in the labor market. It is also important to unify efforts between the public and private sectors, as well as international donor organizations, to improve the economic status of Yemeni women, who - along with children - are among the most affected by the armed conflict."

In conclusion, the importance of private sector financing for Yemeni women lies in achieving economic empowerment and enhancing their effective participation within the local community. If these desired objectives, which are crucial pillars, are realized, Yemeni women will undoubtedly be capable of contributing to the construction, advancement, and sustainable development of the country.

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Our Vision

A society that believes in
the importance of women in
establishing peace and raises
their public awareness. Therefore,
they become able to participate
in all areas of building and
developing the society.

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The Suffering of Women in Yemen: How is it Reflected in the Media in Light of the Conflict?

Afaf Abdo is trying to find a program in Yemeni media that conveys the suffering of Yemeni women, who have suffered a lot in recent years. These years have witnessed continuous conflict for more than eight years, significantly impacting the lives of Yemeni women.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez
Women in Development and Peace

Citizen Afaf, who was interviewed during one of the field visits, said, "We women suffer a lot of fatigue and face the bitterness of living under difficult conditions that our country is going through. Despite this, Yemeni media has not conveyed our suffering to the world as it is in reality. There are no sufficient spaces to discuss our issues, problems, and circumstances, including those of women."

She adds, "I follow a lot of Yemeni media, and what I find is that the news of the conflict in many Yemeni governorates dominates the different media; visual, written, and auditory. Topics related to Yemeni women are almost absent from their programs, which requires those in charge to reconsider allocating sufficient space to discuss issues of different groups within the society, including women."

Afaf believes that it is important for the media to provide numerous programs that cover all aspects of Yemeni women's lives, including their struggles, fights, successes, and sufferings, and everything related to them.

A report issued by the Economic Studies and Media Center, entitled: "A study to evaluate the professional performance of visual media in 2017", revealed that 592 reports and programs focused on the fields of politics, health, economy, entertainment, and other aspects.

The report stated that political programs took 65.4% of the programs they offer, economic programs by 17.9%, while for health programs on Yemeni television channels, it reached 6.4%. 9% for other diverse programs between artistic, cultural, and cultural. And 1.3% for entertainment programs.

The Role of the Media

Journalist Mohammed Al-Sharabi highlights the role of Yemeni media in reporting the suffering of Yemeni women, stating, "Numerous Yemeni media outlets exploit women's issues for political gain, disregarding ethical standards that infringe upon their privacy and depict them in a manner that further harms women rather than serving their best interests."

He believes that these outlets often make big mistakes by presenting topics that cause major problems for women, as they employ their issues in an incorrect manner.

Al-Sharaabi also confirmed that many Yemeni women are subjected to physical violence in the context of the conflict, as well as arbitrary arrest without justification or on false charges. Many women are also suffering from diseases, such as malnutrition and other illnesses. In addition, there are many women who are victims of landmines. Despite all of this, Al-Sharaabi says that media outlets neglect to address these issues that affect women.

From her side, journalist Shaima Al-Qurashi said, "Media outlets address women's issues based on the demands of their donors and owners.



Sometimes they focus on children's issues, so you find most media outlets addressing issues that concern children. But if the donors and organizations are focused on women, then the topics are centered around women and so on."

Al-Qurashi wonders, saying, "Women whose issues have been discussed through various visual, auditory, and readable media, and in several different media formats; has anything changed in their lives?! Those discussions did not receive any reaction, and if they did, it was not in the desired manner. The suffering of women has not found a solution until now, and it continues."

Many women in Yemen, especially in communities where women have not received their right to education, have not been reached by these discussions. The fact that these issues are being discussed without reaching them indicates that we have a long way to go before we can provide content that brings about change in society.

Journalist Mahrous Bahusein says, "The reason for the weak role of Yemeni media in conveying the suffering of women in Yemen is due to the lack of cooperation of families and communities with these media outlets, which has led to a decline in the coverage of women's issues in general, and the concealment of many of them; due to the lack of awareness among the community."

"Yemeni media has neglected social and humanitarian aspects and has not provided solutions to many issues. It has limited itself to news coverage of events, which has led to the emergence of media outlets specializing in women. This is what Marwa Al-Areqi, editor-in-chief of the Hodaj platform, said about the situation of Yemeni media during the conflict.

Al-Areqi continues her conversation with Women in Development and Peace newspaper, saying, "These outlets are run by Yemeni female journalists who have been able to draw attention to the issues of women in their country, discuss them, and provide solutions as well."

She adds, "These outlets have focused on the success stories of women in Yemen who bear the responsibility of their families due to the absence of men, in miserable economic conditions that the country is going through, the most diffi-

cult of which is the crisis of salary cuts and the lack of job opportunities".

Media plays an important role in addressing the issues of society in general, especially women, who face many challenges in the midst of the conflict that many areas of the country are witnessing. This conflict has left behind many problems, including the deterioration of services, the spread of diseases, and the difficulty of accessing education and all other rights. Women have paid a heavy price due to these conditions.

The challenges facing women in recent years are many and varied, and they need wide spaces in the media; whether visual, audible, or readable. Therefore, Yemeni media, especially government media, needs to convey the suffering of women and discuss all their issues, especially in areas that have witnessed conflict and where women have been affected more.

Quality of Programs

Regarding the types of programs that the media can focus on in terms of conveying the suffering of women in Yemen during the conflict, media personality Zuhur Abdullah says, "There are many types of programs that media outlets can focus on in media coverage, including impactful human stories, field visits to conflict areas, highlighting the suffering of women, conducting direct interviews with affected women, and learning more about that suffering".

Continuing, she says, "Searching for solutions and treatments from the field, in addition to hosting officials from the relevant official bodies in live and direct programs, putting them face to face with women and their problems resulting from the conflict, and finding logical and reasonable solutions".

Munira Al-Tayyar, a journalist, says, "The importance of media and its role in conveying the suffering of citizens during the conflict is increasing, especially the suffering of women. Their responsibility doubles, and their role becomes significant, whether from an economic perspective by providing and securing food, or from a social perspective by raising their children and taking responsibility for the household when the man is absent or injured due to the conflict."

She adds, "Women also bear the

psychological pressure due to what the country is going through because of the conflict and the cessation of job opportunities, which puts them in confrontation with the head of the family, who has become unable to provide household necessities, making them victims of abuse and persecution".

Nadia Abdullah, a media activist, told Women in Development and Peace newspaper, "There are thousands of painful stories of women in Yemen and the sacrifices they make, but unfortunately, the media only conveys very little".

She explains, "The stories of Yemeni women's suffering are numerous and their sacrifices are great. The violations they face daily are significant. We have hundreds of thousands of displaced and homeless women in displacement camps and elsewhere. There are dozens, and it could reach hundreds, of women who have lost their limbs, are detained, or kidnapped".

She continues, "We have a large number of widowed women who today bear the responsibility of their families after losing their families in this conflict. We also have thousands of mothers of detainees and abductees and their suffering".

Nadia says, "All of this suffering can be media material for dozens of television and radio programs for all Yemeni media outlets, but unfortunately, they are still falling short in conveying the reality of Yemeni women".

She confirms, "The role of the media in conveying the suffering of Yemeni women has unfortunately not reached the level of suffering that women in Yemen are experiencing, and there is a clear shortfall in conveying all that they are going through due to the conflict."

On the contrary, Huda Harbi, a journalist, says, "Yemeni media outlets have played an important role in conveying the suffering of affected women during the conflict in Yemen. They have shed light on this suffering, raised awareness of it, and supported efforts to support Yemeni women by publishing the stories and experiences of affected women".

She emphasized that Yemeni media has shed light on their suffering and the challenges they face in various fields, such as health, education, economy, family life, and work.

She adds in her speech, "The media has provided information and analysis on issues affecting women, and contributed to raising awareness in society about the problems facing affected women."

She continues, "Yemeni media should intensify media coverage of women's issues and cooperate with non-governmental organizations. These organizations can provide the media with the information and data they need to prepare accurate and comprehensive reports on issues affecting women."

Harbi believes that it is important for Yemeni media to consider the professional and ethical standards in covering issues affecting affected women; they should respect the privacy and dignity of these women.

In recent years, Yemen has witnessed the opening of many media outlets, whether written, visual, or audio, and their specialties varied between political, artistic, cultural, and others. Many aspects that were important for media coverage were overlooked by those outlets.

Many of these outlets marginalized women to a great extent and neglected their issues, which should have been addressed, and conveyed their suffering as it is in reality. However, the events of the conflict were predominant. Many of the outlets focused on covering the news of the battles that the cities and regions of the country are witnessing, and designated spaces to address women's issues in a way that illustrates the bad situation they have reached since the outbreak of the conflict.

This encouraged many people, including women, to open many websites and platforms dedicated to Yemeni women's issues. Most of these sites are run by women, as they address the Yemeni women's life in all its aspects, discuss the stories of many of them, convey their suffering, successes, and aspirations, and provide possible solutions to reduce the problems they face and the tragedy they live in various Yemeni regions.

Some of the most popular platforms that address women's issues in Yemen include Hodaj, Neswan Voice, Sheedr, Taa, Yemeni Women's Voices Platform, Women in Development and Peace Newspaper, Women's Experiences Platform, and others.

Challenges Faced by Yemeni Women Amidst the Conflict

Yemeni women encounter a multitude of challenges in the midst of the conflict, and they tirelessly strive to overcome and confront these obstacles. Many women have been compelled to flee due to the conflict, while others endure significant hardships after losing their primary breadwinners. Some have taken on added responsibilities after experiencing salary cuts or losing their sources of income. The conflict has led to numerous job losses in affected facilities over the past few years.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez
Women in Development and Peace

Moreover, Yemeni women have faced a range of problems, including the prevalence of child marriage, exposure to various forms of violence, difficulty accessing essential services such as education and healthcare, vulnerability to epidemics and diseases, denial of their rights, and obstacles in obtaining assistance and support.

According to United Nations reports, Yemen ranks among the worst countries globally in terms of women's rights. Nevertheless, Yemeni women consistently support one another, surmount obstacles, and bravely confront the hardships they face. They do so individually or through women's initiatives, feminist organizations, and institutions focused on women's issues. Numerous feminist organizations have emerged in various regions of the country in recent years, highlighting the women's desire and determination to change their reality and their resilience in the face of challenges that seek to undermine them.

Spread of Diseases

A United Nations report published on January 23, 2023, titled "Addressing Food Insecurity in Yemen: From Meeting Individual Needs to Building National Capacities," confirmed that approximately 24% of Yemeni women require medication for malnutrition-related diseases due to the food insecurity that the country is facing.

A gynecologist and obstetrician (who requested anonymity) stated that, "Low living standards are one of the main causes of malnutrition among women in Yemen, in addition to a lack of awareness and education about nutrition in general, and the importance of consuming the necessary daily nutritional requirements."

She adds, "The short intervals between pregnancies expose women to a lack of nutritional intake compared to their nutritional needs. Pregnant and lactating women require double the nutritional intake due to the physiological changes that occur during pregnancy, and therefore due to the short intervals between pregnancies."

She continues, "Different diseases, most notably gastrointestinal diseases, such as stomach bacteria, intestinal worms, and irritable bowel syndrome, are widespread.

The lack of intake of micronutrient sources (vitamins and minerals), mainly represented by vegetables and fruits, leads to an imbalance in the conversion of food into energy, which in turn causes malnutrition in both its forms."

The doctor says in her speech, "There are effects resulting from malnutrition in women, including emaciation and general weakness, lack of activity, and disruption of vital processes in the body, as well as disruption in the abundance of many nutrients in the body, such as iron deficiency, which leads to anemia."



She adds, "Also, low immunity, increased incidence of diseases and frequent infections. Pregnant women with malnutrition are more susceptible to miscarriage, difficult labor, and congenital deformities in newborns. In addition, they may experience problems with hair, skin, and nails, as well as psychological problems such as anxiety and depression."

Women and children are the most affected groups by the conflict. Many United Nations reports have shown that many of them have been exposed to diseases caused by the deterioration of living conditions in the country, including malnutrition.

Protection of Women from Violence

According to an anonymous employee of an international organization, "Women face many challenges due to the deteriorating economic situation, including physical violence, especially since most men are currently under psychological pressure, which may force them to attack women, who are closest to them, whether they are their wives or sisters, and thus women are exposed to physical, psychological, and verbal violence."

She confirms that "Yemeni women are subjected to all types of violence, and their suffering has increased due to the non-activation of laws that protect them and ensure their rights. The application of these laws would be a deterrent to anyone who attacks women".

Supporting Women's Efforts in Peacebuilding

According to Shinaz Al-Akhali, a lawyer and social activist, "The continuation of the conflict in the country for more than nine years has doubled the suffering of Yemeni women, including making many of them struggle to make ends meet for their children, especially with the loss of their breadwinners."

She adds, "Women have become the weakest party in the Yemeni conflict, and in return, they are the first and last advocates of peace. Therefore, they must be supported in the peacebuilding process, and their efforts in this field must be encouraged."

Al-Akhali said in an interview with Women in Development and Peace Newspaper, "The challenges facing women's efforts to bring peace are many, including the absence of women in peace negotiation committees and dialogues specific to peacebuilding and ending the conflict in Yemen".

Also, they are present in decision-making positions such as local authorities, but only as decoration. There is a trend to appoint women, but they do not have any real power; they are only there to say that women are involved in decision-making.



Shinaz Al-Akhali

Social and Cultural Attitudes

Rashid Mohammed, a teacher and social activist, says, "Social and cultural positions are one of the challenges facing Yemeni women in the conflict. The conflict that occurs in any society will undoubtedly have a direct impact on those positions through several factors."

He adds, "The conflict has a direct impact; when a woman loses her husband, son, or brother, she suffers the most from this situation she is living in. This is reflected in the economic living conditions, which leads to the deterioration of health conditions."

He sees that women become victims of such conflicts; some of them are kidnapped, and some are harassed due to their positions within the community. Additionally, the conflict has a psychological impact on women when they lose a relative or are captured or kidnapped.

He confirms that "Women are half of society, and they must be affected by the conflict in general, which is reflected in their social and cultural lives."

Many girls and women in Yemen are beginning to think about traveling abroad to escape the suffering they are experiencing. Others prefer to move to other areas outside the areas where they have experienced difficult conditions, which made them believe that staying there would double their suffering, and that moving to another place would relieve them of that suffering.

Creating Job Opportunities for Women

In light of the chaos of the conflict and the lack of oil derivatives, which led to an

increase in transportation prices and the interruption of roads between governorates and directorates, this contributed to the creation of alternative routes. This situation reflected on the work of women, who found it difficult to search for job opportunities that suit them, especially with the presence of a man from their relatives during their travels.

Manal Ahmed (a pseudonym) is one of those women who lost many job opportunities due to her family's rejection of the nature of her work, which involves traveling from one area to another.

Manal says, "My father refused several job opportunities that I had obtained, fearing my travel without any of my siblings; the roads have become very far and dangerous, and he says that our family's customs and traditions do not align with those jobs."

Manal was forced to work from home selling women's tools, including accessories that she makes, as well as perfumes, incense, clothes, and more, as she did not find a suitable job for her, as she says.

Sahar Abduljabbar, a teacher, says that in addition to the presence of customs and traditions that restrict women's work, many women have not had job opportunities, especially in recent years, which have witnessed an increase in the unemployment rate in the country.

She continues, "There are many university graduates who have not found work after graduation, some of whom have given up and stayed at home waiting for where life will take them, and others have left their university degrees and were forced to work in other fields far from their specialization."

She adds, "Many women have also worked to start private projects, including from home, such as preparing Yemeni and Arab meals, in the field of e-marketing, and selling women's tools such as clothes, perfumes, and more."

She emphasizes in her speech that the relevant government agencies, organizations, and institutions that support women should provide job opportunities for women who have become heads of their households and help them provide the requirements of life.

Other Challenges

Many of those interested attribute the restrictions imposed on women's mobility to the challenges facing women in Yemen during the conflict. This includes the requirement of being accompanied by a male relative from their family, as well as the strictness in obtaining written permission from their guardian.

Among these is Mukhtar Abdulaziz, a social activist, who believes that women's opportunities for education, development of

their abilities, and creativity are limited, especially in rural areas where many girls have been forced to work in agriculture and livestock breeding to improve their families' income. This has suffered from material deterioration, in addition to performing many tasks, including fetching water, logging, collecting fodder, and more.

Mukhtar says, "Due to poverty, many families have found it difficult to provide their children's educational requirements, which has led to them leaving school and going to the labor market to help their families, which have been suffering since the beginning of the conflict in the country, especially girls."

He adds, "Many parents, due to the living conditions their families are experiencing, have been forced to marry their daughters at an early age to get rid of their expenses, thinking that their marriage will make them find someone to bear their responsibility."

Asma Al-Jadi, the head of the "I Am Here" initiative, agrees that Yemeni women face many challenges imposed by the conflict. She says, "The challenges are poverty, lack of job opportunities, and the family and society's ignorance of their rights."

She believes that awareness of women's rights must be intensified, and women must be empowered economically. She also suggests holding psychological sessions for women affected by the conflict and rehabilitating them.

Afaf Al-Yafei, a civil society activist, says that women are the most vulnerable group to the challenges posed by the conflict, and it is a suffering that women in the country have not been able to overcome.

She explains, "When a woman loses the head of the family, the greatest responsibility falls on her shoulders, and this puts pressure on her, especially if she has children. Even if that does not happen, the income that the breadwinner of the family receives is no longer sufficient, so she is forced to search for work that sometimes exceeds her ability to bear."

In her speech, Afaf Al-Yafei, a civil society activist, says, "In light of these conditions that women in many Yemeni regions are living in, women cannot obtain the necessary health care." She emphasizes, "How many patients have remained in their homes struggling with pain because they cannot afford the transportation costs to take them to the hospital."

She adds, "Many women cannot demand their rights or speak about the injustice they face. Many women in areas suffering from a water crisis are found waiting for a long time in front of water stations to get one gallon. There are many girls who leave their classrooms to go to gas lines to receive their share."

The Role of Official Authorities in Reducing the Effects of the Humanitarian Crisis on Women

Yemen is suffering from one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, with women being particularly affected. They face immense challenges and multiple difficulties, in addition to security threats, economic hardships, and rampant violence engulfing the country. Nevertheless, official authorities play a crucial role in mitigating the severity of this crisis and improving the living conditions of Yemeni women. In this report, we explore the most important activities and projects undertaken by these official authorities to alleviate the impact of the conflict and displacement.

By: Hebah Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

Official Authorities' Role in Alleviating the Crisis on Women

The relevant official authorities, including the government and other government institutions, are responsible for supporting women and implementing policies and programs aimed at improving the humanitarian situation of women. Therefore, official authorities must work to enhance laws protecting the rights of women and girls and ensure their effective implementation. Notably, there have been significant activities and projects carried out by specific entities during the conflict, including the National Women's Committee, Yemeni Women's Associations, and General Women's Directorates.

Nora Al-Saqqaf, the Director-General of the General Women's Directorate in Ibb Governorate, states, "The General Directorate for Women's Development has played a crucial official role in alleviating the crisis's impact on women in Yemen. We have implemented numerous initiatives and projects in the center of the governorate and its districts in collaboration with philanthropists, financiers, and businessmen."

She continues, "These initiatives included the distribution of food, financial aid, and clothing. The Empowerment Project for 2021 was implemented with support from the General Authority for Zakat in the governorate, benefiting 114 productive families from all districts. Additionally, the Empowerment Project for 2023, also supported by the General Authority for Zakat in the governorate, empowered 50 women from the districts of Al Dhihar, Al Mashannah, and Jiblah. The majority of beneficiaries from both projects were widows, women providing for their families, displaced women, and other vulnerable groups."

She further reported that other organizations and institutions have implemented significant projects, such as the Safe Spaces Project and community centers for displaced persons, with support from the United Nations Fund through the Yemeni Women's Union and the General Authority for Zakat. She emphasized that the General Women's Directorate is making significant efforts to achieve development and empowerment for women affected by the conflict, and she hopes for continued support and cooperation from relevant entities to enable the directorate to achieve its objectives and alleviate the crisis's severity on women.

Hayat Al-Kinai, the President of the Yemeni Women's Union in Ibb Governorate, also participated, saying, "Many of the programs we implement focus on supporting families

through women's empowerment. Since 2018 and until today, we have been receiving girls and women aged nine to sixty years in safe spaces for women and girls. They receive training in vocational skills that suit them, including women's tailoring, weaving, accessory making, pastry and sweets making, teaching incense and perfume making, livestock and beekeeping, computer skills and mobile maintenance, cheese and soap making, and other crafts."

Al-Kinai continued, "The training is available to everyone, and we strive to empower the beneficiary women, whether they are displaced, divorced, widowed, impoverished, or victims of early marriage. After the training, they are offered a ten-day training course that aims to teach them how to manage the project, conduct feasibility and market studies, and compete in the product market."

She added, "Through the Yemeni Women's Union, with support from donor agencies, we empower the beneficiaries of the project by providing them with materials and equipment worth \$500. We monitor them and measure the impact of the training and work in the granted project. This fundamental project works to support families economically and improve their living conditions."

She also indicated that the union provides other projects to support families economically in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH (GIZ). The union is ready to commit to continuing the implementation of these programs, providing necessary support to women and families, and striving for a better and more sustainable future for everyone.

Challenges & Difficulties

"We face challenges in managing women's development, and one of the prominent challenges is the lack of financial resources, which hinders us from implementing empowerment and other projects that can alleviate the crisis for women. Therefore, we need to collaborate with other entities to provide the necessary resources and needs," according to Nora Al-Saqqaf, the Director-General of the General Women's Directorate.

Meanwhile, Khawla Al-Sharafi, the Chairwoman of the National Women's Committee in Ibb Governorate, stated, "Despite the necessity of issuing an annual report on the status of women to address the issues that hinder women in the development process, its proper issuance requires the availability of accurate and comprehensive data and information. Here, the main obstacle arises as the report's compilers face difficulties in obtaining data and information from ministries and government institutions."

Continuing the discussion, she said, "Despite direct communication with those entities, writing multiple letters to ministers, agents, and department heads, in addition to field visits by the report preparation team, all of this encounters bureaucracy that does not respond to the logic of the public interest. Even civil organizations, despite being in contact with them, do not respond positively except under orders from higher authorities."

Al-Sharafi believes that despite the government's efforts to integrate women into education, emphasizing it in development plans and government programs, the reality of society reflects a set of challenges in the face of increasing opportunities for girls' enrollment in various stages of education.

She explains this by saying, "In addition to the challenges of the existing gender gap in education, the lack of gender equality and

the increase in illiteracy rates among women, all of this requires political and societal will to expand better opportunities for girls' education and empower women in general to build their cultural and professional capacities. Illiteracy and the limited educational opportunities for women hinder development and weaken productive capacities in society."

Future Projects

Khawla Al-Sharafi, Chairwoman of the National Women's Committee in Ibb Governorate, says, "Empowering women and integrating them into various aspects of society is of utmost importance for the development and progress of any nation. Recognizing the importance of women's roles and contributions, the National Committee has developed strategic projects as part of its national vision to support and elevate Yemeni women."

She continues, "These projects aim to empower women and integrate them into the development process, especially in light of the difficult circumstances Yemen currently faces due to the devastating conflict that has engulfed the country. The ultimate goal is to uplift society, promote development, and rebuild the nation by harnessing women's potential and ensuring their effective participation."

Al-Sharafi emphasizes, "The National Women's Committee has numerous projects that aim to develop women with different objectives and scopes. In this limited space, we will mention some projects that will contribute to achieving real gains for women."

She highlights one of these projects, the Women's Empowerment and Gender Integration project, which aims to enhance women's economic, social, and political roles. The project involves formulating policies and a national vision for the state, providing institutional support to women, family, and child units in ministries and governorates, capacity building for women's general administrations, and playing a pioneering role in documenting national reports on women and their activities.

Furthermore, Al-Sharafi mentions the projects of Women's Development and Productive Family Centers, implemented in selected governorates based on specific statistics and supported by relevant authorities such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Productive Family Center through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, the General Women's Administration, and the National Women's Committee. These projects aim to improve women's conditions, enhance their status, and integrate them into social and economic development processes. They also focus on the spiritual and cultural development of women to address the harm caused by the conflict.

She adds, "Another project is the National Center for Women's Development and Peace, which recognizes the active role of Yemeni women in peacebuilding. This center is established with a clear vision, emphasizing the woman's active role in building her country and consolidating the foundations of peace and development."

Al-Sharafi further explains, "The center will activate women's participation in all fields, enhance their training experiences, communication skills, and abilities to respect diversity in customs and cultures. It will promote peaceful coexistence among different segments of Yemeni society, and play a pioneering role in the social integration of women returning from displacement and refugee camps, and in strengthening national unity and peace."

Establishing a Permanent Market for Productive Families

Al-Sharafi says, "The future vision of the National Women's Committee includes a project to establish a permanent market for productive families and local products, in order to provide employment opportunities for economically empowered women. We will present project studies to supporting entities and coordinate with productive families and institutions to determine the type of production. We will also coordinate with relevant authorities to identify a suitable location for establishing the market, form an administrative body, and equip it to manage all project activities. Sufficient budget allocation will be approved to manage the operations of the branches of the National Women's Committee."

Recommendations & Interventions

As Al-Sharafi presents a number of recommendations that could help alleviate the impact of the humanitarian crisis on women in Yemen, especially in recent years, one of these recommendations states, "Considering women and their issues as integral to the entire society, rather than as a sectional issue, and incorporating this perspective into official and party political discourse. Emphasizing that the weakness of women's presence in the fields of education, political participation, and modern economic activity represents the most significant deficiencies in human development in Yemen."

She further emphasizes the need to amend all laws that still contain discriminatory provisions against women and activate political will to implement practical measures. This includes adopting quotas as a positive discrimination mechanism for a specified period of time, adopting a new vision for literacy programs, and creating supportive incentives to encourage participation in these programs.

Al-Sharafi recommends expanding training and vocational qualification programs, equipping women with life skills, expanding women's integration within development projects in the local community, establishing a direct connection between literacy programs for rural women and providing income-generating opportunities. She also suggests finding more effective methods of supporting and empowering women in building small-scale economic projects, including establishing effective approaches from banks regarding the lending process.



Yemeni Women's Role in Reconciliation and Peace Restoration: Exemplars and Challenges

Yemen is one of the countries that witnesses a continuous and complex conflict, and is subject to serious humanitarian, social, and economic consequences. In this context, the role of Yemeni women has emerged clearly as a key force in peace efforts and reconciliation. Despite the challenges and risks they face; Yemeni women remain hopeful and work hard to achieve lasting peace in their country.

By: Hebah Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

Yemeni women are a vital and active partner in political negotiations and diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the conflict in Yemen. Their productive participation in these processes has a strong impact on decision-making, promoting constructive dialogue between conflicting parties. Yemeni women appear as mediators and influential figures in the efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation. In this report, we learn more about the role of Yemeni women in achieving social peace and reconciliation.

Women's Roles for Peace in Yemen

The role of Yemeni women in achieving peace in Yemen is invaluable and cannot be ignored or underestimated. Despite the enormous challenges they face, they remain a real force and a leader in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts in the country. One of the main roles played by Yemeni women is their participation in political processes and negotiations, and their support for dialogue and reconciliation at the community level.

According to Amina Mohsen Al-Abd, the Goodwill and Peace Ambassador, "Yemeni women have contributed to the peace process in Yemen through several roles, including attending peace meetings, participating in the exchange of prisoners, searching for the missing and including their names in problem-solving committees, as well as helping to open roads and crossings, providing aid and delivering it to the displaced, and preparing lists of the displaced".

Women also participated in official and unofficial meetings and negotiations in Kuwait and other countries, and in negotiations held between the parties to the conflict to bring peace. Women played a role in this through non-governmental organizations and civil society, which were formed to defend peace, provide assistance, exchange information, and form new networks for peace, including the Women's Solidarity Network, the establishment of institutions, and the implementation of peace initiatives during the conflict. For example, Hadrhramout Women's Organization, the Marib Girls Foundation, and the Together for Peace initiative in Abian.

Regarding how Yemeni women participate in political negotiations and diplomatic efforts to bring peace to Yemen, Al-Abd says, "Yemeni women contribute to peace-making at the local and national levels, according to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. Women are the most affected by armed conflicts, which have direct effects on women and girls. For this reason, international agreements have been issued to ensure that women do not live in fear and terror of torture or sexual violence".

Accordingly, these agreements include special texts that ensure special protection for women. These texts are added to the protection of the rules of international humanitarian law, which protect non-combatants during international or internal armed conflicts.

Despite the attempts made to stop the escalation of violence in Yemen through international agreements, the path to sustainable peace is still far away and requires a greater need for discussing conflict resolution



paths than ever before. The participation of women in building and maintaining peace is undoubtedly the missing key that the state has not ruled out, by involving them in official delegations in meetings and discussions that can achieve real progress towards peace.

Amina believes that through Resolution 1325, the United Nations Security Council began to realize the importance of women's role in resolving and preventing conflicts. However, women in Yemen and other countries face serious challenges in building peace that may not necessarily lead to them stopping their work. Despite this, they find ways to resist this increasingly hostile environment.

Jameela Al-Qadri, the head of Al-Thabat for Social and Development Organization, says, "Yemeni women participate in supporting dialogue and reconciliation at the community level, organizing local initiatives and social projects that work to promote unity through cooperation between individuals and communities. Yemeni women work to promote a culture of peace and values of tolerance and spread them among members of society."

She continues, "We have implemented a large number of training programs at Al-Thabat Organization, which targeted women affected by the conflict. These programs helped women acquire new skills in areas such as sewing, embroidery, pastry making, cosmetics, and other life skills, preparing plans for their projects at the lowest cost, and displaying their products at the annual exhibition for productive families. This type of training can be very useful for women, motivating them to build the future, alleviate poverty, and rely on themselves."

Amina also advises that Yemeni women peacebuilders should not be left alone, but rather supported in order to achieve lasting peace. The international community and relevant institutions must work together to provide the necessary support for Yemeni women, whether through providing resources and training or enabling them to participate effectively in decision-making.

The Role of Women in Peace and Dialogue During Conflicts

Amina stated that since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, Yemeni women have played a central role as negotiators and mediators, whether by releasing victims of enforced disappearance, opening safe humanitarian corridors, or combating child recruitment.

These women who participate in creating dialogues in conflict areas challenge those who abuse power, making them vulnerable to different patterns of bullying and harassment. This leads to branding them with things they are not; aiming to discourage their participation in humanitarian and peace activities.



Dr. Amina Mohsen

Afraa Mohammed, a political activist, shares that "the role of Yemeni women in bringing peace to Yemen cannot be neglected or taken out of the circle of interest throughout history. Yemeni women have played an important part in the struggle for change and peace, and they had the biggest and clearest role during the conflict. Yemeni women worked partially and perseveringly to achieve peace with the available resources, despite the restrictions imposed on them."

Afraa also pointed out that Yemeni women have imposed themselves through their participation in many local peace agreements, or those under the supervision of the United Nations Security Council. They have also contributed significantly to the humanitarian aid sector, distributing it to refugee camps for women and children, through their participation in civil society, working with non-governmental organizations and charities to provide support and services, and empowering women affected by the conflict.

The Role of Media and Civil Society

"It is assumed that the media and civil society play a major role in raising awareness in the community and calling on women to participate in peace and reconciliation, given that women and their children are more vulnerable to violence in armed conflicts. Through the platforms that have been established and the media, the important role of women in peace must be highlighted, and the demand for their official participation in delegations, meetings, and negotiations to achieve permanent and comprehensive peace must be made. The media must adopt this role in its official and unofficial channels to contribute to awareness-raising and spreading awareness of the importance of involving women in political, peaceful, and other processes," according to peace ambassador Amina Mohsen.

Women's Efforts to Support the Peace Process in Yemen

There are many female models who have called for peace and worked tirelessly for national reconciliation with all available resources. Among these is Dr. Amina Mohsen, who has dedicated her life to giving women a voice in peace and security operations in Yemen. She has carried out several activities and initiatives, focusing on the identification of displaced persons, providing humanitarian assistance, material support, training, rehabilitation, and economic empowerment for women. In addition, the initiatives aim to raise awareness among displaced persons about mental health and combat gender-based violence.

Dr. Amina Mohsen's participation in Al-Itihad Microfinance Program is one of the most prominent initiatives she has undertaken. Displaced women were able to obtain funding for their own projects and achieve economic independence. These initiatives were implemented in cooperation with the European Union and other organizations.

Dr. Amina Mohsen and her team faced many difficulties in implementing these initiatives. Among these difficulties, displaced persons lost their official and identification papers, which led to difficulties in providing basic services for their children's education. Women were also at risk of harassment and sexual violence due to the breakdown of security agencies during the conflict and the absence of deterrent laws for harassers and rapists. Dr. Amina and her team sought to prevent this phenomenon and protect women.

In addition, Dr. Amina Mohsen participated in the Feminist Roadmap, which was developed by women leaders under the supervision of the Feminist Solidarity Network, the Peace Path, and the Towards Permanent and Comprehensive Peace Committee. She also participated in peace mediations and peace by Yemeni women, in collaboration with the United Nations in Jordan, signing statements calling for conflict resolution and women's participation in the peace process, through participation in official delegations.

Amina signed statements calling for peace and the participation of women in the peace process in official delegations. She also created a platform for the Together for Peace initiative inside and outside Yemen, participated in working papers with Arab organizations, and opened a branch under the name of the Peace Initiative inside and outside Libya.

Challenges & Difficulties

Regarding the difficulties facing Yemeni women in working towards peace and calling for reconciliation in Yemen, Jameela Al-Qadri, President of Al-Thabat for Social and Development Organization, says, "One of the most prominent challenges facing

women in national peace and reconciliation processes is the lack of political will of decision-makers. Therefore, their names are not included in official delegations and negotiations to achieve central and local peace by the state. However, women have succeeded through their participation in expressing their opinions and assisting in peace negotiations by civil society organizations. But this is not enough. We need a political decision from the state to involve women in official and unofficial negotiations and meetings, with a proportionate representation of women in participation".

Afraa Mohammed, a political activist, believes that the most important challenge is the difficult economic situation that many Yemeni women suffer from as a result of the long conflict in Yemen, which has led to the deterioration of the economic situation. Women have been particularly affected by this situation, as they cannot access basic work and education opportunities, which limits their effective participation in the peace process.

Steps Towards Women Involvement in Peace Processes

Dr. Amina Mohsen says, "All government, non-governmental, and civil society organizations must work under one alliance called Permanent and Comprehensive Peace. Efforts must be unified to achieve peace and demand the participation of women in official and unofficial delegations by the state and the United Nations. In order not to scatter efforts that do not raise the voices of women, we must stand firmly to involve women and stand with their parties and organizations. We must be one hand and one voice to involve women in peace and decision-making positions, and implement Resolution 1325 in reality, not just on paper".

Afraa Mohammed also believes that empowering women and enhancing their participation in society is a fundamental step by providing the necessary opportunities and resources for them to participate effectively in the peace process. It is also essential to increase women's representation in government institutions, political organizations, and peace negotiations to enhance their role in decision-making and leadership capabilities.

Jameela Al-Qadri says, "Dialogue and reconciliation in Yemen must be strengthened, and women must be encouraged to participate in these processes. Safe spaces for dialogue must be created, and women must be encouraged to express their opinions, fears, and contribute to finding solutions. Women's protection must be enhanced, and necessary support must be provided to survivors of violence and sexual exploitation. Laws must be tightened and effectively implemented to combat gender-based violence, and support services and psychological treatment must be provided to affected women".

Yemeni Women's Health Most Affected by the Conflict

The ongoing conflict in Yemen for the past nine years has led to the deterioration of the health conditions of approximately 21.6 million people, according to World Health Organization in its 2023 report.

By: Alia Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

The conflict has resulted in the deterioration of the economic situation, leading to food insecurity and the collapse of the healthcare system. The report estimated that 46% of health facilities were out of service due to a lack of financial resources, as well as shortages of electricity, medicine, supplies, and necessary equipment.

The significant pressure on the healthcare sector in Yemen has increased the health needs of the most vulnerable groups in society, including women, with inadequate medical response exacerbating their health struggles.

This report highlights the health impacts experienced by women due to the rapid changes in healthcare needs in Yemen as a result of the conflict.

Deterioration of Maternal Health Services

During the conflict, Um Muhammad, a 30-year-old woman, experienced obstructed labor and struggled to find a hospital that would accept her case. She stated, "I experienced obstructed labor, and many hospitals refused to admit me due to the necessity of a cesarean section. After much effort, I underwent the operation, but the hospital went out of service after I left the operating room, and at that time, neither I nor my child received the necessary medical care."

In February 2023, United Nations Population Fund reported that 5.5 million women and girls of reproductive age were in need of life-saving reproductive health and protection services. Every two hours, one woman dies during childbirth, despite preventable measures under normal circumstances. The report also revealed that 1.5 million pregnant and lactating women suffered from acute malnutrition.

Dr. Angela Ali Salih, an obstetrician, shared her experience, stating, "During the conflict, the healthcare sector deteriorated, reducing its ability to assist patients. Women bore the brunt of these effects, leading to a lack of security and constant anxiety, negatively impacting their immunity against diseases."

Angela emphasized that the unavailability of accessible healthcare centers for pregnancy monitoring had negative repercussions on the health of both mothers and fetuses, increasing pregnancy complications and maternal and neonatal deaths.

Many women have been exposed to emergencies, such as bleeding, which required urgent life-saving medical interventions due to shortages in treatments and health supplies, leading to increased maternal mortality.

Angela confirmed a severe lack of



regular screenings and consistent treatment for cancer, resulting in the worsening of the disease in some cases, reaching advanced stages with no cure.

Deterioration of Mental Health

There is no doubt that the conflict has affected all segments of society, but women are more psychologically affected," said Muhammad Isma'il, the psychological consultant and director of "Oxygen Hayatak Center for Mental Health".

He believes that the psychological effects and traumas on women during conflicts affect them more than other segments of society due to their nature, personality, and psyche, in addition to their psychological makeup. They are constantly affected by events, whether positive or negative because they have intense emotions and represent the containment point for everyone. They are the essential heartbeat of a man's life and family in society.

He added, "22% of Yemenis suffer from psychological disorders; the rapid events that have occurred in Yemen in recent years have been devastating to the psyche of women in particular. They have been affected by conflicts, displacement, and instability, which has exposed them to future concerns, leaving a clear impact known as (collective anxiety) after it used to be individual an-

xiety affecting individual cases."

He pointed out that collective anxiety occurs when an event related to women occurs, such as the loss of a family member or provider, which negatively affects her psychologically and affects the entire family, causing them more anxiety. The anxiety then spreads to those around her because she is the source of the influence.

He continued, "The ongoing conflicts in the country have contributed to transforming women from their basic emotional and positive nature into women who resist many circumstances and suffer from many direct and indirect psychological disorders through being affected by various factors such as displacement and instability."

The indicators of increased psychological disorders among Yemeni women are described as alarming, as more than seven million Yemenis suffer from mental disorders according to World Health Organization.

Regarding the phenomenon of gender-based violence and its connection to the psychological state, Muhammad Isma'il explained that the rate of gender-based violence has increased due to poor mental health resulting from various factors, including the low standard of living for families, the loss of the breadwinner, which has affected wo-

men, and many women have been subjected to physical and verbal violence, leading to an increased divorce rate.

Many household heads have resorted to marrying off their daughters at an early age to escape difficult economic situations and displacement, which has a detrimental impact on the girls' physical and mental well-being.

Muhammad Isma'il emphasized the importance of direct intervention by the Ministry of Health and mental health professionals, as well as the activation of specialized institutions, international organizations, and the establishment of various mental health centers and increased support programs for women, socially, psychologically, and medically, all of which should be practical programs.

Women's Accessibility to Healthcare

The economic crisis in the country has had negative effects on women's access to life-saving healthcare, exacerbating the ongoing struggle of poverty and affecting their access to healthcare facilities and medication.

Yemen has experienced a severe shortage of medication and the proliferation of substandard drugs, further worsening women's health conditions.

Women like Ni'ma Ahmad, who is affected by the high costs of cancer treat-

ment, expressed their inability to cover treatment expenses and transportation costs for medication, worsening their condition.

Additionally, pharmacist Samar Naif reported that the economic crisis has led to an increase in drug prices, leaving many women unable to afford necessary medications for chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease, posing new challenges and exacerbating their suffering due to the inability to obtain essential medications and the closure of pharmaceutical companies.

Steps to Access Women's Healthcare

Women require continuous access to a healthcare system that protects them from the risk of death or disease. Several steps can be taken to ensure this, including: creating a safe healthcare environment for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, providing comprehensive and immediate care before and after childbirth, supplying necessary medications and devices for treating chronic diseases, offering awareness and health education programs for women during conflicts to increase awareness of healthcare and disease prevention. Additionally, providing psychological and social support for women who suffer from psychological effects due to conflicts and difficult life conditions.

Conflict as a Catalyst for Yemeni Women's Entrepreneurship in Small Projects

Many families have lost their sources of income due to the conflict, leading to a deterioration in their living conditions. This has forced many women to seek employment opportunities, even if they offer low salaries. Some have decided to start their own projects to help provide for their families' essential needs.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez
Women in Development and Peace

In 2018, Amal Waheeb, a woman from the city of Hodeida and a mother of four, decided to open a private incense factory in her home after her source of income declined and her husband became unemployed. The conflict had affected her city, like many other areas in Yemen, causing significant economic hardship for many families.

Amal said, "We suffered a lot after my husband lost his job, and I had to sell a piece of gold I owned to buy the necessary materials for making incense. I started my project with the help of my mother and sisters from home."

She added, "At first, there was little demand for our products, but after a few months, our business improved. This project helped me greatly in providing for my family's needs, and my husband was able to find employment. Our work continued, and together we were able to meet all our needs."

In the city of Hodeida, many women have embarked on various private projects. Some have opened their own shops, while others are involved in manufacturing different products such as perfumes, scents, women's accessories, and even ice cream production and sales. Some women specialize in preparing home-cooked meals for various events and occasions. These projects have become increasingly common in recent years due to the worsening of living conditions.

Examples of Projects & Challenges Faced

In 2019, Malaak Muhammad, a young woman from Hodeida, started her own pastry project with the support of her father, who was keen for her to become self-reliant in the face of the difficult living conditions that many young women in Yemen are experiencing. Over five years, Malaak has made a name for herself in her community, and people in the governorate know her and admire what she offers through her project, which she named "Queen Malak for Sweets, Pastries, and Cakes."

Malaak adds in her conversation with Women's Development and Peace newspaper, saying, "My father encouraged me since I started working, and he used to tell me, 'Work harder this year, and I will do my best to buy you a refrigerator to store the cakes and meals I prepare, and they need to be cooled.' But fate had it, and he passed away after a year." Malaak lost the support of her project, but she decided to continue without hesitation as he wished, especially after she felt her financial situation improving and did not need any help from anyone, which made her work even harder.

Um Kinan, who lives in Al-Hodeida, has a project that is different from Malaak's project. It involves marketing



makeup products and everything related to women such as bags and other things. Um Kinan pursued this project to change the routine of life, relying on herself, and to get to know many individuals.

Um Kinan says, "After weeks without any orders for my products, I decided to communicate with a marketing specialist to learn how they started their projects. I benefited from their experiences and way of working, and I began to feel at ease after being tense."

She emphasizes that the field of marketing in general is challenging despite its sweetness, and it requires patience and many sacrifices in order to gain the trust of society and have them accept your project and be willing to buy the products you market. She adds, "I need capital, I am tired of worrying about how my work will progress without any obstacles, and I am also thinking of opening a women's beauty salon because I love this field very much and everything related to makeup." Malaak talks about the difficulties she faces, "I started my project with very limited resources, I didn't even have a refrigerator, so I relied on a plastic one and put ice inside it, and on top of it I put the meals that needed to be cooled."

Malaak's struggle continued until she got a small refrigerator from her grandmother, through which she was able to get rid of many troubles such as buying ice or getting a good degree of coolness for the meals. She still aspires to get a large refrigerator and to open her own store, and for her project to gain good fame. She confirms that she has faced many difficulties and challenges, most of which she has overcome with determination and perseverance.

Shaima, a girl living in Al-Hodeida, also sought a source of income for herself and her family after her salary was cut off. Her project was the production of incense, which she named "Kasrat Bakhoor," and she was able to succeed and gain fame in her community.

Shaima says, "I started my project with self-effort and support from my husband and family, and I began working within the framework of the family. Thanks to Allah, everyone encouraged me and I love my work, which has expanded to include everyone I know, and within the community. Although many projects are known for producing incense, I wanted the incense I produce to have a special character and high quality in terms of its type and



Magid Al-Dha'ri

packaging."

Shaima confirms that she has many ideas for developing her project, but she needs sufficient capital to get her products to the local and international markets, and for her products to gain global fame. She aspires to have a small shop in one of the city markets, even if it's just a kiosk, as long as she finds a place to market her products.

Shaima faces many challenges, such as the high prices of the raw materials required for her products, in addition to the packaging costs. She explains, "Printing a thousand boxes requires me to pay between one hundred and fifty to two hundred riyals per unit, in addition to electronic marketing in case I need advertising, which is very costly."

The women working on projects specializing in food preparation agree that the most prominent challenges they face are the high prices of materials and the disappearance of some of the items they need in the markets, as well as the occasional lack of household gas, in addition to the decline in purchasing power due to the deteriorating financial conditions of many families.

About These Projects

Magid Al-Dha'ri, an economic affairs enthusiast, says, "Several factors have encouraged many women to start their small projects despite the struggle, including difficult life circumstances, currency collapse, and women losing job opportunities in the face of deteriorating living conditions for many families. All of this is to provide income for them and their families to be able to face life's challenges, as sa-

larities are no longer sufficient to meet the most basic needs due to losing 70-80% of their purchasing power due to the collapse of the local currency."

Al Dha'ri believes that the motivation behind the opening of many projects is the disruption of many job opportunities and projects, as well as the interruption of salaries. He considers small projects as an opportunity for women to earn a living and avoid the risks of moral deviation or being drawn into the quagmires of dirty businesses, where circumstances and needs are among the most important reasons driving them.

On the other hand, the economist Nabil Al-Shar'abi says, "The reasons for women's involvement in work are diverse, ranging from their love for work, the lack of job opportunities, the need for a secure and dignified source of income, to the anxiety caused by the conflict; fearing the loss of the jewelry these women have saved, to confront the challenges of life. In addition to the erosion of confidence in the banking sector and the fear of not being able to access the deposit if they have deposited their money in a bank due to the application of a non-full deposit policy, except through impractical installments that do not allow for its utilization."

He adds, "The conviction that there is no hope on the horizon for a breakthrough in the situation, entering into a peace process, and the return of things to normal, has become entrenched. This has led to the suspension of government salaries, staying at home without work and without a source of income in the face of the increasing need to provide for the necessities of life. Therefore, these women had no choice but to think about the necessity of finding a source of income, and thus small and micro-projects became the way out."

He continues, "What encouraged this trend is the experiences of women who ventured into this field and found encouragement, support, and achieved successes that became the subject of public discourse and media coverage, which had a significant impact in motivating other women to work in this field."

Al-Shar'abi believes that by carefully examining the reality of some families before and after opening their projects, we find that the situation has improved significantly. These families were able to continue their children's education, provide for their needs, repay some of their accumulated debts, and meet their requi-

rements such as rent for the housing they live in. Most importantly, these families preserved their dignity from humiliation and disgrace, such as resorting to begging and waiting for assistance from others.

In response to the question of how these projects helped improve the family income amid the conflict, Al-Shar'abi says, "Depending on the type of project and the service it provides, the aspects of improvement in the family income level varied. A project that provides a quality service results in a higher improvement in the family income level, and vice versa."

Solutions & Suggestions

Al-Shar'abi emphasizes the existence of several ways to encourage these projects, which helps in their expansion and development, benefiting both the family, women, and society. He says, "Before encouragement and motivation, women must understand the foundations of managing their projects in ways that ensure continuity, provide quality service, and the ability to achieve profitable returns that enable them to fulfill their commitments and more."

He emphasizes the necessity of identifying and evaluating these projects, and understanding their development and expansion needs, which is the responsibility of the relevant authorities and supporting entities. This should be accompanied by training and qualification processes at two levels: management and providing quality service.

He adds, "In addition to facilitating access to loans and their repayment, the relevant authorities should focus on economically feasible projects, granting them complete exemption from all tax fees and others."

He points out the importance of focusing on these projects through stories and news reports to introduce them to the community and encourage support through purchasing their products or services. He also emphasizes the role of the private sector in providing necessary support, directing part of their support to these projects, and assisting them in providing initial requirements such as decor and advertising boards.

Women in Yemen had no choice but to enter the labor market to help their families meet the necessities of life, especially with the halt of salaries, the layoffs in many insolvent establishments, and the decline in individuals' income due to the conflict.

Digital Violence Targeting Yemeni Women: A Rising Concern

Digital violence poses a serious threat to women's rights and dignity in Yemen, as it contributes to restricting their freedom, social and economic activities, and their general ability to express themselves. It represents a form of gender-based violence.

By: **Hanan Hussein**
Women in Development and Peace

Digital violence is a recent phenomenon that has emerged due to the advancements in digital technology worldwide. So, what is digital violence? What are its causes? What are its impacts? And what are the solutions to mitigate it?

What Is Digital Violence?

It is defined as any use of digital technology to harm, threaten, or control another person. It takes various forms and occurs online, through electronic devices, or social networks.

Fahmi Albahith, a digital security specialist, says, "Digital violence does not differ from real-world violence, except in the mechanisms and tools used. Digital violence against women and girls is violence based on gender, utilizing technological tools, including social media or instant messaging applications. However, it undoubtedly has consequences that extend beyond the digital realm, including bullying, extortion, and threats, which can have psychological and physical effects on the victim."

Forms of Digital Violence

Helmi Abdulqawi Ghaleb, an expert from YODET organization, discusses various forms of electronic violence, stating, "In our current digital age, as social media infiltrates almost every aspect of our lives, a new battlefield for violence against women has emerged."

He adds, "This online space, despite providing opportunities for communication and empowerment, can also become fertile ground for various forms of abuse, often leaving severe consequences on the victims."

Helmi emphasizes that women face multiple forms of violence on social media, including:

Cyberbullying: This continuous form of harassment involves repeated attacks

through messages, comments, and harmful images, with the aim of intimidating, humiliating, and isolating the victim. The anonymity of individuals on online platforms encourages perpetrators to commit crimes, often targeting women based on their appearance, gender, or opinions.

Harassment: It includes unwanted and offensive communication, including unwanted sexual harassment, threats, and derogatory comments. Perpetrators may use social media to flood women with messages, invade their privacy, and track their online activities, creating a sense of fear and anxiety.

Cyberstalking: This involves continuous and unwanted monitoring through social media as a tool to track the victims' movements and monitor their online interactions, even gathering information about their personal lives. This constant feeling of being watched can be extremely distressing and have severe psychological effects.

Threats: The anonymity provided by the Internet allows perpetrators to issue threats of violence or harm against women, often with terrifying effects. These threats can extend to their loved ones, increasing the fear and intimidation experienced by the victims.

Online defamation: This includes sharing personal information about the victim in a harmful manner, such as their address, phone number, and private photos, without their consent. This violation of privacy can expose women to further harassment and harm beyond the online realm.

Online hate speech: Social media platforms can become fertile ground for hatred and misogynistic speech that targets women based on their gender, religion, or ethnicity. Exposure to these hateful messages can create a hostile online environment, leading to feelings of isolation.

Digital extortion: It involves blackmailing women with explicit or compromising photos or videos, exploiting their vulnerabilities to intimidate them and gain what the perpetrator wants. This can push the victim to the point of suicide.

Cause of Digital Violence Against Women in Yemen

Digital violence against women in Yemen can be attributed to several factors, as mentioned by Elaf Rashid, a decorator and animator. She states, "One of the reasons for digital violence is the exploitation of criminals who take advantage of girls' lack of experience in the digital world. If a girl cannot strengthen her personal account on social media platforms, her account can easily be hacked, and her data can be compromised, leading to blackmail."

She further adds, "Our society's culture prevents girls from sharing their personal information and photos on social media networks, but it does not prevent others from disrespecting and insulting them due to cultural differences. If a girl happens to share her photos or personal information, and they are circulated in a demeaning manner by others, they are not held accountable. Instead, blame is placed on the girl for this 'flaw,' and she is expected to bear the consequences because she shared personal photos of herself."

Engineer Azmi Ghaleb, an expert from YODET Organization, shares his perspective on the causes of digital violence, stating, "Digital violence is widespread, particularly as a result of conflicts in the country, including electronic extortion. Some individuals have turned electronic extortion into a source of income, and some even operate as organized gangs."

He continues, "Among the reasons for digital violence are a lack of awareness about digital culture, a lack of sufficient understanding of the risks of digital violence and how to confront it, as well as unsafe Internet usage."

Azmi emphasizes that there are various complex factors contributing to digital violence, saying, "Many girls experience digital violence on social media platforms due to emotional relationships with unknown parties on social media. The main reason behind this is poverty and the poor financial condition of both the victims and the extortionists."

He adds, "There are girls who engage in phone calls for some money without realizing that the other party might be an extortionist. On the other hand, extortionists may hack electronic devices to obtain material gain. Here, we find that financial situations and poverty are two fundamental factors contributing to the spread of digital violence against women."

Others argue that the widespread use of the Internet and electronic devices in Yemen has made it easier for individuals to access and harass women. Additionally, the ongoing conflict in Yemen has led to

discrimination against women and weakened their legal protection.

Effects

Helmi Abdulqawi believes that there are consequences that can befall women who experience digital violence in its various forms. He states, "The diverse forms of violence cause significant harm to women, including psychological effects ranging from emotional distress and anxiety to depression, sleep disorders, and even post-traumatic stress disorder."

He adds, "There are also social and economic consequences that can extend beyond the virtual world, affecting women's personal and professional lives and hindering their full participation in society."

Challenges in Combating Digital Violence

Fahmi Albahith, a specialist in digital security, identifies challenges that may impede efforts to combat this phenomenon, saying, "The absence of laws and specialized authorities addressing such issues poses a major obstacle in finding solutions."

He further states, "The lack of awareness among women and girls about the risks present on the Internet makes them easy targets. Therefore, it is important for individuals and collaborative initiatives to clarify what can be addressed to the relevant authorities to assist in resolving these issues or to raise awareness among victims and Internet users in general."

Proposed Solutions to Combat Digital Violence

Combating digital violence against women in Yemen requires a range of solutions. According to Fahmi Albahith, there are several approaches that can be taken to reduce digital violence. He mentioned the following in his statement, "There are long-term solutions, such as enacting laws to combat these crimes and training specialized personnel in government agencies to gain the trust of victims. And there are short-term solutions, such as intensifying awareness campaigns about digital issues and their risks, which contribute to raising awareness and caution and thus reducing their spread."

Azmi Ghaleb also believes that there are various approaches to address this type of violence. He stated, "Conducting

Some individuals have turned to cyber extortion as a source of income

awareness campaigns, training courses, and workshops to raise awareness about digital violence, how to protect electronic devices from breaches, and other similar courses."

He adds, "Girls, in particular, should be targeted to prevent them from becoming victims of digital violence. It is also suggested to publish information about the risks of digital violence, its causes, how to deal with it, and propose preventive solutions on various media platforms and social media platforms dedicated to civil society organizations and peace-building organizations."

Helmi identifies several points to counter these forms of violence, including:

Strengthening the legal aspect: It is necessary to enact strong legislation that criminalizes digital violence against women and imposes strict penalties on perpetrators from relevant authorities.

Enhancing digital literacy: By educating women with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate online spaces safely and protect themselves from cyberattacks through educational courses and training workshops.

Improving platform accountability: Social media platforms need to implement strong policies to regulate content and reporting mechanisms to address harmful content and ensure user safety. Additionally, building online and offline support networks can provide invaluable resources for women experiencing violence online.

Increasing awareness of the risks of digital violence: Civil society organizations, schools, and universities should promote awareness of the risks of digital violence against women and how to protect themselves from it.

He further states, "Combating violence against women on social media requires collective efforts from individuals, platforms, and policymakers, aiming to create a safer digital environment."

Digital violence against Yemeni women has emerged as a phenomenon along with the development of the digital world. As the world expands and efforts towards a more developed society intensify, we find that the negatives become more pronounced. Therefore, digital violence against Yemeni women is a problem and an obstacle that requires urgent attention from all relevant parties, as it causes harm on all levels.

Women at Risk: Impacts and Restrictions Amidst the Conflict in Yemen

Yemen has witnessed successive conflicts, which have had a devastating impact on the country's infrastructure. Yemeni women have been the most affected by the consequences of the conflict, as many restrictions have been formed that prevent access to basic services such as healthcare and education. The conflict in Yemen has led to an increase in violence in all its forms, putting Yemeni women in more vulnerable positions.

By: Alia Mohammed
 Women in Development and Peace

Family Influences

Mona Ahmed, a 30-year-old mother of two, lost her husband during the conflict and found herself with additional roles that she had to take on. She says, "The family's standard of living decreased after my husband's death, and financial burdens increased. I was forced to go out and look for work. I moved from place to place and went through a difficult psychological state that affected my children."

Shoukia Al-Abssi, a feminist activist and president of the I Am for My Country Foundation, believes that "the conflict has had a significant impact on women; women have become at the mouth of the cannon and have faced very large confrontations and challenges to survive."

She has fully borne the family matters, whether she was a wife, sister, or daughter, because she has borne greater burdens than before the conflict.

She adds, "Conflicts leave a great impact on the life of a woman due to the complete changes in her roles; the conflict forces women to take on new roles as a result of bearing the responsibility of the family in case of the absence of its provider, which creates a state of fear and insecurity."

Al-Abssi described the conflict as the greatest pain for women due to the complexities of life that have

caused many families to collapse, and only women bear the harsh conditions and challenges that have a devastating effect on them.

She pointed out that the conflict has forced many women to sell their family's possessions in order to live with dignity, but with the length of the conflict, there is nothing left to sell. Displacement and mobility to search for supporting organizations became the last solution, and this was also the biggest challenge for women in light of the spread of corruption and the absence of supervision and accountability, which exposed them to violations and harassment in order to access humanitarian aid.

Social and Economic Effects

The conflict has affected women in many economic and social aspects, and violence, displacement, and loss are among the most important effects that women face during conflicts, leaving deep and sustainable scars on their lives.

Feminist activist Hayat Al-Rahbi stated that the conflict has significant economic effects on women, and the destruction of vital infrastructure in Yemen has led to the deterioration of the economy, the loss of job opportunities, and the loss of jobs. This, in turn, has affected women's ability to secure their daily income and support their families. It has also exacerbated poverty and created an economic disparity between genders.

She adds, "The exorbitant price hike posed a major challenge to women who decided to undertake small projects of their own after losing their jobs and experiencing frustration due to the lack of profit opportunities and the instability of currency exchange."

Al-Rahbi pointed out in her speech that men's control over decision-making positions and the exploitation of the ongoing conflict in the country, and depriving women of their rights by not activating the supervisory side and holding the

corrupt accountable and leaving things as they are, which led to depriving women of mobility in the functional pyramid structure guaranteed to them by law.

In a related context, the report issued in 2019 by Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies stated that the conflict in Yemen has forced many women to work in new professions inside the home or join the labor market due to the deterioration of the economic situation. The report also stated that the conflict imposed additional restrictions on women's participation in the labor market, making it difficult for them to obtain job opportunities and participate effectively in the workforce.

Regarding the social impacts that have affected women due to the conflict, Haya Al-Rahbi confirmed that the conflict has led to an increase in various forms of domestic violence, as well as an increase in cases of child marriage and forced marriage due to poverty and lack of livelihood - especially in remote areas - and the absence of family support, in addition to the absence of the state and the exploitation of the country's state of emergency.

She added, "The law is absent during the conflict, and women are subjected to physical and sexual violence, kidnapping, abduction, and torture; leaving deep psychological and physical effects that negatively impact their ability to participate in society and access educational and employment opportunities."

Education & Healthcare

Access to education and healthcare is another challenge facing women in Yemen due to the destruction of infrastructure caused by conflict. Many schools, educational centers, hospitals, and clinics have been shut down, which has limited access to essential educational and healthcare services.

Shoukia Al-Abssi said that the conflict has destroyed many schools, and some of them have been used as

shelters for displaced people, making it difficult for girls to access education and disrupting their studies. As a result, the cycle of illiteracy, poverty, and marginalization continues for women.

She added that a large number of girls have dropped out of school because they are unable to meet the demands and requirements of education that are not taken into account by the ongoing events on the ground. As a result, many families have decided to marry off their underage daughters in order to reduce the burden of expenses and protect them, especially among displaced families."

Solutions & Treatments

"Women affected by conflict need comprehensive support that includes psychological, social, medical, professional, and educational support. This is what activist Hayat Al-Rahbi stressed in her talk about the most important measures required to ensure the safety of women, help them, and provide them with the necessary support for recovery and rehabilitation.

She explained that women need to strengthen their role in society, and this will only be achieved by protecting women and girls who have been victims of violence, providing safe shelters, and providing psychological and social support to help women recover and overcome the effects of conflict. In addition to providing financial support to rebuild health and education services and provide support and economic opportunities for conflict-affected women, through the provision of vocational training and entrepreneurial opportunities to empower them economically. She stressed the importance of the concerted efforts of government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and civil society to provide these services and treatments appropriate to meet the needs of women affected by conflict.



Increase in Illiteracy Rates Among Yemeni Women: A Prominent Effect of the Conflict

Education is considered one of the fundamental human rights and is the foundation for economic, social, and cultural development. Despite this, Yemen suffers from high illiteracy rates, especially among women.

By: Hanan Hussein
Women in Development and Peace

Nora Ahmed (pseudonym), 24 years old, comes from a village near the capital, Sana'a, just a few kilometers away. Nora struggles with a harsh reality that forces her to travel long distances to reach the university. She has a husband, two children, and a family, as well as household chores and other rural work such as herding and farming.

Nora has faced many challenges with her husband to convince him of the necessity of completing her university education. She says, "My father prevented my sisters from continuing their education after the sixth grade. I was lucky to move to my husband's house, which is close to the school at that time. Now I put a lot of effort and time into continuing my university education; I spend four hours every day on transportation."

Nora speaks with tension as she hurriedly takes her steps towards transportation, preparing to return home. She believes that family comes first, and she is committed to providing all the needs of her children for food and drink, preparing them the night before. As soon as she returns, she works on warming up the food and serving it filled with love and hope for a better future.

Community Perspectives

Ali Nasih, a grocery store worker, wonders, "Why should girls pursue education?" A woman who is shopping responds, "A girl's destiny is her home, her husband, and her children, but education is essential for everyone. At the very least, it allows her to review lessons with her children in the future." These are the common comments cir-



culating in the Yemeni society in general, especially in rural areas.

Statistics

Yemen is considered one of the poorest countries, and the conflict has greatly deteriorated the educational situation in Yemen, leading to a significant increase in illiteracy rates among women. According to official statistics, the illiteracy rate among females in Yemen is around 65%.

In a report by UNICEF titled "Major Challenges Facing Girls' Education" for the year 2021, it is stated that there are over two million children out of school in Yemen, and the vast majority of them are girls. Basic education is still inaccessible for many of them, especially those living in remote rural areas.

On the other hand, in a report published by UN Women in 2023 titled "Yemeni Women: Pioneering Towards the Future," it is stated that the percentage of women and girls accessing education is only 35%, with only 6% of them

having access to paid job opportunities.

Inevitable Reality

A group of experts and researchers believe that there are several consequences that may arise from the increasing illiteracy rate among women in Yemen. The first is the difficulty of obtaining suitable employment opportunities to be able to provide for themselves or their families adequately in the future. Others argue that they may face an increasing risk of violence, as illiterate women become more vulnerable to exploitation by men. Illiteracy can also lead to women being deprived of job opportunities and participation in public life.

Ahlam Al-Maqalih, an organization trainer, believes that women may face many negative effects and states, "In general, women are affected in all aspects. Violence and discrimination against them may increase significantly, and they may face difficulties due to a lack of health awareness, which poses a threat to their well-being, and this ex-

pands the negative effects."

She adds, "Let's not forget that poverty resulting from a lack of education can deprive them of excellent job opportunities, and they may become a burden on their families. The consequences of the conflict, such as the interruption of essential services, the destruction of schools, and the shortage of teaching staff due to the wave of displacement, in addition to the security threats that have affected some schools during the conflict, all contribute to significant challenges that the educational process has faced in general."

Causes

The reasons for the high illiteracy rate among women in Yemen in the context of conflict are numerous and complex. Ahlam Al-Maqalih, a Yemeni journalist, identified some of the reasons, saying, "The most important reasons for the decline in education are the deteriorating security situation since the outbreak of the conflict and the widespread customs and traditions where girls' education is not a priority."

A number of researchers have identified the following as possible reasons for the high illiteracy rate among Yemeni women:

Social customs and traditions: Some social customs that prevent girls and women from accessing education still exist, such as the belief of some families that education is not necessary for girls and women. The expansion of the phenomenon of early marriage also contributes to the denial of girls' right to education.

Displacement of families: The displacement of many families from their homes, whether internally within Yemen or externally to neighboring countries, has disrupted the educational process. Many families have been forced to move to areas where there are no schools, or girls and women have been forced to work to support their families.

The destruction of schools in armed conflicts: The destruction of schools in armed conflicts has led to the closure or relocation of these schools, making it difficult for girls and women to access

education.

The decline in financial resources: The conflict has led to a decline in the financial resources available for education in Yemen. This has led to a decrease in the number of teachers, textbooks, and other educational facilities.

Lack of job opportunities and high unemployment rates in society: Illiterate women may face difficulty finding good jobs; employers often prefer to hire educated women.

Proposed Solutions for Combating Women Illiteracy in Yemen

Journalist Ahlam Al-Maqalih offers some solutions, saying, "The most important solutions are to raise awareness among families about the importance of girls' education and to support them in continuing their education on a continuous basis. The importance of education is a necessity that must be done, and working seriously to provide a safe environment for them to complete their education in a correct and safe way."

Researchers also see the need to reopen schools that have been destroyed or closed as a result of armed conflicts, and to maintain, repair, and fully secure them. In addition to providing the necessary financial resources for education, such as teachers, textbooks, and other educational facilities.

The most important proposals that could contribute to reducing the illiteracy rate among women in Yemen are to get rid of the social customs that prevent women from continuing their education, especially in rural areas, and to prevent early marriage by enacting some laws. Women and girls should be encouraged to continue their education and to obtain job opportunities that allow them to live a decent life for themselves and their families.

The high illiteracy rate among women in Yemen is a serious problem that affects society as a whole, and requires great efforts to be made to solve it. Therefore, it is necessary to take urgent measures to address this challenge and ensure women's right to education.



Gender and Conflict in Yemen

The current conflict in Yemen is considered one of the most challenging armed conflicts in the modern history of Yemen, with devastating effects on all segments of Yemeni society, including gender.

By: Hanan Hussein
 Women in Development and Peace

Women have been greatly affected by the ongoing conflict, experiencing various forms of gender-based violence such as physical and psychological violence. Discrimination against them has intensified, reducing their opportunities for education, work, and social participation.

Direct Impact

Dr. Salih Hameed, a sociology professor at Sana'a University, believes that the conflict has created a new environment where women have been marginalized at various levels. He states, "Women have been the victims, bearing the brunt of these conflicts. This is most evident at the family level, where a woman is marginalized and her role is weakened. Women have been used as tools in the conflict, with some experiencing physical and psychological violence. This violence is not a result of the moment, but rather a consequence of the ongoing conflict in Yemen over the years."

Meanwhile, Dr. Halima Gihaf, the director of the Gender and Social Research Center at Sana'a University, emphasizes that all citizens have been affected by the conflict in Yemen, with men, women, and children all feeling its impact. However, she points out that women have been disproportionately affected for several reasons, including the loss of breadwinners (father, husband, brother) due to the conflict, forcing them to seek work and sources of livelihood.

Additionally, the lack of basic services such as water, electricity, and gas has placed additional burdens on women as they search for these necessities or alternatives in urban and rural areas.

Dr. Gihaf further explains that the interruption of salaries has also negatively impacted Yemeni women, as the absence of income for employed women directly affects their living standards and essential household needs.

The fear, panic, and psychological stress caused by the surrounding conflicts and the lack of a sense of security have further negatively impacted family life, leading to increased disputes, tensions, and divorces.

Children were not exempt from that either, and the impact of the conflict on them was extremely significant, particularly concerning health issues and the spread of many epidemics and diseases. Additionally, there was a deterioration in the economic situation, with parents unable to provide the essentials of food and drink, as well as an impact on their educational situation due to the lack of salaries, damage to schools, and a shortage of resources that affected the quality of educational services.

The Role of Women Compared to Men

Before the conflict in Yemen, women and girls had made significant progress in gender equality, with an increased percentage of women enrolling in higher education, entering the workforce, and participating significantly in political and social life. Unfortunately, this progress has regressed significantly due to the effects of the conflict over the years.

Widad Al-Badwi, a journalist, sees that the conflict has placed significant responsibility on women in their society, stating, "Women have completely lost their privacy due to displacement and conflict. In some cases, more than three families have been forced to live



in one house, which has completely deprived the women of their privacy."

She adds, "They have also suffered from economic hardship and the inability to provide the essentials for a dignified life."

She continues, "Women have borne the brunt of the conflict in the past years, especially in light of salary interruptions, which has placed a significant responsibility on them due to the loss of the breadwinner in conflicts, or due to some of them experiencing psychological distress as a result of the poor economic conditions and lack of salary."

Widad emphasizes that women have played a pivotal role in leading toward safety, with many women and girls continuously seeking sources of income to secure their family's needs. Many of them have taken on undesirable jobs or jobs in which they lacked experience, such as cooking and tailoring.

She adds, "Some of them have even sold their personal savings, such as gold and money, to support their families."

Dr. Salih Hameed, a sociologist at Sana'a University, believes that women have been more affected by the consequences of the armed conflict in the country, stating, "Women have taken on additional roles during the conflict, in addition to their roles as home caregivers, as the conflict has forced them to seek work and support their families significantly due to the general deterioration of the economic situation."

The woman has entered the workforce to support her husband, father, and son, which has posed a challenge for Yemeni society, being traditionally male-dominated.

Despite the challenges faced by Yemeni women, they have played key roles in conflict resistance and peacebuilding in Yemen, working as civil activists, volunteering in humanitarian relief organizations, and engaging in other social work.

Key Roles

Ikram Al-Raqihi, a protection and gender advisor, highlighted the significant roles women have played in the conflict, stating that Yemen has experienced difficult conditions and multiple conflicts that have directly impacted the change of many cultures and roles within society, especially those based on gender.

She added that women have played a major role in supporting conflict-affected individuals by raising societal awareness about the importance of protecting them from violations and helping them access services provided by various entities, institutions, and organizations, whether it's psychological support,

economic empowerment, or legal protection.

The Challenges

In the midst of conflict, women and girls in Yemen face many challenges. Dr. Halima Gihaf pointed out some of the prominent challenges, including the lack of security, security complications due to the conflict conditions, and restrictions on women's movement.

Additionally, there are limited income sources, a scarcity of decent living opportunities, and a lack of healthcare resources, leading to the spread of serious and intractable diseases. Negative effects also include the decline in women's issues, in terms of participation and integration into public service, due to changing priorities.

Dr. Salih Hameed also noted that women face a lot of violence, both within and outside the family, with some facing condescending attitudes when entering the workforce. However, he emphasized that women have become essential and have overcome condescending attitudes, proving their resilience and ability to face challenges and marginalization by society, creating numerous opportunities for themselves.

Furthermore, "Another difference that women have been subjected to is the deprivation of many services as a result of conflicts, including access to food aid. The obstacle was the lack of a male guardian to track the responsible persons for this aid in the neighborhood where she lives, as she is a woman who cannot enter men's councils."

Additionally, women, especially displaced women, have been restricted in their freedom of movement, leading to a loss of privacy and limited mobility.

The negative impact of the conflict has also led to a setback in women's education, as they prioritize entering the workforce to provide for their families due to the absence or loss of income from male family members. This economic strain has forced some women to sell their personal savings, engage in home-based projects, or seek traditionally male-dominated work opportunities.

On her part, Ikram Al-Raqihi spoke about the most prominent challenges faced by women, saying, "Due to conflicts, a large percentage of women have become the breadwinners; due to the loss of a husband or breadwinner alongside displacement to different areas, which forced women to work even if this work lacks any protective measures and dignity, in order to protect their families and children from the dangers of conflicts."

She added, "Women are the primary victims in armed conflicts; where women have

sought to work and acquire different skills, even if these skills are mostly limited to the stereotypical image of women in Yemeni society, such as sewing, embroidery, making sweets and pastries, small projects, and others."

She further stated, "Women have faced an increase in family disputes with men, and the gap between them has widened due to targeting, as they have become the sole breadwinner and head of the family bearing extremely difficult burdens."

The Damages

Ikram Al-Raqihi mentioned that women and children make up about three-quarters of the total 4.5 million displaced people in Yemen, and women support almost 26% of the displaced families (according to statistics published by the United Nations in Yemen). She added, "Discriminatory behaviors against women continue to hinder women's ability to support themselves and their families. Around 7.1 million women in Yemen (according to United Nations statistics) need access to services that prevent and address gender-based violence, yet these services are still extremely limited or completely absent in some areas." She continued, "Conflicts have left serious negative impacts on women for several reasons, most notably economic collapse and the collapse of services, resulting in the lack of healthcare, deprivation of education, early marriage, and the most difficult of all, violence against women, which is one of the most significant violations against women."

In conclusion, she emphasized the role of humanitarian organizations in supporting women to access services, protect them, and assist them in training and economic empowerment and highlighted some weaknesses facing these projects, including the lack of actual coordination with local organizations to identify the most important needs and how to reach the target audience directly and clearly.

Solutions & Treatments

Addressing the effects of gender conflict in Yemen requires a range of solutions and treatments.

Halima Gihaf emphasizes that there are many proposals, including those she mentioned, stating, "Reaching quick solutions to ensure regular payment of salaries, opening airports and seaports; which may facilitate people's movement for treatment, work, or other reasons."

She added, "Serious and rapid work in repairing infrastructure, providing basic ser-

vices, essential goods, and medical needs, in addition to providing psychological support for deserving individuals from all groups. Enhancing the efficiency of women, economically, administratively, and politically, to enhance their status and make them active partners in Yemen's development. Finally, we hope to reach a political solution as soon as possible, as it can change many challenges." Dr. Salih Hameed sees that the most prominent solutions are: "First, raising awareness of the importance of women's role in society, and civil society organizations finding sustainable solutions and projects that empower women to work and achieve partial self-empowerment." He adds, "As well as conducting specialized statistical studies and research on working women, those who have left their jobs, and those who couldn't find work before and after the conflict, presenting the damages they have suffered, and presenting these studies to the responsible authorities and organizations to help them establish their projects and economically empower them through suitable projects with them."

He emphasizes, "Enacting laws and legislation to reduce women's exposure to violence in all its forms, in addition to seeking their involvement in social activities in the field of peacebuilding."

Ikram Al-Raqihi believes that the most prominent treatments from her perspective involve raising societal and institutional awareness in all national and local sectors and institutions about the importance of conducting field studies and surveys before preparing plans for any project, to identify the most important actual needs from a gender perspective.

In addition to raising societal awareness through social media about human rights in general, and women's rights in particular, from an Islamic perspective, alongside international and local legislation and laws.

Al-Raqihi also believes that integrating gender into plans, strategies, and programs implemented in various sectors would contribute to reducing the negative impact on women.

She emphasizes the need to prepare a national plan to implement Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and their involvement, highlighting their importance in preventing and resolving conflicts, as well as in building peace.

The conflict in Yemen has led to numerous negative effects on gender equality, making post-conflict gender equality a significant challenge but necessary for achieving sustainable development. These efforts must include protecting the rights of women and girls and achieving gender equality.

Aisha: A Real Story of Struggle Between the Hell of Conflict and Traditions

Aisha wakes up at five in the morning, the sound of the wind gnawing at their tent. It is a daily routine for her, as she has to spend a suitable amount of time kindling the firewood to boil tea, an essential part of the family's breakfast, along with leftover bread from the previous day and a small amount of goat milk.

By: **Haneen Al-Wahsh**
Women in Development and Peace

Aisha puts the breakfast in a ceramic bowl and covers it with a piece of cloth to protect it from flies, keeping it ready until her five children and her disabled husband wake up. Then she takes a rope and ties together empty water containers to make it easier for her to carry them to the nearby well. By seven in the morning, Aisha leaves her camp, which is surrounded by a large group of randomly distributed tents. Over a hundred displaced families reside there, in the eastern part of Dhubab District near Bab Al-Mandab.

Aisha walks a distance of one kilometer to reach the well. If she arrives early enough, she manages to fill the water containers (each with a capacity of 10-20 liters). She leaves them at the well until her children wake up and take turns carrying the smaller containers, while the larger one remains there, waiting for their mother to return from one of the women's associations where she volunteers intermittently, as they occasionally offer temporary projects that bring about a noticeable change in the living conditions of the targeted families.

Aisha says, "I spent a long time searching for work. My husband stepped on a landmine in 2018, losing his right leg as a result. It was my responsibility to provide for our family, which consists of him, myself, and our five children. The oldest is eleven years old, and the youngest is four."

Forced Marriage

Aisha is proficient in reading and writing, which distinguishes her from

the majority of women in Dhubab, the hosting district for displaced people. She says, "I worked as a volunteer teacher and knocked on the doors of all organizations in search of work, any kind of work. I have the ability to read, write, and understand any task assigned to me. However, I only have a junior high school certificate as I didn't complete my education due to reasons related to customs and traditions."

Aisha continues, "Many families prevent women from receiving education in our village, considering that women are created solely for the household. Only a few families give their daughters the opportunity to learn until the ninth grade. Anything beyond that is considered objectionable, as they view young women as ready for marriage."

Aisha got married at the age of twelve to her six-year-older cousin and started playing the role of a housewife. She gave birth to three children before the armed conflict forced her to leave her home. The family left Maw-

za District and moved to Dhubab, the neighboring district. In the displacement camp, she gave birth to her youngest twins. Her husband worked as a shepherd before being caught in a landmine explosion from the remnants of the conflict in Harieqia area, one of Dhubab's villages overlooking Bab Al-Mandab.

"It was a dream for me to complete my education and become someone in the future, either a teacher or a doctor, but I was prevented from doing so," Aisha speaks with her eyes fixed on the ground. She raises her gaze and adds, "It was not only customs and traditions that prevented me but also the debilitating war. I'm not the only one; in fact, the majority of women here have resorted to searching for work to support their families, either due to the loss of the sole breadwin-

Many families in our village hinder women's access to education, holding the belief that women are solely meant for domestic responsibilities

ner in each family or to prevent family members from joining the conflict and carrying arms. There are no other available jobs except for this."

Escape from Hell

It was not easy for Aisha to find work in an environment filled with difficulties, especially since she lacked prior experience, skills, and formal education, which made her start from scratch. She explains, "I started working at a local association that provided five sewing machines with humanitarian support, and we started using them. However, the difficult circumstances prevented me from continuing, and I left after gaining some experience."

She continues, "As I told you before, I approached many organizations in search of work and volunteered as a teacher without compensation. I would return to my children with nothing, feeling ashamed of making them wait. That's why I returned to my position at the association. Instead of working as a trainee, I visited neighboring camps and assessed the needs of families. Some had torn clothes, while others wanted new clothes. So, I provided them with what they needed at affordable prices, and that's how I started feeling productive."

Aisha embarked on a new chapter when families started coming to her to mend their children's clothes. But the most significant breakthrough in Aisha's closed-loop life was when she received a sewing machine and a large bag of fabric through the support of a United Nations fund project targeting associations and small businesses. She says, "I received the sewing machine a month ago, and I kept it at the association where I

work. I intend to move it home after expanding the tent."

She adds, with a glimmer of joy in her eyes, "I dream of sewing many clothes and establishing a small exhibition to sell them, which will undoubtedly grow over time. This way, I can provide a decent living for my family. I will face some difficulties, as my husband does not want me to work, and he barely accepts me leaving the house. In addition, my father hears bad rumors about organizations and believes them."

She concludes, saying, "Just as I faced the hell of conflict, I will face the hell of customs and traditions that diminish women. I won't say I have overcome them until I achieve my dream."

Aisha Is Not the Only One

We reached out to the president of Al-Zahra Association where Aisha works, Mrs. Belqees, who said, "Aisha is an exemplary model for dozens of women who are waiting for their turn to receive support in order to improve their families' livelihoods. That's why they work actively and voluntarily in the association. Rarely do we get targeted by organizations, even though we have a wide range of projects."

Mrs. Belqees confirms that the association accommodates a large number of displaced women who, due to conflict and the loss of their families, have been forced to seek work to provide a source of income to support their children. She pointed out that Aisha stands out from others due to her quick understanding, imagination, and spontaneity.

Mrs. Belqees called on supporting organizations to involve the association in implementing some projects, saying, "We are a developmental women's association, and we have a trained administrative body consisting of women who speak multiple languages, in addition to an active team of association members. Through you, we seek support from relevant organizations."



Rural Women in Yemen Amidst Conflict

Rural women in Yemen are among the most affected by the ongoing conflict in the country, facing significant challenges and suffering negative impacts on their social and economic aspects of life.

By: Hebah Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

Analyzing the impact of the conflict on rural women is crucial in understanding the current situation and identifying the needs and future paths to empower this important segment of society.

This report aims to shed light on the impact of the conflict on rural women in Yemen and the challenges they face. It will analyze the social and economic effects of the conflict on the lives of rural women, including its impact on issues such as education, health, sexual violence, and women's economic empowerment.

The Conflict and the Life of Rural Women in Yemen

The conflict in Yemen presents a huge challenge that affects the lives of the population in general, but rural women suffer its effects in a particularly direct manner. The prolonged conflict weakens the economic and social structure in rural areas, undermining their stability and sustainable development.

Amid the struggle and the years of conflict, rural women continue to play their roles inside their homes or on farms, serving as fundamental support for agricultural production in rural areas. According to Muna Ribat, the head of the Women's Cooperative Association in Yareem district of Ibb Governorate, "During the conflict, rural women have continued to perform their roles within the household or on the farm, as a fundamental support for agricultural production in rural areas."

She further explains, "Women represent over 60% of the workforce in crop production and over 90% in animal husbandry. The continuous conflicts in Yemen have pushed more families to the brink of poverty, leading to an increase in early marriage among girls to alleviate financial burdens."

She continues, "The only activity that men engage in is marketing and selling animals in the markets, and rural women are not allowed to do so. Women bear the greater burden in all household tasks, childcare, and family care in general."

Ribat pointed out that the economic situation of the country has placed additional responsibilities on rural women, leading them to work six hours or more daily to fetch household water and firewood due to the high prices of water and domestic cooking gas. Many families have also been displaced to their original rural areas.

Ribat explains the roles of rural women and the nature of their lives, stating that they often have many young children who require a great deal of care. Women bear the heavy burden of household responsibilities, particularly in collecting water and firewood, as well as in domestic work, cooking, and childcare, all of which consume time and energy that could have been used for income generation and other activities.

She added, "Women are responsible for tending to livestock and domestic breeding, which traditionally requires force-feeding by hand, a task usually performed by older women. Women also bear the heavy burden of agricultural work during planting seasons, crop care, and harvesting."



Samaah Halqum, the director of the Rural Women's Department at Sanaa Radio, said, "Unfortunately, the presence of rural women is almost marginalized except in special cases, despite the extensive advertising using the name of rural women, it is merely a promotional exploitation, as our society is predominantly male."

She further explains, "Sometimes the broad headline of supporting and assisting rural women in reality benefits men, even though rural women are the ones who actually bear the major role in rural work, whether in the land, animal husbandry, or feeding, in addition to their traditional roles as homemakers, mothers, and wives."

Naseem Al-Ma'mari, president of the Widows and Divorcees Association in Al-Nadra directorate, Ibb Governorate, says, "Rural women and girls in Yemen are the most affected by the conflict, resulting in displacement, deprivation of services, daily suffering, increased unemployment, and a heightened risk of falling below the poverty line and experiencing hunger."

Impacts & Challenges

Muna Ribat explains, "In a male-dominated society like Yemen, men are seen as providers of protection for their families. Without this protection, women are at risk of physical assault and harassment. Therefore, men often resort to strict actions when women disobey orders, which can escalate to domestic violence."

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has had a significant impact on rural women, as the disruption of water networks and the rising prices of domestic gas expose them to increased dangers while fetching water and collecting firewood from distant areas, including the risks of the road, landmines, and explosive remnants from the conflict.

Ribat also points out that displaced families and even the host community in rural areas do not prioritize girls' education due to financial constraints and the need for girls to perform household and agricultural tasks. Furthermore, the destruction of some rural schools and the government's inability to pay salaries have disrupted the education process for both genders, with girls being affected more severely, as parents can barely afford fees for boys to attend private schools.

Ribat emphasizes that humanitarian aid targeting rural women is significantly weak compared to men, as women often struggle to access registration committees and lack personal identification documents such as identification cards or passports.

She also explains that due to harsh economic conditions and men facing financial pressures, domestic violence against women and children often occurs. In recent years, families supported by women in Yemen have faced extreme poverty, whether in rural or urban areas, with a heightened risk of food insecurity. Most female-headed households lack a stable source of income, leading to a worsening cycle of poverty, exploitation, and mistreatment.

She added, "Rural women still lack access to credit due to procedural complications, lack of guarantees, land ownership issues, low awareness, absence of women-specific markets, and cultural traditions that restrict their participation in mixed markets for buying and selling."

She also explains that cultural, social, and security concerns pose significant barriers to the economic prospects of rural women, along with limited access to markets, high levels of illiteracy leading to low self-confidence due to inadequate education, even among the few young wo-

men who receive education.

Halqum contributes by stating, "Rural women also suffer from organizations' inability to reach them or advocate for their rights, lack of supportive proposals, and insufficient independence from men. Civil society organizations are observed to not take actions that benefit rural women effectively, as they rely on pre-existing data or information from scattered sources that may not be suitable for the targeted group, thus wasting available resources."

She advises, "Therefore, it is essential for civil society organizations to prioritize field surveys, conduct feasibility studies for any project needed by rural women based on region, needs, statistics, and coordinate with relevant authorities familiar with those needs, alongside the rural women themselves in that area." Meanwhile, Al-Ma'mari states, "Rural women face immense societal pressures and challenges, making it nearly impossible for them to balance work and personal life, including gender discrimination, unequal access to job opportunities, and absence of family care facilities."

Khairiya Al-Masi, Director of Rural Women's Development in the Directorate of Yareem, proposes solutions to the challenges facing rural women, including expanding the establishment of associations for women's development in rural areas, reaching out to women in their homes through direct visits to raise awareness about the harms of child marriage, and providing interest-free loans to rural women to establish small projects.

Shadia Al-A'rasi: A Rural Woman Who Made Wonders

Shadia Al-A'rasi, a simple rural woman in the village of Al-Balad, Al-A'ras town, in Ibb Governorate, married early and left school at a young age, leaving her no time

to enjoy her youth or access her right to education and healthcare. She gave birth to five daughters and a son, and her marriage turned into a nightmare with a husband who struggled to provide for the family. However, she became a shining example of a rural woman who defied all odds and created social change towards rural development.

Shadia Facing Challenges

Facing her family responsibilities towards her husband and daughters, Shadia insisted on defying the impossible. She took a small loan, bought a sewing machine, and joined Khadija Foundation to learn sewing and embroidery. She commuted daily from her village to the city of Yareem on foot, struggling to balance her family duties with her love for education and the search for a source of income for her family.

As her skills in sewing and embroidery developed, Shadia began producing children's and women's clothing. She marketed her products in women's gatherings and local associations, facing new challenges in managing her business and marketing her products. Therefore, she decided to learn more.

Shadia participated in training courses in project management, marketing, and local development, becoming an active member of the Khadija Foundation. She was entrusted with training women in sewing, embroidery, and life skills, and also worked on development projects with the German organization GIZ and the Social Fund for Development. Many women, including those with disabilities and the marginalized, graduated under her supervision.

Achievements & Success

Shadia established her own project by opening a supermarket with her husband, and she has achieved great accomplishments in bringing change and development to her village. This includes establishing a community development association in the field of training and rehabilitation, opening literacy, sewing, and embroidery classes, and targeting marginalized and vulnerable groups in society. She also set up a center for productive families in her town serving four adjacent towns.

Additionally, Shadia was able to secure Japanese support to build a health unit serving women and children, reducing maternal and child mortality. She also established a girls' school in A'ras, with support from the social fund, after engaging in numerous negotiation sessions with social figures and the local council in her area to build a school for girls in the village, aiming to increase the number of girls in education after years of deprivation.

Shadia has become an example of a great woman, leading in community service, rehabilitation, social care, empowerment, and enhancing the community's role in change and accessing services. Shadia has grown, as have her daughters, and many students and trainees have graduated under her guidance. Shadia is loved by those around her due to the greatness of her character and her contributions to the community.

Shadia did not stop the wheel of knowledge and education; she completed her secondary education, joined the university, and became a certified trainer in life skills by several organizations and specialized centers. She also became a social counselor for conflict resolution in her town.

Shadia Al-A'rasi reminds us of the power of will and the ability to make positive changes, even in the most difficult circumstances. Her story reflects the human desire to achieve success, improve one's life and the lives of those around them, and demonstrates that education, knowledge, and life skills development can be powerful means to achieve that.

The Role of International Organizations in Providing Support and Protection for Conflict-Affected Women

International organizations play a crucial role in safeguarding women during times of conflict, offering them psychological, social, and cultural assistance. Given that women are often the most affected by conflict, it is the responsibility of these international organizations to shield them from the adverse effects of conflict, providing vital support to Yemeni women in these challenging times.

By: **Afrah Borji**

Women in Development and Peace

Regarding this matter, Fatima Mohammed Yesslam, a member of the Arab Women's Organization, expresses that the assistance provided by international organizations does not adequately address the suffering experienced by Yemeni women due to the ongoing conflicts.

Yesslam explained that some organizations have implemented interventions without thoroughly considering the specific needs of each region, resulting in repetitive and ineffective measures. She emphasized that the complex issues faced by abused women in conflict, including verbal, physical, and social violence, require more comprehensive and tailored interventions, as the current efforts by civil society organizations often overlook the most vulnerable women in need.

Fatima further elaborates, stating that certain supporting organizations' approaches to providing judicial aid to abuse victims can be exploited for personal gain. Additionally, she highlights that programs for economic empowerment lack proper follow-up, evaluation, and sustainability, as they are often limited to specific geographical areas.

"The lack of equality of opportunities in the fair distribution of programs by donors requires these organizations to reconsider their policies in order to achieve effective results and align with the fundamental principles presented by the United Nations, which should prioritize reconstruction to provide a safe environment."

Fatima Yesslam confirms that most of the victims of the conflict are not aware of the situation in an unsafe environment. There's also an issue with economic empowerment without providing facilities for small business pioneers. Additionally, there's a lack of protection for their products in the face of the competitive market, along with non-concessional loans to continue their projects and save them from stumbling. This makes them a burden instead of being protected and cared

for. This is, of course, due to the absence of coordination between donors and the Central Statistical Agency as an expert in the field of data analysis and needs assessment; through field surveys coordinated with social affairs and work; to implement their plans according to a well-thought-out strategy that determines actual needs and priorities.

According to a report issued by Amnesty International at the end of 2019 titled "Yemen: One of the Worst Countries in the World for Women," Yemen ranks last in the global gender gap index, which was developed by the World Economic Forum for the thirteenth consecutive year.

The report verifies that women continue to experience entrenched gender inequality in a society dominated by traditional male norms and rigid gender roles. While the conflict in Yemen has adversely affected all civilians, women and girls have been impacted to differing extents. Prevalent gender stereotypes, discriminatory laws, and economic disparities have further worsened the vulnerable position of women, increasing their susceptibility to violence.

The report added: The armed conflict has led to the suffering of Yemenis due to the severity of the economic crisis, the damage to infrastructure, and the collapse of services. In addition to that, women have had to face restrictions on their movement due to prevailing cultural gender norms, as well as being responsible for providing food and care in their homes. They have had to deal with the challenges associated with limited or no access to food, water, sanitation, and healthcare services, which have continuously deteriorated due to the ongoing conflict.

According to Mawadda Khaled Qaddar, Executive Director of the Good Foundation for Human Security and Coordinator of the Sixth Women's Summit Project, "International

organizations play an important role in providing support and protection for women affected by conflicts. These organizations aim to promote women's rights and ensure their protection in the harsh conditions they face during conflicts. This role is carried out through a variety of programs and initiatives that aim to provide immediate and long-term support to affected women."

Programs that Help Conflict-Affected Women

Mawadda added that there are programs that provide support and protection for women in conflict situations. Some examples include: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): This program works to promote women's rights and participation in decision-making, and supports capacity building and economic empowerment of affected women. UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women: This program is the second most important program that helps women affected by conflict. It aims to promote women's rights, reduce gender-based violence, and support women and girls affected by conflicts.

Mawadda, in the context of programs and activities carried out by international organizations to support and protect women, mentions the United Nations Women program, which is based on promoting gender equality and women's rights in all aspects of life, and provides support and protection to women affected by conflicts.

Mawadda also says, "There are many programs in addition to those mentioned, including: the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which provides humanitarian, medical, and psychological support to women and girls affected by conflicts, including health care, shelter, and psychological support, as well as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which provides sup-

port to children affected by conflicts, including girls and boys, and works to ensure their protection from violence, exploitation, and abuse."

Challenges

According to an expert in the field of organizations, "There are no challenges for organizations in obtaining facilities from the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation, and its offices, but organizations have become more inclined to impose awareness-raising projects than developmental ones, which do not serve the current stage. Therefore, some organizations object to the nature of the projects, especially since we need to focus on rural development, encourage agricultural, fish, and animal projects, and empower rural areas to attract labor to relieve pressure on cities, and invest in abused women in such projects in these open spaces, which will in turn help women by providing them with psychological support. Such projects will contribute to addressing the challenges we face in the capitals, and will provide greater opportunities for construction and sustainability, which is a priority for international organizations in the current stage. Organizations should also focus their training on problem-solving and how to raise them, to enable women at the legal, economic, and political levels. In my personal opinion, organizations face a fundamental challenge of randomness and weak coordination among them when choosing and studying projects."

Beneficiaries' Perspectives

Dhikra Hassan says, "At the beginning of the conflict, I lost my brother, who was my primary provider, after my father died years ago. I became without a provider, and I have sisters, but each of them is in the city, and due to the difficult economic situation, they cannot help me. One day, I heard that there is an organization

that supports women affected by conflict who do not have a provider. I went to register, and they gave me an application form to fill out. After a month from the date of the request, my request was approved, and here my economic situation began to improve."

Dhikra continues, "I got a sewing machine and a lot of embroidered fabrics, and I trained after taking the tools for a month, and here I had a small project, from which I earn a living, and today I have a sewing shop."

Dhikra confirms that UNICEF has greatly helped many women in the city of Hajjah, and has provided work and projects for women who have lost their husbands during the conflict, enabling them to earn a living to improve their economic situation and support individuals who have no one to provide for them.

Statistics

In February 2023, the United Nations Population Fund called for 7 million dollars to continue its services in Yemen. According to the United Nations Population Fund, it was able to reach more than 2.7 million women and girls in Yemen during the past year, with support from partners including Canada, the Central Emergency Response Fund, Denmark, the European Union, Iceland, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States Agency for International Development, and the Humanitarian Financing Facility in Yemen.

Yemeni women are the first to be affected by the conflict. In many cases, women lose their providers, as their economic situation deteriorates, and they resort to seeking help. This is what makes many organizations support them to meet their needs and protect them from harm that affects them.



Youth-Led Initiatives Support Conflict-Affected Women in Yemen

Youth initiatives are among the most important tools contributing to bringing positive change in society, and their contribution is of utmost importance in achieving development.

By: Alia Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace



These initiatives are part of the recovery process for women affected by conflict, and a means of raising awareness in the community about women's issues affected by conflicts. This is evident in the role of youth in spreading awareness of women's rights and gender equality, providing psychological support by listening to their stories and problems and directing affected women to appropriate sources of support and assistance, whether through non-governmental organizations or relevant governmental entities.

Empowering Women Economically

Many youth initiatives aim to provide projects and opportunities to economically empower women affected by conflict. This is done through providing financial support, professional training, implementing workshops and educational programs that contribute to

developing women's skills, enhancing their capabilities to obtain better employment opportunities, achieve personal and professional progress, improve their living conditions, and thus enhance their independence and enable them to participate effectively in economic and social life.

Tarabut Al-Tanmawiya Initiative is one of the most important youth initiatives that has provided several humanitarian interventions to support women affected by the ongoing conflict through various development projects. Among the initiative's most important achievements, Amat Al-Rahman Al-A'foori, the initiative's head, says, "Tarabut Al-Tanmawiya Initiative has provided many humanitarian and developmental projects for all segments of society affected by the conflict, including

women for whom we have dedicated special projects for economic empowerment. We conducted many activities, the most important of which were: organizing training courses for women in the fields of sewing, engraving, and embroidery, in addition to specialized courses in first aid."

She added, "After taking the courses, we opened an exhibition to display the women's products, which we offered for sale to benefit from the profits. This exhibition was held in Taiz Governorate. We also implemented an economic empowerment project for women in the streets (beggars) and poor families in Aden Governorate, targeting 30 women who were trained in engraving, hairdressing, and incense making."

She pointed out that the project aims to

create employment opportunities to help them in their daily lives and to alleviate the burdens of living they endure.

Raising Awareness & Providing Psychological Support

The conflict left significant psychological effects on women due to the pressures and difficult experiences they have endured. The importance of psychosocial support activities has emerged in providing support to women affected by conflict through counseling and psychological guidance services to help them overcome their difficult psychological state, as well as to raise awareness of their rights and enhance their self-confidence.

The Nisa Al-Baydha Initiative is one of the most important feminist and youth initiatives

that provided psychological support to women affected by conflict. Huda Al-Mudhaffari says, "We conducted psychological support sessions for women, and we listened to many stories and experiences through safe spaces for expressing pain and difficulties they face. We also conducted awareness sessions on how to deal with conflicts and how to deal with feelings of fear during increasing violence."

She adds, "We also organized several training courses in first aid for a group of displaced women, and provided necessary advice on how to overcome pressures and cope with the situation for the sake of the family." She pointed out that the initiative distributed health kits and first aid supplies to the displaced women, in addition to preparing and equipping schools as shelter for displaced families and providing them with material and food aid - such as blankets, eating utensils, and more - by conducting surveys to count the number of displaced families from other governorates.

In a related context, Amr Mahfoodh, the head of Qatrat Ghayth Youth Initiative, explained the projects provided for women during the conflict, the most important of which were: involving women in humanitarian and charitable work, training and qualifying women after graduation from colleges. In addition to training female cadres in the displaced camps in the empowerment project, and assisting them in handicrafts, such as sewing, embroidery, and engraving courses.

He adds, "Women were involved in field surveys, and the emergency response project by raising awareness in the displaced camps and among the public about important health issues. Female cadres were trained and qualified in the I am the Rescuer Project in the field of first aid, in addition to organizing many festivals highlighting the importance of women's role in society."

Women Mine Victims in Yemen: A Willpower to Confront Imminent Death

According to the 1980 International Humanitarian Law regarding the use of mines and other explosive devices, their use is limited to the duration of hostilities, provided that a distinction is made between times of conflict and peace, with the guarantee of not causing harm to civilian populations. On the other hand, Yemeni law in 1997 prohibits the use of anti-personnel landmines. However, the warring parties have disregarded these laws and failed to implement the minimum safety standards for civilians or even create maps during mine planting. Instead, they have randomly planted mines, according to official and international reports.

By: Ahmed Bajoaim
Women in Development and Peace

This report reveals the reality of women who have fallen victim to landmines in Yemen. The crimes committed with such brutality paint a tragic picture of a reality resembling hell on earth for civilians in general and women in particular.

Landmine planting in Yemen is a dangerous and horrifying phenomenon that poses a real threat to civilians in many governorates and areas close to the front lines. They endure harsh and difficult humanitarian conditions, surrounded by death from all directions, including beneath the ground. In light of this, international intervention to protect women and provide necessary care for them, as the most affected group, becomes an urgent necessity.

Number of Affected Women

According to a report by the Chinese news agency Xinhua on March 8, 2023, the number of women affected by landmines in Yemen is continuously increasing. The agency cited official statistics from officials in Aden and Sana'a, stating that the total number of women who have been victims of landmines, including deaths and injuries, during the

years of conflict has reached around 2,093 in several governorates.

The Chinese government-affiliated agency, in its report titled "The Danger of Landmines and the Legacy of Conflict Haunting Women's Lives in Yemen," pointed out that the issue of landmines is a prevailing danger that hampers the lives of civilians, especially women and children.

Xinhua explained that many areas in Yemen have been contaminated with mines, ammunition, and explosive shells as a result of the devastating conflict that has lasted for nine years. Despite efforts to clear mines, explosive ordnance, and projectiles from many areas, death still lurks for women and children everywhere.

In a statistic mentioned by Dr. Dhia'a Mahirz, a member of the National Committee for Investigating Human Rights Violations, the committee recorded 161 incidents of mine explosions in the governorates of Al Jawf, Ma'rib, Al Hodeidah, Taiz, Al Bayda, Lahj, Al Dhale, and Hajjah between August 1, 2022, and July 31, 2023. These incidents resulted in 55 deaths and 124 injuries, including women and children.

Meanwhile, Al Jazeera Net website addressed, in a report titled "Hundreds of Civilians in Yemen's Al-Hodeidah injured by Landmines in 2022, including 127 children

and women," that the number of casualties from landmines and explosive ordnance reached about 289 civilians in the Al-Hodeidah Governorate in western Yemen during 2022, including 15 women. The report indicated that the number of landmine victims since the outbreak of the conflict has exceeded ten thousand civilians, mostly women and children. Over the years of the conflict, more than two million landmines and explosive devices were planted randomly throughout the country.

The report, issued on February 7, 2023, based on international reports, revealed that Yemen has witnessed the largest planting of landmines, explosive ordnance, and improvised explosive devices in the world since the end of World War II in 1945. The governorate of Al-Hodeidah is considered one of the most affected Yemeni governorates by landmines among civilians, especially women, as the mines have been planted randomly in farms, roads, and places frequented by women.

Challenges

Dr. Dhia'a Mahirz states that the main challenges facing mine clearance in Yemen are the lack of clear maps indicating the areas where mines have been planted and their types, as well as the absence of qualified local personnel to deal with these mines and remove them within a short period of time. This makes future mine clearance attempts extremely difficult. In addition to that, the ongoing tension between the conflicting parties is a hindrance as it complicates the movement of teams between regions and governorates. However, there are international and regional efforts for mine clearance, but they remain limited due to the extensive spread of explosive planting in Yemeni territories.

Mahirz also pointed out that the continued random planting of mines without providing explanatory maps poses a new challenge to the efforts aimed at ridding Yemen of mines and explosive ordnance. This represents a blatant violation of the 1997 Mine Ban Convention, of which Yemen is a party, posing a direct threat to the lives of civilians and resulting in either death or physical and psychological maiming.

Stories

Explosive mines have left behind numerous tragic stories, especially among women. Some have lost their lives, while others have suffered permanent disabilities and the loss of body parts. The stories and accounts vary, as do the victims, injuries, and regions. However, the common denominator remains the same: mines and explosive devices planted by warring parties, which are nothing but a lurking death for the innocent.

These heart-wrenching stories defy belief, yet it is difficult to comprehend the patience, endurance, and resilience exhibited by women affected by mines. In this regard, one survivor, after losing one of her four limbs in a landmine explosion, miraculously escaped certain death.

Um Musleh, a resident of a village near the city of Al-Hodeidah, shares her story: "My sister and I were working in agriculture and livestock farming. Four years ago, in 2020, a landmine exploded, killing my sister. We rushed her to Al Thawra General Hospital in Al-Hodeidah, but after several days in intensive care, she passed away. A few months after the incident, another landmine exploded while I was herding the livestock, resulting in the death of all of them. Yes, I survived the incident, but it deprived me of my source of livelihood."

Um Musleh continues, "Two years after my sister's incident, as I was heading to a farm for daily wage work, I stepped on a landmine. It exploded, and I fell into a coma for several days. When I woke up, I found myself in the intensive care unit with my left hand amputated, and I entered a difficult psychological state. By the grace and wisdom of God, I lost only my hand and nothing more. If the explosion had occurred at the center of my body, I would be dead now."

Despite all these tragedies faced, Um Musleh, the fighter, did not surrender or lose hope. She thought of relying on herself to provide for her livelihood, away from begging or relying on others. She adds, "After one of the officials at Al Thawra General Hospital heard my story and my search for work despite the loss of one of my upper limbs, he offered me a job as a sanitation

worker at the hospital. Today, I have completed my first year in this new profession." She mentions that the complications from the landmine incident on her severed hand still persist, occasionally causing her to have a fever throughout her entire body, requiring her to rest in bed at times. She emphasizes that the psychological and material stability of those injured is crucial.

In another similar story, Rahma says, "On a summer night in 2019, the airport area near Al Mandhar in Al-Hodeidah Governorate became almost empty of people. Everyone had fled and displaced, except for me and my children. We couldn't leave due to our difficult financial and living conditions, and we also didn't want to scatter. I endured what God had destined for me and my children. My husband passed away at the beginning of the conflict, and I remained with my children, not leaving the area, just like the families facing difficult living conditions."

She continues her narrative filled with sadness and heartache, saying, "Our situation became unbearable, and we didn't even have enough to eat. One day, I left the house hoping to find someone on my way who could help me. My steps led me to a place with landmines, and I was accompanied by my four-year-old child, and a landmine exploded."

Rahma lost her child and also three of her limbs (her left hand and both legs). She became a wheelchair user, deprived of her vital limbs, unable to do anything without the assistance of her family. Despite all this, she remains faithful and content, thankful for still being alive. She says, "Many people close to me, including children, have been taken away from life by randomly planted landmines. Some have lost limbs."

The victims of landmines, especially women and innocent civilians, are continuously increasing in number, particularly in areas where these devices are prevalent. This necessitates the United Nations, its various bodies, and regional countries to double their efforts to remove landmines, clear Yemeni territories from them, and secure them for innocent civilians. This is to prevent further loss of lives and achieve peace, security, and stability in the country.

Social and Psychological Impacts on Yemeni Women in Times of Conflict

Women have always been peacemakers and agents of change around the world. They are the force that keeps families and communities resilient in the face of crises. In Yemen, which has been ravaged by a devastating conflict for years, women face extraordinary challenges in shouldering responsibility. Among these challenges is the loss of a breadwinner, whether a husband or father. This places a heavy burden on them, as they are responsible for financially and emotionally supporting their families, in addition to caring for children and the elderly. In the midst of conflict, women face additional difficulties in accessing essential resources, such as food, health, and education.

By: **Afrah Borji**
 Women in Development and Peace

This psychological pressure affects Yemeni women on a social level, making them more vulnerable to violations, such as domestic violence and human trafficking. The displacement of women from their homes due to the conflict also deprives them of the social and economic support they used to receive from their families and communities.

Social Impacts

In this regard, Professor Abdul-Baqi Shamsan, a professor of sociology at the University of Sana'a, said, "There are social impacts of conflict, as this often happens in all societies. These impacts impose the highest human cost on women and children, as women often pay a high price throughout history. They have lost their husband, brother, and family in the past, and this is happening in the present as well."

Shamsan continues, "In the past, women were exposed to captivity by the tribes that won the battles, which is called dominance. In traditional societies, women also had roles, by virtue of being a housewife in societies where women have a major role, they also lose their husband, children, and brother in the conflict, and these are enormous numbers, as the woman loses the breadwinner."

Dr. Abdul-Baqi Shamsan continues, "In ancient societies, women lose their breadwinners. In modern societies where women have an important economic role and have a breadwinner, they can also rely on themselves, but they always lose

their husband, brothers, and family; because they are the foundation to which a person belongs, so women are the ones who pay the cost of constant conflicts many times more than men and other individuals."

Shamsan adds, "Yemeni women have paid a high price throughout history, considering that Yemeni society is a changing society, and therefore women still rely to a large extent on men for economic support and protection as well. Therefore, she is the one who pays the price of the conflict through the loss of her breadwinner, whether it is her brother, husband, or children. Here, her economic, human, and social condition deteriorates."

Dr. Abdul-Baqi Shamsan explains, "Therefore, throughout history, women have been exposed to the cost of conflicts being multiplied many times over. In Yemen specifically, the cost of conflict is very high for Yemeni women. As we can see, there are tens

of thousands of men on the fronts of armed conflict, and this makes them lose their breadwinner, which leads to them losing the human and economic side. After losing the breadwinner, her economic condition deteriorates, and she resorts to asking for help. The economic and social deterioration, along with the change in the value system, imposes a social, human, and economic cost on women that is multiplied tens of times more than the man who may lose his life. However, women in traditional and changing societies pay the cost more significantly."

Psychological Impacts

Psychologist Rokia Al-Muzfari says, "As for the psychological impacts that women are exposed to during conflict, they may include psychological disorders. Many women during the conflict have been exposed to many things, including divorce as a social problem due to the deteriorating economic situation

that leads to family disputes and then divorce."

She adds, "These conflicts have compelled women to go to work, and those who were not working due to tribal customs or similar reasons have now become part of the working women in all fields. The woman has shouldered responsibilities beyond her capacity because of these conflicts and problems, and she has become suffering from psychological disorders, such as anxiety of all kinds, and depression."

Al-Muzfari continues, "Increasing family problems increases the severity of the woman's ability to bear more than her capacity, and this has a significant impact on her psychology; the woman has become working for the lowest wage to provide her and her children with the necessary livelihood. In some cases, we see the man sitting at home due to the lack of job opportunities, so the woman is forced to bear the responsibilities beyond her capacity."

She continues, "As for psychological problems, I have previously talked about anxiety and depression of all kinds. These are the most problems or diseases that have occurred, and I can say that during these stages, some women entered into some psychological disorders, including mental disorders, and this is what happened to many women because of the conflict."

Psychologist Rokia Al-Muzfari says, "As for the treatments, we must resort to family counseling and psychological treatment programs. For example, we must provide a depressed patient with a special treatment program, and the same for anxiety. In the case of family problems, such as marriage problems, we work on a special program to solve marital, family, and social problems."

She continues, "Likewise, cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks, and pathological fears, there are many women who have entered this crisis due to shocks, and have been exposed to fear and panic, so we see them affected significantly, meaning that they suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and

this is treated by treating the shock itself, and through a therapeutic program called (post-traumatic stress), and there are also treatment programs for pathological fears."

Consecutive Harms to Women

In the context of the conflict in Yemen, women are suffering from extremely difficult humanitarian conditions; they are at risk from a psychological and social perspective, they lose their loved ones, and they are forced to bear heavy burdens.

Randa Abdullah, 25, is one of these women who have been significantly affected by the conflict, which was the cause of the deterioration of her psychological and physical condition.

Randa says, "The conflict made me a prisoner in my home for a whole year because of the fear that came over me when I heard gunfire of any kind. I couldn't bear it; that's why I used to sleep excessively, and this is what made my body very lethargic."

On one day in 2017, the intensity of the armed clashes in the area where Randa lives increased, so she lost her balance and was hospitalized for a full week. The panic she was exposed to was the reason for the decrease in her blood pressure, which affected her balance and her psychological and physical health.

Randa continues, "My father searched for a blood donor to save my life, and he found a donor at Al-Thawra General Hospital in Hodeidah Governorate. There are many cases that come to them full of pain and tragedies, including the mother who lost her child in the eighth month because the doctor told her that he was dead in her womb, and the grieving child who no one knows what is wrong with her except that she does not speak and is consumed by high fever. There are many cases that make the eyes cry and the heart break."

Randa Abdullah's story is one of thousands of stories that tell the suffering of women in Yemen from the conflict. They deserve to hear their stories and to receive support and help."



Yemeni Women: Resilient Against Violence with Hope for a Better Future

Humanity has long suffered from numerous conflicts that, unfortunately, continue to persist to this day. Within these conflicts, various violations and violent practices are inflicted upon all members of society, particularly women who bear the brunt of these hardships. Women are either direct victims of violations or bear the responsibility of their families after losing their providers. In addition to the hardships they endure in dire living conditions.

Even if we are not direct victims of violence by mere coincidence, violence touches our daily lives, infiltrates our screens, magnifies our words, and influences our actions. There are visible forms of violence, such as armed conflicts, and others that we tend to exaggerate, like violence in suburban areas. There are also hidden forms of violence, such as domestic violence.

Considering that women, for various reasons, represent a vulnerable group in different societies, they are subjected, as a collective or as individuals, to various forms of violence resulting from the repercussions of conflicts. They are targeted with violence and harm due to the discrimination they face based on their gender, known as "gender-based violence," which includes physical, psychological, and sexual harm inflicted upon females. This encompasses anything that harms women's health, economic status, threatens their well-being, and restricts their fundamental freedoms in both public and private spheres, both in times of peace and during conflicts. This type of violence is a widespread phenomenon worldwide. It led Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, to mention in his speech at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 that "violence against women is a universal problem that must be universally condemned."

Women face various forms of violence during peacetime on multiple levels: within families, such as physical abuse and rape; within society, such as being forced into prostitution and forced labor; and on a state level, through discriminatory legislation or turning a blind eye to what is known as "crimes of honor." Many people believe that this violence extends and intensifies during conflicts, whether between nations or within a single country. This is because conflicts create hostile atmospheres and behavioral patterns resulting from the spread of a militaristic culture that legitimizes the violation of many regulatory norms governing social and international life during peacetime.

Conflicts generate numerous and painful effects that often increase women's suffering and deepen it in many instances. Here is a depiction of those effects that befall women:

Physical Effects

There are several physical effects that impact women, including:

1. Killings and injuries:

Conflict machinery has become more advanced, causing harm to a larger number of civilians quickly and at a lower cost, without inflicting significant losses on its users. This technological advantage is crucial for advanced countries with high defense

and offensive budgets, enabling them to develop or acquire the latest aircraft and missiles. Primitive conflicts also have a significant impact, resulting in loss of life, especially among women who are considered the most vulnerable during conflicts.

2. Sexual violence:

To combat this immoral and inhumane phenomenon, international human rights standards, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, attach great importance to addressing sexual violence against women in conflicts. These conventions aim to urge the world to prevent violence against unarmed civilians and protect women from assaults on their dignity, especially rape, forced prostitution, or any other form of dishonorable attacks.

The reason for the international agreements' concern with sexual violence against women during conflicts stems from governments' sluggishness in taking measures to protect women from violence. Conflicts, whether international or civil, continue to result in horrific crimes against women and children.

3. Human trafficking:

Human trafficking is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, or receipt of people by means of threat, force, or monetary payment or benefits to gain control over another person. This is done for the purpose of forced labor, slavery, or organ removal.

4. Detention and torture:

Women may be subjected to imprisonment and torture during conflicts due to their positions or political activities. They may be captured to lure men from their families into detention or to force them to confess or provide information.

5. Physical disabilities:

There is no doubt that armed conflicts result in numerous deaths and injuries, leaving a significant number of individuals with physical disabilities. Consequently, the number of disabled women increases during conflicts due to battle injuries or mine explosions. Physical disabilities have both immediate and long-term effects, radically altering the lives of women who acquire disabilities as a result of conflicts.

Psychological Effects

In addition to the physical effects, conflicts have profound psychological effects, particularly when they endure for a long duration. Psychological effects are rarely effectively addressed because they are individual in nature, whereas the suffering in conflicts is typically collective. Amidst the economic and physical ramifications such as poverty, violence, and death, psychological well-being is often seen as less important or less prioritized, with the belief that women can endure it be-

cause survival is the primary concern. In most Arab societies, psychological treatment is not given significant attention, and psychological problems can lead to health issues, and sometimes to addiction to alcohol, smoking, or drugs. The various aspects of psychological effects can be summarized as follows:

Psychological disorders:

Various studies have proven that the psychological effects resulting from conflicts are numerous. While it is a collective experience that an entire country, village, or city goes through, there are individual aspects of suffering caused by individual conflicts affecting people.

Conflicts generate constant anxiety and fear within women, not only for their country but also for their personal fate and the fate of their family members and loved ones. Sometimes this fear reaches a state of hysteria, which poses a danger to both the woman and her family.

Nervousness in dealing with children and others:

Studies confirm that daily fear for one's fate, lack of security, and the inability to secure essential resources for the family create a very difficult psychological state. This can lead to health problems and tension in relationships, primarily with family members. It may translate into an increase in domestic violence and violence against children by parents, and sometimes even by mothers. Since physical punishment is still prevalent as a parenting method in the Arab region, violence against children in times of conflict is not often recognized as an abnormal situation requiring specific intervention.

Sadness for the loss of loved ones:

The actual psychological impact of losing loved ones due to conflicts cannot be underestimated. Studies show that the psychological effects of conflicts are deeply profound on women, especially mothers who have lost their children. The situation worsens when a mother is forced to set aside her grief and sorrow in order to fulfill her expected role as the nurturer of her family and to secure a sense of stability even in difficult circumstances.

Anxiety for abducted relatives:

The suffering resulting from not knowing the fate of abducted relatives or loved ones is almost equivalent to the suffering caused by the death of a family member. The anticipation of prisoners weighs heavily on women, who become both the father and mother to their children, and they strive to release their husband or son from captivity.

Social Effects

Conflicts affect the relationships and behaviors of individuals, whether they are citizens of the warring state itself, neutral citizens, or citizens of enemy states. This leads to various outcomes and results that affect both men and women, summarized as follows:

Displacement and refuge:

Armed conflicts sometimes force women to leave their homes and belongings, either due to a deliberate policy of forced displacement of civilians adopted by one party to the conflict or out of fear of being involved in the fi-

ghting and facing attacks.

The long-standing suffering of migrant women has influenced the issuance of international laws and conventions that ensure the protection of refugee women, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, which prohibit parties to armed conflicts from arbitrarily displacing civilians. It is worth noting that the majority of internally displaced persons and refugees in the world are women and children, accounting for up to 80% of the population in refugee camps.

Family disintegration:

There are several reasons for the disintegration of families, including geographical separation due to travel, migration, exile, or imprisonment. The reality of displacement may force a single family to separate, either within a region or in another country. Conflicts and disputes lead to role changes when the father is no longer able to fulfill his socially recognized role in protecting and providing for his family. This can lead to frustration, which has negative repercussions on all family members.

In any case, removing women from their natural environment, where they were born and raised and familiarized themselves with all its components, including family, neighbors, and friends, negatively impacts their reality and their ability to fulfill their roles in caring for their families and achieving self-fulfillment. Women in Arab societies are considered the binding factor within the family and sometimes within the neighborhood. Therefore, stripping women from this reality, placing them in unfamiliar places, and turning them into refugees, lead to significant disruptions in their lives and their ability to continue.

Restrictions on mobility, travel, education, and work:

Conflicts impose restrictions on freedom of movement, making going to school, university, or work risky, especially for women. This deprivation of political, economic, and educational rights is a form of violence against women. When a woman is killed on her way to work, the city, or the university, her right to a safe life is violated, along with her right to education and work. Awareness campaigns on the importance of girls' education within families are also prone to errors, with many examples in our Arab region and other conflict-affected countries.

Exacerbation of the situation for people with disabilities:

In countries where disabled women face significant difficulties in exercising their rights and meeting their needs, the situation worsens during conflicts. The remaining scarce resources are allocated to those who have a better chance of survival.

In many countries experiencing protracted conflicts, specialized institutions have emerged to cater to the needs of people with disabilities through charitable work and the provision of healthcare and social services. Despite receiving these services, their situation remains extremely challenging, especially in rural and remote areas.



Dr. Rania Khaled
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Advisor of "The Impact of Conflict on Women in Yemen" Issue

Increase in domestic violence:

While everyone - men, women, and children - is exposed to violence during conflicts, the nature of violence experienced by women becomes different. When men are killed, it is often due to their direct involvement in the battle, and the number of male casualties in conflicts is usually much higher than the number of female casualties. However, the violence that women experience in conflicts is not necessarily a result of their participation in the battle but simply because they are "women." In addition to other forms of violence, including domestic violence, conflicts or their aftermath are a major cause of its spread and complexity.

The suffering endured by women due to conflicts and their resulting impacts on their lives has made the international community aware of the magnitude of this suffering. It urges the conflicting parties to adhere to the provisions of international humanitarian law and respect them. The United Nations has issued numerous international resolutions and treaties that address the situation of women during and after conflicts, emphasizing the protection of civilians and the vulnerable, including children and women.

Recommendations

Providing protection mechanisms for women during armed conflicts.

Promoting a culture of peace within society and emphasizing that the ultimate goal is to build a life free from injustice and oppression for all human beings.

Monitoring government institutions to ensure their responsibilities towards guaranteeing women's rights and promoting them in accordance with the provisions of international treaties they have signed and ratified.

Establishing a specialized domestic court for crimes of violence and violations against women and ensuring justice for female prisoners due to their political activities or national struggles in prisons.

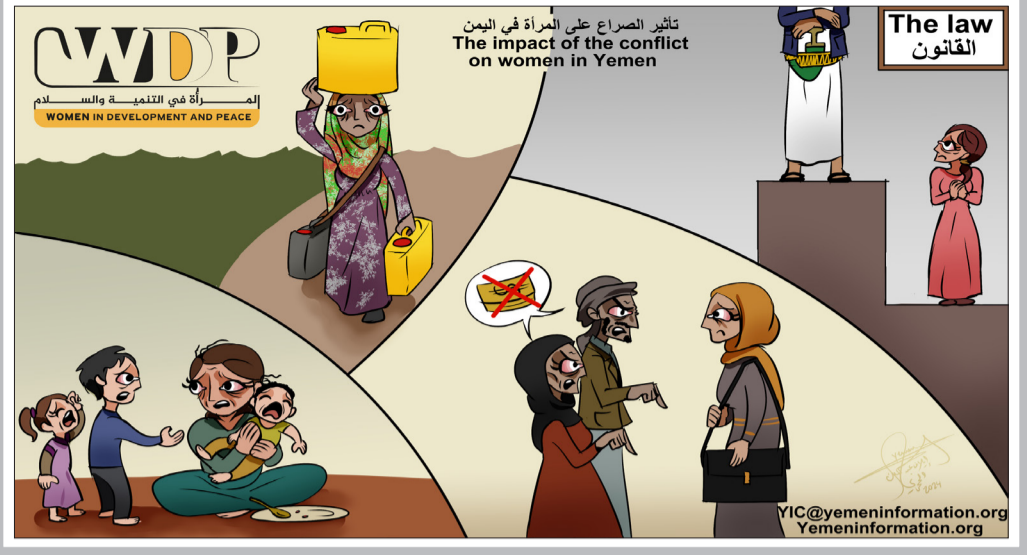
Affirming that women are meant to be active participants in economic, political, and social development, and not just voices in parliamentary and executive elections.

Granting women their full rights according to the constitution and international treaties ratified by the state, rejecting tribal ideologies, and establishing the foundations of a civil state.



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96.1% Believe that the Conflict in Yemen has Significantly Impacted Women's Ability to Access Their Basic Rights

By: Yomna Ahmed

Women in Development and Peace

The ongoing conflict in Yemen, for years until now, has caused suffering for Yemenis due to its impacts and consequences. It has had many negative effects on the economy, security, health, education, and social life, affecting all aspects of Yemenis' lives.

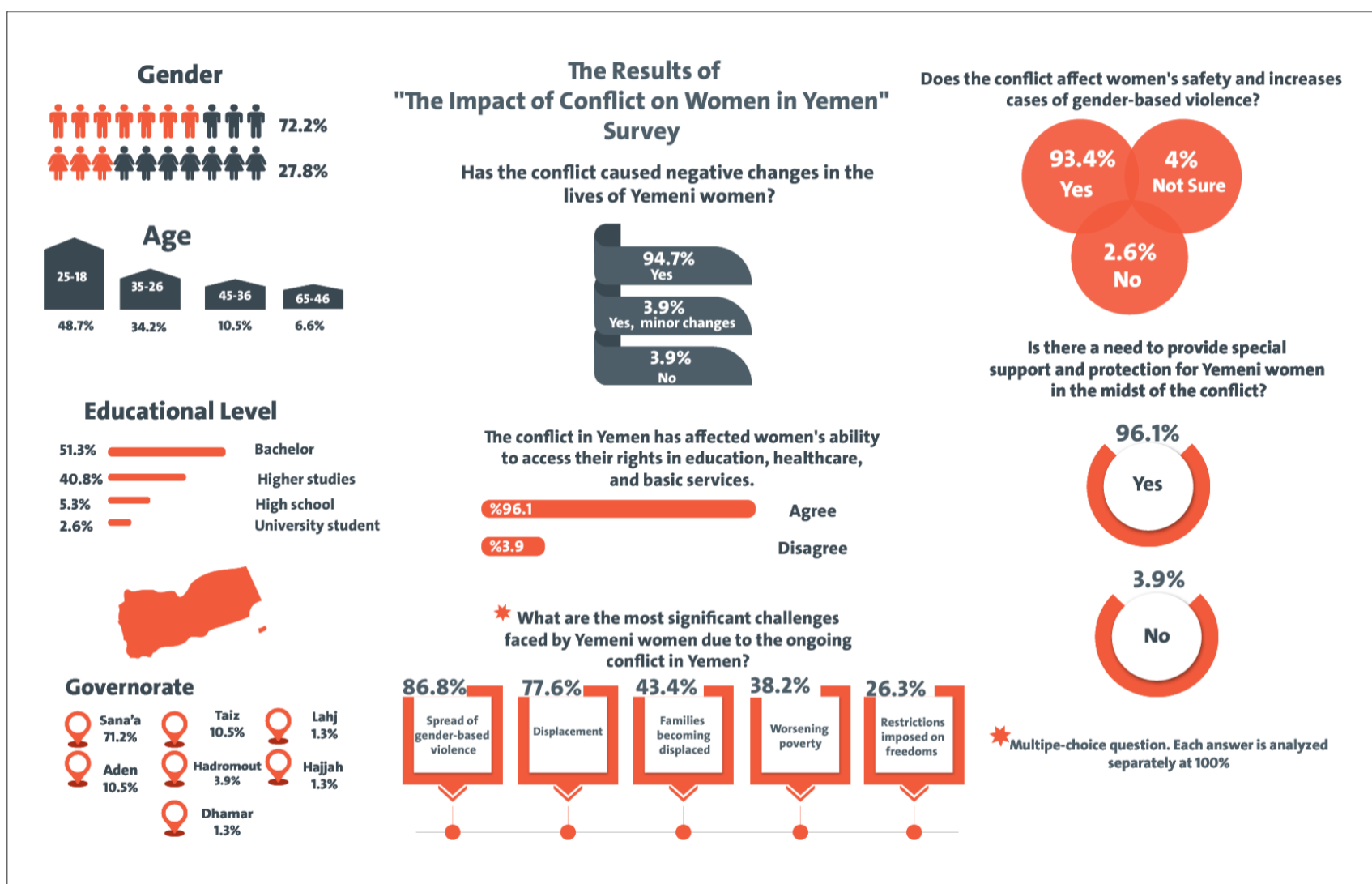
With all these consequences, it was natural for the lives of women in Yemen to be greatly affected by the conflict. They have suffered from increased rates of violence because the armed conflict has led to the disintegration of the social and security system in the country, as well as a regression in laws protecting women and girls.

The conflict has also resulted in reduced opportunities for Yemeni girls to access education. The conflict has had a significant impact on the education infrastructure, leading to the closure of some schools and universities. Additionally, the health sector has been affected by the conflict, causing a shortage of essential resources, deterioration of healthcare services, the spread of diseases, and malnutrition.

Based on the above, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how the conflict has affected the situation of women in Yemen, the Information and Opinion Survey Unit at the "Yemen Information Center" conducted a survey titled "The Impact of the Conflict on Women in Yemen."

The survey aimed to gather opinions from a sample of Yemeni society about the extent to which the conflict has affected women's lives in Yemen in order to understand and analyze it. It also aimed to identify the challenges and difficulties faced by women in various social, economic, health, and psychological aspects.

The survey was conducted on a research sample of 157 individuals, with the majority being male 72.2% and females comprising 27.8%. The age groups of the respondents varied, with 48.7% of them being young people between



18-25 years old, 34.2% ranging from 26-35 years old, 10.5% between 36-45 years old, and 6.6% from the age group of 45-65 years old.

Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of participants held a bachelor's degree at 51.3%, followed by postgraduate degree holders at 40.8%, 5.3% with a high school diploma, and 2.6% were university students.

In terms of the geographic scope of the survey, the sample was taken from seven Yemeni governorates, namely: Sana'a at 71.2%, Aden at 10.5%, Taiz at 10.5%, Hadramout at 3.9%, and only 1.3% for each of Lahj, Hajjah, and Dhamar separately.

Main Results

First, 94.7% of the participants in the survey stated that the conflict has had a significant

negative impact on the lives of women in Yemen. Meanwhile, 3.9% of them indicated that the conflict has indeed brought about a change in the lives of Yemeni women, but it was minor. They believed that Yemeni women were already suffering greatly before the conflict started. As for the remaining percentage (1.4%), they stated that they have not noticed any change in the lives of women in Yemen at all since the beginning of the conflict until now.

Regarding the possibility of Yemeni women obtaining their rights in education, healthcare, and access to basic services and the impact of the conflict on that, 96.1% believe that the conflict in Yemen has significantly affected the ability of women to obtain their rights in education, healthcare, and access to basic services.

In contrast, 3.9% expressed a different opinion.

When asked whether gender-based violence has increased since the start of the conflict, 93.4% of the participants said that the continuation of the conflict has greatly contributed to an increase in violence against women. However, 4% of them believed that the increase in violence due to the conflict is limited. Only 2.6% stated that the conflict has not caused any increase in gender-based violence at all.

There is no doubt that Yemeni women face numerous problems due to the ongoing conflict in Yemen. The participants' answers regarding this were as follows¹:

- The spread of gender-based violence: 86.8%.
- Displacement: 77.6%.
- Family displacement: 43.4%.
- Worsening poverty: 38.2%.

Restrictions on freedoms: 26.3%.

Furthermore, 96.1% of the survey participants believe that there is a need for special support and protection for Yemeni women in the context of the conflict, while 3.9% hold a different view.

In conclusion, the survey participants agree that everything women in Yemen are experiencing due to the ongoing conflict increases their vulnerability and hinders the achievement of equality and sustainable development. They also emphasize the need for immediate measures to protect women's rights in Yemen and provide necessary support in the areas of health, education, protection, and economic empowerment.

1- Multiple-choice question, with each answer being analyzed as a separate sample, with a percentage of 100%.