

Women in Health Sector in Yemen

International Organizations Pledge Support and Financial Commitments to Empower Women in Yemen's Healthcare Sector

International Report: Women in the Health Sector Earn 24% Less Than Men

WIDDP

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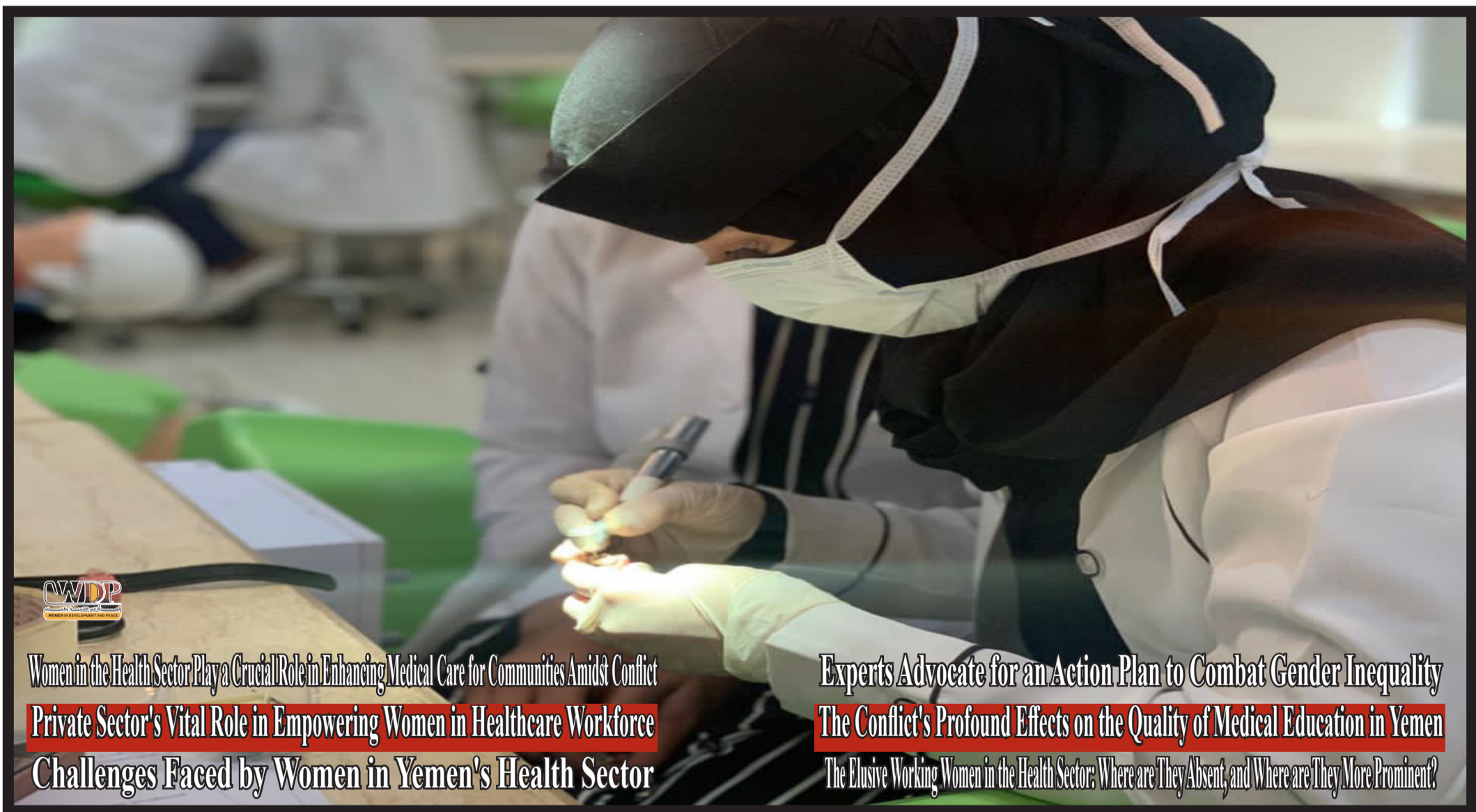
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Women in the Health Field: Exploring the Yemeni Society's Perspective



Women in the Health Sector Play a Crucial Role in Enhancing Medical Care for Communities Amidst Conflict

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Yemeni Women: Pioneers in the Health Sector

The dedication of Yemeni women in the health field is evident across all healthcare facilities, be it government-run or private, throughout the nation. With unwavering determination, they employ their skills and expertise to assist people in their fight against diseases, leaving no room for hesitation.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez
Women in Development and Peace

In rural Yemen, women play a significant role in aiding their communities, particularly in societies where privacy is highly valued, and male intervention is limited. Hence, the presence of female doctors among them is seen as essential, providing women with a sense of comfort when seeking medical attention.

One such example is Hamama Ali Has-

san Muhammad Al-Qusai, who established a health unit in her village of Mazhar in Raymah Governorate. Soon after graduating from a local health institute, she began working from home, choosing the field of midwifery. This profession holds great importance in Yemeni society and has attracted a considerable number of women to the healthcare sector.

Reflecting on her journey, Hamama shares, "We are three girls. Our father not only taught and encouraged us but also worked tirelessly to meet our educational needs. As the oldest

among us, I pursued midwifery training in 1998 at the age of 15. At that time, midwives were scarce, making my role crucial in the village."

She adds, "I trained in midwifery, and I was diligent. Despite my father's difficult circumstances, I continued my studies along with my colleagues from every district in Raymah. We were about 18 students. Thanks to Allah, I completed my studies in midwifery. I took the exam and obtained a certificate with a very good grade. I applied the practical

aspect in Zabid District in Hodeidah Governorate for seven months. This added a lot of skills and knowledge to me, and I also gained experience. I graduated in 1999 and immediately entered the field."

Through the health unit that Hamama opened, she helped many women in the district and neighboring areas. Large numbers of pregnant and breastfeeding women flocked there. They benefited in several ways, including immunizing their children and dispensing some medications, such as iron, folic acid, and other treatments that pregnant women need.

She continues, "I made sure to provide them with advice about breastfeeding, childbirth, and pregnancy. I also held sessions for them on preparing types of corn and legumes. I discussed with them how to compensate for a malnourished child. In addition, I provided them with correct methods on how to breast-

feed a child and when to start feeding their child corn and light food."

After graduating from school, Hamama was keen to visit the villages while carrying the vaccination refrigerator to serve both the mother and the child by completing all their vaccinations for them. Every month she carried out this task for a full week. In addition, she sent a maternity ambulance to homes, when a woman in the village gave birth.

She continued her speech by saying, "My work played a major role in helping women in the village, which made me feel at ease. I would be saving a pregnant woman with postpartum bleeding or help infants when asphyxiated, because the infant was born with asphyxia. Many would mistakenly believe the baby died, and they would bury them."

Hamama is not the only woman working in the health sector *continuepage2*

in Yemen who has contributed and is still contributing to the provision of health care. There are thousands of women who work for humanity without waiting for help or assistance from anyone. The passion for the profession and the sense of patriotism led them to contribute to the provision of health services. It is known that Yemeni women have been instilled with a love of working to the best of their abilities and skills.

This is what Dr. Ahmed Al-Humairi, a general physician and surgeon, talked about the role of women working in the health field. He said, "The role of women in the health sector is an integral and indispensable part of providing medical service and care for patients in all medical fields, starting with emergencies, all the way to from operations, to following up on patients hospitalized, as well as in the laboratory, the pharmacy, and even the reception. There is almost no private medical institution without a role for women, to the point where females have dominated males in job opportunities in the health sector."

He adds, "As a matter of fact, social factors

and customs have made women a central and indispensable role in the medical field, which has made the private health sector in Yemen pay attention to the issue of women and their work in the field to the fullest, by providing training in hospitals, job opportunities, housing, salaries, and benefits. This has made a large number of girls in society pursue medical studies."

Hamama became famous in her area and gained the love and respect of the people there. She also, attracted some supporters of the humanitarian operation in Yemen, as one organization established a medical center and another provided them with equipment and everything the health facility needed. She was promoted to reproductive health coordinator in Mizhar District.

Hamama worked in a mobile clinic and discovered many problems among pregnant and breastfeeding women who do not receive health services, and there are no health centers for them to benefit from.

Hamama says, "I undertook the mission of discovering areas deprived of health services,

educating and training midwives in order to serve women in those areas. The aim of this was to reduce the death rate, reduce the deformities that children suffer from, and eliminate the problems that pregnant mothers face."

Hamama contributed to solving many of the health problems facing pregnant mothers in her area and what infants suffer from. She began her work at a time when the village suffered from the absence of health facilities and medical personnel, as a result, people experienced great suffering, especially women.

Rashid Al-Bakali, a resident of the area, says about the role that Dr. Hamama played in helping the people, "For several years, the area has been suffering from the deterioration of health services and care due to the lack of facilities and centers and the unavailability of health personnel. This has resulted in a deterioration of the health situation, exacerbating the suffering, especially among women and children. Critical cases had to be transported to the main cities, and some cases died on the way."

He continued, "And from here begins the

story of success of one the most prominent female community figures who achieved remarkable success at the directorate level. Her personality embodied a success story worthy of praise, thanks and appreciation, due to the nature of the role embodied by Dr. Hamama Ali Al-Qusaie."

He added, "She had the great honor of being the first health worker and midwife in the community, as she joined early on working at the health center in Al Qusai since its inception. She had a major role in receiving sick cases and providing first aid to them. From the beginning, she was dedicated to her work, keen to serve her community, passionate about her profession, committed to her work, and sincere in performing her duty."

Al-Bakali says, "The people of the region cannot forget her great role in providing first aid to difficult childbirth cases. She used to receive such cases and perform her duty to the fullest extent. She was called from the villages at critical times even late at night to help difficult childbirth cases, and she responded call at any time, and bear the trouble of tra-

veling on foot".

He continues his speech, "To this day, she continues to perform her duty to the fullest extent, providing all services and health care, working silently day and night without getting bored or tired. She devoted her energy, time, and effort to serving her community. This is how we know her to be dedicated to her work."

At the conclusion of her speech, Dr. Hamama says, "Rural women suffer from many health and social problems and the large number of children they have, in addition to household chores and agriculture, which affect their health. In addition to being too busy to take care of themselves and their children."

She believes that the solutions to these obstacles she faces are to push girls to enroll in schools and complete their education. In addition to encouraging girls to learn midwifery in rural communities ensuring that there are many of them in areas that suffer from a scarcity of health services, and to help women and infants there.

Women in the Health

Sector Play a Crucial Role in Enhancing Medical Care for Communities Amidst Conflict

Women working in Yemen's health sector have made remarkable and commendable strides in enhancing medical care for society, particularly amidst the ongoing conflict. Despite facing numerous challenges and adversities, these women have played pivotal roles in delivering essential healthcare services to the conflict-affected population.

By: Alia Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

Their contributions have been diverse and significant, with a particular focus on providing healthcare for women, children, and individuals displaced by the conflict. They have also attended to patients with war-related injuries and chronic illnesses, while extending crucial psychological and social support to those affected by the psychological and social consequences of the conflict.

Ansaf Al-Khamri, a children's specialist and director of the Al-Maidan Health Center, underscored the indispensable role of women in the health-care field, even amidst the most trying circumstances. In her address, she highlighted the severe infrastructural deterioration and scarcity of medical supplies and services that the health sector has endured throughout the conflict.

Al-Khamri further emphasized the immense challenges faced by these women, including insults, threats, and the constant peril of working amidst armed bombardment and sniper attacks. Nevertheless, these dedicated doctors persistently exerted tremendous efforts to provide essential healthcare services.

She added, "At the Maidan Health Complex, we never ceased our mission of delivering healthcare services, even in the midst of conflict. We labored tirelessly, both within and beyond the center, fighting on all fronts with unwavering determination."

Al-Khamri pointed out that female health sector workers were able to fulfill their roles as mothers, sisters, and wives, despite their many duties. They have not relinquished their roles as doctors. Some of them opened their homes to receive patients when they could not come to the center because of snipers and armed shelling. Others provided medical consultations via mobile



phones, and their numbers were distributed in WhatsApp groups and social media to provide health care.

Al-Khamri explained the working mechanism at Al-Midan Medical Center during the conflict: The center was divided into two parts: a section to provide health care for the wounded, and a section to provide other services to patients. Some of the female doctors provided their services in displacement centers as pediatricians, obstetricians and gynecologists, and each doctor had a role in her field. They worked in places close to their locations, in mosques, homes, schools, and displacement camps.

She added, "During the conflict, a number of diseases spread. We did not know what caused them, and we handled them with all the medical expertise we had. This put great pressure on the working female doctors. Therefore, here the role of the community doctor emerged, who would go to homes to monitor cases and provide the necessary awareness about preventing widespread diseases during that period."

She continues to say, "We did not open a field of specialization, and we can say that we worked in all specialties, and we dealt with the wounded in the beginning in a primitive manner when removing bullets from the patient's body. We did not receive any government support, but all the support came to us from international

organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders and philanthropists. Our efforts in addition to their efforts have joined forces to improve health care."

Al-Khamri stated, "There were many doctors who failed us during the conflict and refrained from providing health services as a result of fear of losing their lives. On the other hand, there were female doctors who did not leave their work in health centers, even though they lost loved ones. Despite the pain of loss, they did not stop providing health care to individuals or society. Those are the ones to whom a message of thanks and gratitude is presented, and those are the ones we can call 'life savers'."

The repercussions of the conflict in Yemen affected the health sector infrastructure, affecting women working in this sector, and many female doctors and nurses bore a number of burdens. The pressure on health care services increased due to the rise in the number of patients, wounded individuals, and displaced people. This was coupled with a shortage of health supplies and attacks on health facilities, posing a constant threat to those working there. Many of these women faced danger, arrests, and injuries as a result of the armed conflict.

Despite these challenges, hundreds of female health workers continued their roles tirelessly providing assistance to the neediest groups.

She says, "The interruption of salaries affected the performance of many female workers in the health sector, and they lost many distinguished cadres as a result of their displacement outside the country to search for better opportunities and income levels."

Medical Initiatives During Conflict

The Women of Corona Team is one of the most important initiatives that had a prominent role, and part of the efforts that contributed to improving the health situation in Yemen during the conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zainab, a member of the team specializing in midwifery and first aid, said, "The Women of Corona Team is a team consisting of several girls working in the health field, and the team aims to educate women and girls in Yemen about COVID-19 prevention."

She added, "The team provided many tasks, such as distributing preventive materials, and providing psychological and social support to women who were affected by the conflict and the pandemic. In addition to providing financial and livelihood support to women who lost their jobs due to the war and the pandemic."

She pointed out a number of difficulties that she and the team faced, the most important of which was convincing their family members to go out to provide health care to the most affected groups. Due to the people's fear that they would be exposed to danger.

She says, "We provided many health services, despite our knowledge of the danger to which we could have been exposed. We worked during the armed conflict and during the bombing, and we stayed in hospitals to care for the sick and provide health care to them. We shared the community's pains, and we were not afraid, but rather faced all the challenges."

She added, "We diagnosed diseases, and raised awareness about disease prevention and personal hygiene during the conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, through awareness campaigns, distributing health brochures, and providing the necessary medical consultations to patients, stressing the importance of appreciating the efforts and support of female doctors in Yemen, and female workers during the conflict, who worked bravely to meet the needs of the affected population and provide necessary health care."

Private Sector's Vital Role in Empowering Women in Healthcare Workforce

Yemeni women have played a crucial role in serving their community through their dedicated work in the healthcare sector. Despite the numerous challenges faced by the sector, such as limited funding, salary delays, and the migration of medical professionals, these women have consistently provided exceptional medical services to women, children, and men in both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the healthcare sector has been strained by the spread of diseases and epidemics, coupled with infrastructure destruction, which has further tested its capacity.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez
 Women in Development and Peace

A shining example of dedication is Wafa Umar, a nurse at a private medical center in Hodeidah Governorate. Wafa's unwavering commitment is evident as she consistently arrives first at her workplace, never missing a day, regardless of personal circumstances. She firmly recognizes the significance of her role and firmly believes in the essential contribution of women in the medical field, where they serve the community by combating diseases and epidemics.

Residing in Al-Hali district, at the heart of Hodeidah Governorate, Wafa is a devoted mother of three children. Her exceptional work has garnered recognition from her colleagues, who regard her as one of the standout employees at their center. Wafa passionately states, "Medicine is a sacred profession, and serving in it with honesty and dedication is both a national and humanitarian duty. Witnessing a patient's recovery from illness brings immense satisfaction, knowing that you have made a positive impact on someone in dire need. It doesn't matter if you work in the public or private sector or face various challenges; what matters is standing beside those in need."

Women in Public & Private Healthcare Sectors

In recent years, it is hard to pass through main streets, side streets, or popular neighborhoods in Hodeidah without noticing the presence of private medical centers, facilities, and hospitals that compete in providing excellent medical services and healthcare.

This private movement in the medical field emerged at a time when the government healthcare sector is witnessing a collapse in services due to the country's ongoing conflict. The emergence of these medical facilities has allowed women to participate significantly in the healthcare field by working in various medical fields. There are large numbers of female doctors, nurses, and lab technicians, outnumbering men.

Regarding the situation of women in the private sector, Afaaf Abdulmajid, a nurse, says, "During work, we face some difficulties, including being accused by some citizens who visit private hospitals of exploiting patients. Their reaction is a result of the high costs imposed by some private medical institutions."

Afaaf adds, "Another struggle is that the working hours are long, and the financial compensation is insufficient. For example, a nurse works from 8 am to 8 pm, and her salary does not exceed 60,000 Yemeni riyals (~\$110). However, what distinguishes the private healthcare sector in this aspect is that salaries are not delayed and are paid monthly."

She continues, "Some private healthcare facilities also provide incentives and bonuses to their employees. It is known that most private facilities that provide excellent medical services strive to have experienced and highly competent staff."

As for the situation of women working in the government healthcare sector,



Fatima Adel, a physician assistant in the government sector, says, "Months pass without receiving our salaries, sometimes up to three months, unlike what happens in the private sector. This salary issue has worsened in recent years which have witnessed prolonged conflict in Yemen."

Fatima explains that at the beginning of an employee's work in the government sector, they start as a volunteer without receiving a salary. Then, they receive a small amount of money, and with continued work, they become an official employee with an increase in their salary. She says that getting leave is difficult unless she finds someone to cover her work, and even then, it is deducted from her salary. This is a common problem faced by women working in both the government and private sectors.

She adds, "Some departments in the government sector, such as the operating room, inpatient care, emergency, and others, take a percentage of the hospital's revenue for the services provided and add it to the employee's salary."

For her part, Amal Musa, a lab technician, says that joining the government sector is somewhat difficult in terms of the procedures for joining, and also because women no longer have the same role they used to have due to the current situation that has affected their work in those health institutions. She adds, "The suffering of women in obtaining their salaries and rights in the government sector has made them stop working in it or turn to other sectors to provide for their families, especially with the deteriorating living conditions experienced by many families in Yemen."

The Private Sector's Role

In this regard, Yusuf Hasan Abbas, a general physician and surgeon, says, "The private healthcare sector has provided job opportunities for women because they

play an important role in this sector. Their presence is essential and they are relied upon, primarily in providing important services. This has made them receive special attention and treatment, enabling them to perform all tasks and duties in the medical and administrative fields."

Amal Ibrahim, a nurse, says, "After many individuals were lost in the government healthcare sector, especially during the recent years of conflict, they found an opportunity to work and receive salaries, albeit sometimes low, in medical facilities belonging to the private sector."

She continues, "The ease of joining private medical facilities has contributed to the support and empowerment of women, in addition to the significant presence of medical facilities in both urban and rural areas, which has helped in employing many women."

Ruqayya Ubaid agrees with what Amal said. She searched for a job opportunity in government medical facilities but found no success and felt frustrated. She says, "Once I noticed the situation of employees in some facilities, that they have no salaries or incentives and work for months without any compensation, in addition to the absence of competent medical staff and a severe shortage of necessary equipment and supplies in the facility, I decided to look for another job outside my academic specialization."

She adds, "A friend who works in a medical center in the city contacted me and told me that the centers are in need of new employees. I saw it as an opportunity to work in my field of study after deciding to look for a job in a private school. I submitted my documents and after about a month, they contacted me and I started working with them as a nurse."

Ruqayya explains that the private healthcare sector has provided job opportunities for many women at the medical center where she works. She confirms,

"Most of the staff at the center are women, and although their salaries may not be sufficient to meet their needs and family requirements, they have helped many of them improve their family income and cope with the living conditions that many individuals suffer from. In addition to providing employment opportunities, the presence of the medical facility has greatly allowed other girls to join specialized medical universities."

On the other hand, Ahmed Al-Himyari, a general practitioner and surgeon, says, "The private healthcare sector has provided women with a wide range of work opportunities, benefiting from their services and work experience towards patients who seek medical care in these sectors, especially since customs and traditions play a role in making women an essential element in examining patients of the same gender. It is not easy for a woman to agree to receive medical care from a man."

He adds, "The private healthcare sector has provided support for women working in the healthcare field in several aspects, including wide employment opportunities in various healthcare fields, and providing housing exclusively for them without mixing with men in some facilities that require night shifts. For example, the women's ward contains female staff, especially in modern centers."

He continues, "There is moral and encouraging support from healthcare leaders in terms of training courses in various medical fields to promote awareness among female workers in the healthcare sector, regardless of their specialties."

The private sector in Yemen, through its affiliated healthcare facilities, has contributed to improving the health situation by relieving pressure on the public sector in terms of accommodating medical cases or by providing job opportunities for many university graduates whom government medical institutions were unable to accommodate.

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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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Medical Education in Yemen: Traditional Teaching Methods, Theoretical Study, and Limited Resources

The Conflict's Profound Effects on the Quality of Medical Education in Yemen

Muhammad Al-Kamali emerged victorious in 2018, passing the medical admission test fueled by his parents' unwavering support and his own passion, which he discovered at the tender age of ten. His dream of becoming a doctor was driven by his desire to treat his mother, who became paralyzed after suffering a stroke when he was just five years old.

By: Haneen Al-Wahsh
Women in Development and Peace

Hailing from Sharaab Heights, a district in Taiz, Muhammad ventured to the sole public university in Taiz Governorate to pursue his medical studies. The year 2018 marked his first day at the university, where he arrived donning medical gloves and filled with anticipation. It was an extraordinary day for him as he was about to delve into the world of medical tools and gain hands-on experience.

However, the voices of the students, including Muhammed, gradually faded and came to a halt, as the medical professor entered the lecture room for the first academic lecture. The professor began the session by emphasizing the dangers of Orientalism on Islamic culture. This lecture on Islamic culture had been a constant companion for Muhammad throughout his educational journey since he enrolled in school at the age of six.

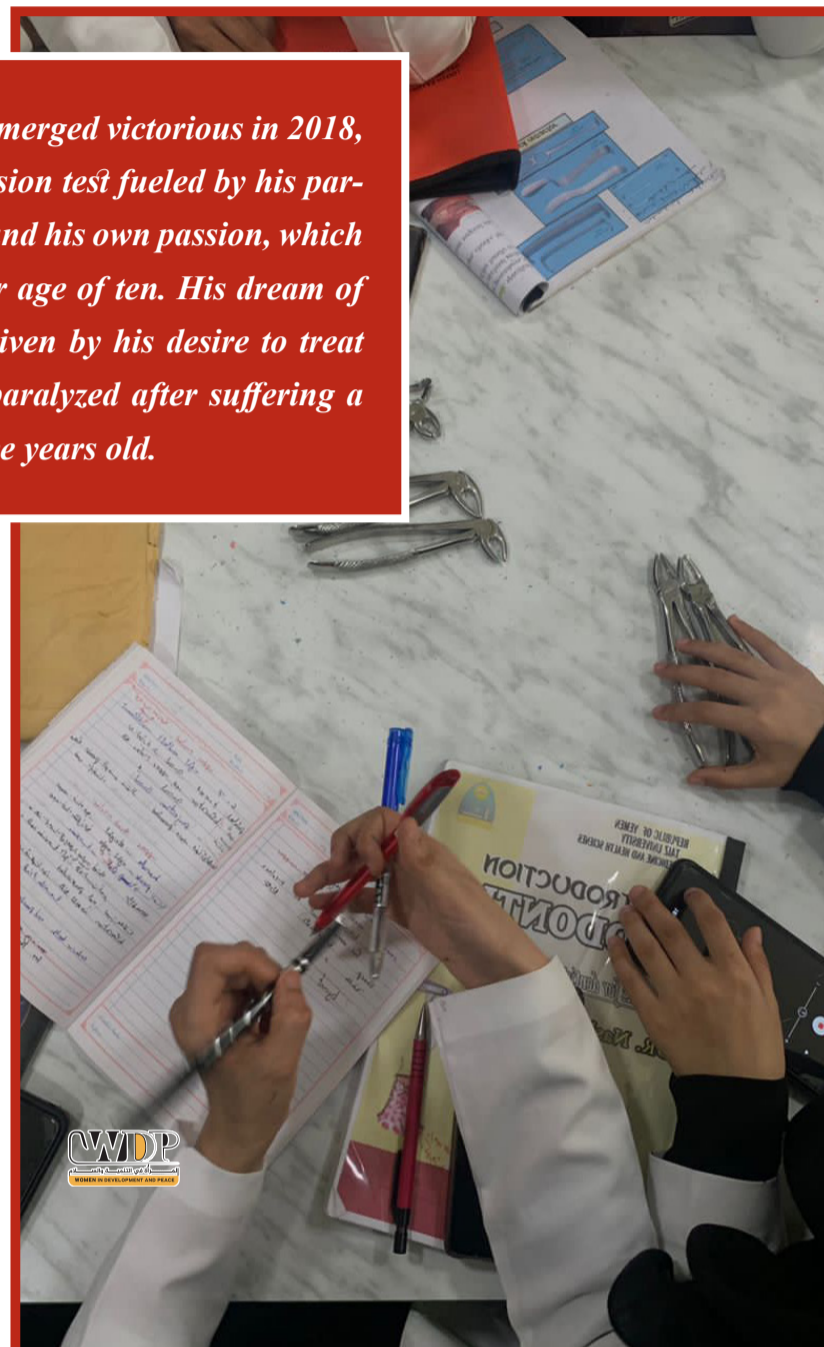
"I was taken aback. I yearned to hold the medical devices and equipment. The first and second years passed by, and here we are in the sixth year without any practical exposure in laboratories, only receiving theoretical lessons," Muhammad lamented, his voice tinged with melancholy.

In the corridors of the College of Medicine, we encountered Muwaffaq Al-Wahbani, who introduced himself to us. When we inquired about why he was not attending the lecture. He explained that he arrived late, and the professor refused him entry. He continued, "I stayed up late last night. The internet connection was surprisingly good, allowing me to download contemporary medical courses and lessons from Google. At the university, we are confined to traditional teaching methods. The curriculum desperately requires updating, thus we resort to external sources and invest significant time in research due to the limited internet access and lack of digital literacy."

Educational Attempts

In one of the medical colleges in the city of Taiz, we met Dr. Hanadi Muhammad, and we asked her if she was happy with the lessons she offered to medical students, and her response was, "I try to provide modern lessons for students, apart from the courses that are given to them in print that they can read at home. Our curriculum is traditional and needs updating. I help students apply the lessons I offer them by hosting the distinguished ones in my clinic."

Muhammad Al-Qadi, a fifth-level student at the College of Medicine in Taiz University, says, "Studying me-



dicine at the university itself - even if it does not meet our aspirations - has managed to withstand the conflict and achieved a better level compared to other universities."

Limited Resources

Within the context of difficulties, Dr. Aber Badr says, "Medical education is difficult to enter, whether in private or public universities. There is nepotism, in addition to high fees in private universities. Furthermore, the outdated curricula do not keep pace with the tremendous developments in the medical field around the world. Moreover, there are limited training opportunities for students, and even graduates as well. The chances of obtaining a specialization are slim, and there are no open specializations; all specializations are limited."

She added, "There is the Yemeni Board of Medical Specializations and the Arab Board, but the fees there are exorbitant, especially after suspending doctors' nominations for state-funded studies. This increases the suffering, forcing the doctors to look for work. This affects their academic dedication and the opportunities available for training and qualification. Therefore, we find many doctors - especially in rural areas - working without sufficient experience or qualifications, and thus many medical errors occur, which claim people's lives."

Dr. Aber stressed the necessity of

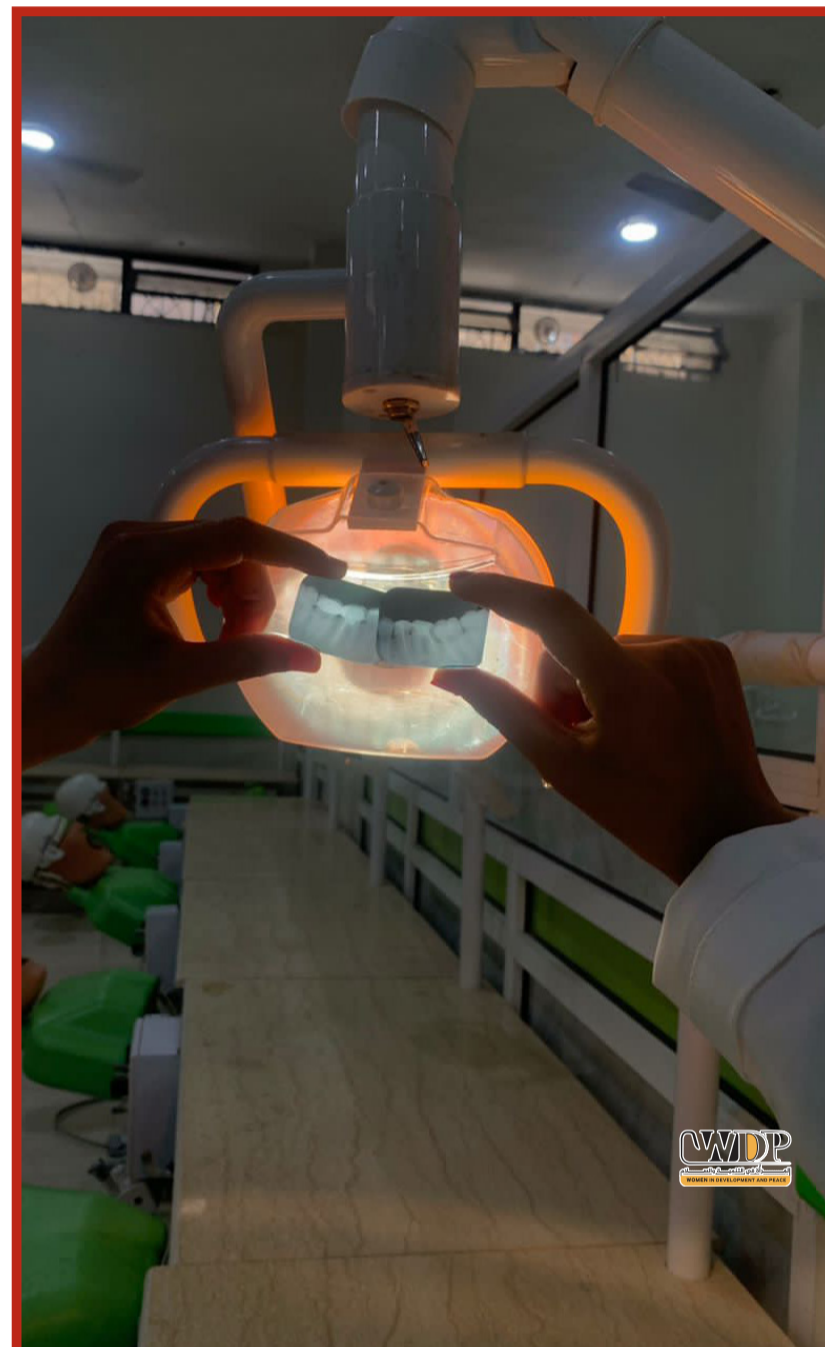
qualifying students with a very high level of English proficiency, providing modern references, and everything that modern science has achieved with regard to medicine and health sciences, and making them available in an accessible manner for everyone. In addition to stopping students from being forced to study requirements that are baseless and useless in their field of study, because, in turn, it wastes the opportunity to obtain basic and important materials.

Anwar Hammoud, a fifth-year student in the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Taiz, confirms, "We go to one of the government hospitals to apply or practice what we learn at the university, but we find that it itself lacks the most basic capabilities. The study of medicine in Yemen is deteriorating like other sectors."

Training & Qualifications

Anwar adds, "We need external training grants, and I mean for the distinguished students, or at least the development of educational methods, such as using the internet to hold distance courses and workshops with distinguished external universities."

Regarding the difficulties and obstacles, Al-Qadi added that there are many problems facing the College of Medicine in Taiz. The most prominent of which is the absence of specialized staff due to the displacement of a large number of academic doctors outside the country. In addition to the siege



imposed on Taiz Governorate which limited the college's ability to attract academics from outside the governorate.

He confirms that students suffer from weak training opportunities, while the college's specializations are increasing, in contrast to the scarcity of the number of government hospitals in which they receive their practical training.

He added that the absence of specialized personnel in the hospitals makes training opportunities secondary.

The student Heba Ahmed said, "One of the problems I faced was the end of the first academic year in studying the requirements without any specialized subject. This led to a defect in the study plan, which had to be compensated for in the remaining years. This put great pressure on the students. The pressure stemmed from the lack of availability of doctors to teach important specialty subjects on a continuous basis, attending intermittently, accumulating lectures, and explaining them all at once. The students cannot understand and review them on the same day, especially when multiple subjects are taught in the same manner."

She added, "There is no oversight from higher education on private universities, and the way they deal with students' problems, providing supplies, equipping laboratories, and the level of tests are not commensurate with what is taken in the lecture."

Heba believes that the solution is to

guide students to important references and sources. To take information from it, and to rely on research and modern curricula, in addition to the curricula adopted in the college, or to replace the current curricula.

Urgent Rescue for Medical Education

The student Anwar Hammoud said, "Arab and foreign students used to come to study medicine in Yemen, but the situation collapsed years ago. The challenges seem insurmountable as the country enters a state of conflict." University lecturer Dr. Moaz Khaled agreed with him, adding, "We had reached a decent stage in terms of the quality of education."

Dr. Khaled offers a set of systematic solutions, stating "Today, it is necessary to increase partnership between medical faculties in Yemeni universities and foreign universities, update educational courses, and contract with clinics run by distinguished doctors to host students in pairs, train them, and test their performance."

He concludes his speech lamenting, "The education sector in Yemen is collapsing. The universities remained resilient during the duration of the conflict, somewhat distant from its repercussions. However, the repercussions are dire today in the various governorates, and the medical sector needs urgent rescue, due to its uniqueness and importance in Yemen."

Dr. Hanan Shuraim's Triumph Over Armed Conflict: A Story of Enduring Struggle

Hanan Shuraim, a resident of Hodeidah Governorate, was born in 1994 with a strong passion for entrepreneurship. However, life doesn't always unfold as planned. In 2011-2012, after completing high school, Hanan faced a pivotal moment in her career path. In her community, the fate of a girl's university education is typically determined by her family, with two fields being the primary options: health or education. Influenced by her mother's aspirations and driven by her own desire to heal people's wounds and make a meaningful impact, Hanan made the difficult decision to pursue a career in medicine. She was drawn to the field due to its human nature and its undeniable importance in society.

By: Afrah Borji
Women in Development and Peace

A Tough Start

In Hodeidah Governorate, the College of Medicine did not have its own building. Medical students from all departments were studying in more than one college, with the Colleges of Science, Commerce and Education being among the colleges that received most of them. In 2014, a beautiful moment came like a ray of light and hope in the path of medical students when they finally had a college of their own to study in.

Hanan says, "Yes, now we have a college of medicine with all its departments, and now we take lectures in the same college without straying everywhere, though this college does not have the basic necessities of life - such as a cafeteria, a printer, and a library. We endured thirst, and sometimes we went up to three hours without drinking water in the stifling heat of Hodeidah. For the sake of education, we were patient. We even commuted on foot, as it was inside the neighborhood, and not on the main street."

Two months passed for the medical students under these conditions, until good news came and the college began to improve as all the medical departments opened, and they now had a cafeteria, a library, and printing presses, alleviating some of the suffering they were experiencing.

The Worst Period

This period does not only concern Hanan, but also all medical students. In 2015, the conflict began in Yemen, everyone suffered the worst. Yemenis experienced the bitterness of panic and the pain of separa-



tion, with many losing their families and loved ones. During that year, large parts of the areas in Hodeidah were subjected to widespread destruction, and on May 27, the Medical College in Hodeidah was targeted during the battles. The dreams of many male and female students were shattered, and their only concern became how to continue their education!

A Return Laden with Suffering

Medical students returned to school in even worse conditions. They were accepted into various colleges of Hodeidah University. The second year of medicine passed for Hanan's class, and she expressed her pain, "We were displaced to many colleges when we became homeless for education. Two years of studying medicine passed in this tragic situation until December 2016, when we stopped studying."

Suffering of the Entire Batch

Here, the difficulties and challenges began. Hanan - along with her colleagues - did not give up and faced the circumstances. There were many difficulties that were not only on Hanan's shoulders, but the entire group were affected by the situation. The struggle intensified the pain.

Hanan Shuraim confirmed, "We stopped for a whole year from December 2016 to December 2017, and we started thinking that we must continue our education at the Faculty of Medicine at Sana'a University."

Many difficulties arose with the start of the process in 2017, carrying tons of pain. There were protests in front of the presidency of Hodeidah University to obtain their documents and certificates, so they could reach Sana'a and complete their studies at Sana'a University. Unfortunately, their pleas fell on deaf ears. This forced them to travel to Sana'a to continue their education. Hanan says, "We did not demand to merge with them, we just wanted education, with the provision of professors and classrooms."

When they arrived in Sana'a, the Faculty of Medicine did not accept them, and they felt trapped. Desperation was evident in their eyes. They made an appeal through the media, and after several attempts, they managed to enter the Parliament with the help of some individuals, including Professor Sheikh Abdu Radman. Their request was simply to continue their education.

A meeting was held with members of Parliament, and it concluded with the Minister of Finance signing a check for the Faculty of Medicine at Sana'a University,

allowing the teaching of medical students coming from Hodeidah University within the framework of Sana'a University.

Challenges Persist

The Faculty of Medicine in Sana'a proposed conditions for the students from Hodeidah, but they did not give up and agreed to all the conditions, which included having the medical students' certificates issued from Hodeidah University, not Sana'a University. They also had to pay a financial amount. The students refused to reside in the university dormitory, but this issue was resolved.

Hanan Shuraim added, "Studying with the medical students at Sana'a University started at the end of 2017. We studied for two full months, but as soon as we entered 2018, we stopped due to the Ministry of Finance not paying the required financial amount. The check was signed, but it was not disbursed."

Hanan continued with a choked voice, "We were unable to take the practical exam, and the problems resurfaced. We went back to Parliament, and our studies resumed with the students at Sana'a University. We were integrated with them at the end of 2018."

Dr. Hanan Shuraim: Determination &

Challenge

Hanan got married a year before starting her medical studies and persevered through four years of hardship. However, this period was not as challenging as what followed. She became pregnant during her fourth-year break and started studying in the fifth year while in her fifth month of pregnancy.

Hanan says, "I started studying in the fifth year, and this was a great challenge and exhaustion for me, but I overcame it. I would go to exams while in labor. The most important thing was not to miss the lectures."

The End

Hanan successfully completed her education, and after all the difficulties and challenges she faced, there had to be a celebration of graduation. She and her fellow classmates in the Faculty of Medicine in Hodeidah were supposed to have a joint graduation ceremony with the Sana'a University batch. However, this did not happen due to some obstacles, and the Sana'a University batch graduated a year before them. Even during the internship year, they had to take their exams after the students of Sana'a University.

Success & Skill Development

Hanan worked while she was still a student, which allowed her skills to develop. After graduation, she also benefited from taking training courses in CPR, sonography, and cardiac monitoring. These courses honed her skills and made her proficient in various aspects of work, as well as enhancing her resume.

Describing her experience, Hanan said, "Attending these training courses had its challenges, but it also had its positives, as I gained new experiences that I did not acquire from hospitals and inpatient departments."

After graduating, Hanan found employment in a foundational position, and it was a beautiful period for her as it was her first time working in the medical field. She had the opportunity to work in the District of Wosab, and she traveled there to work as a doctor. Expressing her joy, she said, "This was the best experience I had in the medical field, and it was the best time I've worked."

Dr. Hanan Shuraim is one of the students who faced many obstacles but managed to graduate from medical school and become a doctor we are proud of. Despite the numerous hurdles, they have become guardians of health, treating patients suffering from pain and ailments.

Dr. Hamida Zaid: A Beacon of Continuous Humanitarian Giving

By: Hebah Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

When the profession transforms into a vibrant humanitarian and community endeavor, lives are entrusted to capable hands, free from fear and worry.

Meet Dr. Hamida Zaid, a remarkable Yemeni woman working in the health sector. She has dedicated herself to providing essential humanitarian services to all segments of society, with a particular emphasis on women and children. Her unwavering commitment has rightfully earned her the distinguished title of "Ambassador of Peace in Yemen."

Born in Aden Governorate in 1968, Dr. Hamida Muhammad Zaid has pursued an impressive academic journey. In 1995, she obtained qualifications in general medicine and general surgery. Additionally, she holds a diploma in obstetrics and gynecology, along with a professional master's degree in high-level strategic leadership and sustainable development from Cairo, Egypt, along with many other qualifications.

Dr. Zaid is a respected member of the

healthcare community, specializing in the field of obstetrics. She stands among the pioneering women in Yemen's medical field, having embarked on a remarkable journey of success. Throughout her career, she has provided distinguished medical and humanitarian services, constantly keeping pace with scientific advancements and introducing approaches to diagnosis and treatment.

The doctor worked at Aden General Hospital as a physician, specialist, and physician in the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department from 1995 to 2005. She held many official positions in Yemen, including Director of the Health and Population Office in Al-Buraira, Aden, Director-General of Reproductive Health in the Ministry of Health, and Undersecretary of the Population Sector. She was recently appointed Undersecretary of the International Academy of Management and Development Sciences for the Yemen branch.

Dr. Hamida Zaid's work was not limited to the field of medicine. She was one of the most prominent Yemeni women who worked in the field of human rights. She played a prominent role in many issues related to human rights and worked to monitor and document huma-

nitarian violations. In addition to her interest in community activities and the programs and activities of the welfare centers and marginalized groups in society.

Dr. Hamida Zaid was able to play an effective role in combating and advocating for many issues that concern women and children. She has shown great interest in improving the quality of human life and the health situation in the country, by supporting the health sector and providing basic health care to those in need in Yemen.

She made a number of humanitarian visits as a representative of many human rights and humanitarian organizations. In addition to spreading awareness, education, knowledge and culture, and sowing love and peace among the spectrum of society.

Dr. Hamida Zaid directed her research and humanitarian contributions to the field of maternal and child health. Among the most prominent topics were infant and young child nutrition, maternal and child health, family planning methods, public, psychological and physical health during peace and war, and crisis management.

She was able to help women with pregnan-

cy and giving birth by performing a number of different types of gynecological surgeries in Yemen and the Arab world.

The presidency of the International Arab World Union in the United States of America granted Dr. Hamida Mohamed Zaid membership in the International Arab World Union, and she was honored at the Arab Women's Dream Festival as one of the Arab pioneers.

She was appointed by the Center for Human Rights in the Middle East and the Observer Group as the Human Rights Ambassador to Yemen, and in 2020 she was appointed as the delegate of the Maghreb Forum for African Cooperation to the State of Yemen.

Mrs. Hamida, the representative of the Arab Peace University in the Republic of Yemen, was appointed advisor on health affairs for women and children. She was honored in many events and conferences locally and internationally in appreciation and recognition of her pioneering successes and community contributions in the fields of medicine, charity and humanitarian work. She received an honorary certificate from the Peace Academy in Germany and the Brotherhood for World Peace.



Dr. Hamida Zaid

Paving the Way: Recognizing the Capabilities of Women in the Health Sector

Experts Advocate for an Action Plan to Combat Gender Inequality

In the past decades, women's contributions to the medical field have often been overlooked, and in some countries, their involvement was even restricted. Primarily, their roles were confined to healthcare sectors such as midwifery and nursing. However, this marked the initial step towards their integration into medical education institutions worldwide.

By: Haneen Al-Wahsh
Women in Development and Peace

Women & Medicine

Despite the significant number of medical colleges graduating students today in various specializations, women in Yemen have not received adequate attention to fully participate in the field of medicine and health sciences. This is concerning, particularly given the pressing need for their presence in both rural and urban areas, where their skills and expertise are highly valued.

Women in Health

Dr. Abeer Muhammad, a specialist in Yemeni community medicine, and responsible for monitoring and evaluation in the field of health and nutrition for Prodigy Organization, stated the following regarding the importance of the presence of women in the health sector, "Women played a pivotal role in the renaissance of ancient and modern societies, and through this role they demonstrated their ability to bring about positive change in these societies. Their remarkable presence in various aspects of life and in all sectors, especially in the health sector, in addition to their insistence on standing by men and supporting them, are evidence that they are an essential element in bringing about the process of change in society."

Dr. Abeer added to that saying, "The positive change that societies seek depends largely on the reality of women, and the extent to which they are able to carry out their roles in society in general, and in the health sector in particular. They occupy a fundamental role



in building their families and caring for them, more over they occupy a pivotal role as one of the components of the health system. While providing health care, it is her responsibility to confront all the challenges and difficulties that are still imposed by the customs and traditions of society, and which constitute an obstacle for women in obtaining educational opportunities, also opportunities in the field of work, and in playing decision-making roles in the health sector."

Regarding the role of women in

health care, Abeer adds, "Women have a major role in health care institutions, whether within health facilities or through community activities, such as providing outreach services inside and out, spreading health awareness."

In the context of the difficulties and recommendations, Abeer asserts that women face many

problems, which include inequality in access to educational and practical opportunities in the health field, and

the failure to enable women to play leadership roles in this sector. Therefore, work must be done to develop a strategy to reduce gender inequality in the workplace and promote qualified women in decision-making.

This will lead to improved gender parity, improved participation, performance, productivity, and the efficiency of the country's health human resources, which in turn will strengthen the overall health system, and that is critical to improving health outcomes in Yemen.

International Reports

Regarding the importance of the presence of women in the Yemeni health sector, a report issued in 2023 by the World Health Organization (WHO) initiative to empower female health workers in Yemen, emphasizes the importance of gender equality and addressing gender-based violence in light of the increasing restrictions on

women in Yemen.

The report indicated that empowering female health workers has direct benefits for participating women. They are given educational opportunities, financial allowances, and it also contributes to the empowerment of Yemeni women on a broader scale to enable them to have better access to basic health services.

In 2022, reports regarding restrictions imposed on the movement of women in Yemen began to increase in many governorates, which limited the participation of female health professionals, because WHO training activities are multi-day, and far from their places of residence.

Moreover, there were cases where women faced difficulty due to restrictions of social norms which prevented women from receiving treatment or physical examination by male doctors. The impact of these restrictions is reflected in maternal mortality estimates in Yemen. In 2015, before the humanitarian emergency, Yemen recorded 164 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births.

New estimates issued by the World Health Organization, the World Bank, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, indicate that the maternal mortality rate in Yemen has risen to 183, starting from 2020.

The assessment conducted by the WHO to analyze the gender-based activities of the Emergency Human Capital Project showed that women represent only about 18% of participants in training courses, workshops, field visits, and other activities related to daily wage allowances.

Public Views

Regarding the opinions of doctors, Dr. Rasha Abdel Sattar emphasizes the importance of promoting gender equality in activities in order to improve the services available.

She added that since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen, there have been increasing cases of women being exposed to sexual, physical, and even psychological violence, as part of these efforts, care efforts that focus on survivors of violence must be intensified, also training in psychological first aid for nurses, midwives, and doctors must be intensified.

Dr. Rima Ahmed confirms that there is a lack of investment in the education and training of female health workers, and a mismatch between education and employment strategies regarding health systems and the general needs of the population, which contribute to the perpetuation of deficits.

In the same context, Rima says, "These problems are exacerbated by the difficulties facing the deployment of female health workers in rural and remote areas and areas that do not receive adequate services. Also, the increasing international migration of health workers due to the conditions the country is going through, despite the great importance that this represents women's energies, especially in the current situation, leads to a shortage in the health workforce, and thus a high gap in society due to the importance of women doctors in it."

Women accounted for about 18% of participants in training courses, workshops and field visits



Challenges and Successes: Women in Yemen's Healthcare Sector Strive to Meet Demands

Amidst challenging circumstances, Yemen's education sector has been significantly impacted, particularly affecting the quality of education and posing additional hurdles for female students, especially those pursuing medical specialties. The stage of higher education in universities and medical institutes is crucial for female students, as they encounter numerous difficulties and challenges that have an impact on their academic and professional journey.

By: Ahmed Bajoaim
 Women in Development and Peace

In light of this issue, Women in Development and Peace newspaper conducted a survey among female students in various medical specialties across universities and health institutes. The purpose of the survey was to explore the obstacles girls face, be it professional, societal, or otherwise, and to identify ways to enhance the role of women in Yemen's medical and health sector. The focus was on supporting girls' education, providing modern resources and opportunities, and ultimately improving the overall quality of medical education.

Difficulties Encountered

Hanan Al-Numani, a third-year university student at the Faculty of Medicine, specializing in nursing at Hadhramaut University, recounted the difficulties facing female students in universities and health institutes, saying, "One of the most important of these challenges is the lack of applied capabilities such as models and other things in classrooms, some professors often rely on explaining lessons and lectures on the theoretical aspect. As for the practical aspect, it is minimal, in addition to the societal challenges, including practical training in hospitals and health centers, where family restrictions impose certain times on female students, unlike male students who have more and greater opportunities than girls during practical training."

Al-Numani added, "Some of the curricula offered to female students are somewhat outdated in most Yemeni universities, unlike universities in other countries, and do not keep pace with the development that medicine is witnessing today, especially specializations related to women, including dealing with gynecology, obstetrics, nursing, and midwives departments. There is also a weak presence of supervisors with the students during their practical training in hospitals and in constantly supervising the examinations and inspections or checkups they provide."

Khadija Othman - a seventh-level human medicine student (with distinction), training at Bashraheel Maternity and Childhood Hospital in Mukalla - highlighted several challenges, including the difficulty of transportation due to the distance between their place of residence, the university and



the hospitals in which they are training, also the high costs of transportation. In addition, the seventh-level students are only allowed to do practical training in health centers only one day a week, which is considered the last year academically, stressing that most of the challenges faced by female students are the same as those faced by male students, especially in the current circumstances that the country is going through.

Khadija pointed out that female students during training face additional challenges, including patients' lack of confidence in the checkups and the examinations they perform, their refusal to deal with them, as

well as some family harassment, such as not mixing with the opposite sex or conducting examinations with male patients. In addition to their limited access to higher educational opportunities abroad is a result of the customs and traditions that are associated with many Yemeni families under the pretext of "maharm," unlike males who find widespread encouragement and acceptance in society.

As for the laboratory student at Ibn Sina Higher Institute for Medical Sciences, Enas Moawadah, she spoke about the difficulties in obtaining graduate studies in universities for graduates of health institutes, and

the lack of opportunities for them to obtain jobs in hospitals compared to university graduates. These challenges face both genders. In addition, Yemeni female students in the medical and health sector face greater challenges under the current unsafe situation that causes fear among many girls in continuing their university education or practical application in medical centers, especially in the evening shift.

Moawadah stressed that the difficult economic conditions experienced by most of the country's residents cast a shadow on the academic aspect and weakened its quality. Many students in the field of medicine resorted to refraining from university and going to institutes with fewer years of study. The factor of girls' marriage and lack of income significantly limited their continued educational attainment and obtaining higher degrees in the medical field in all its branches.

Mona Moqbel, a human medicine student at Hadramout University, explains that medical students go through many pressures, most notably the accumulation of exercises from some professors, in addition to having homework and their application in hospitals. Mona says that these pressures reduce the student's academic achievement and concentration during practical application in medical centers and represent a major obstacle to the advancement of the female sector in medicine in Yemen.

Assistance Requirements

Aisha Shamsan - a third-level nursing student at Hadhramaut University - enumerated a number of points that would improve the quality of girls' education in the field of medicine, including: increasing community awareness of the importance of women in all fields (education, health) and giving them their rights, raising the level

of confidence and providing them with opportunities, overcoming customs and traditions that restrict girls in medicine or other fields, and changing the perception towards them. If all these points are achieved, it will contribute to fulfilling most of the girls' requirements for education.

Shamsan added, "Girls working in the field of health must be supported by providing educational scholarships for postgraduate studies, in Yemen or abroad, and intensifying training and rehabilitation courses to raise the medical status of women because of their effective role. This will reflect positively on our conservative society, as it refuses conducting checkups or examinations of women by male doctors. In addition to attracting qualified medical personnel to supervise female students' projects, most notably the departments related to women, such as the departments of obstetrics and gynecology, nursing, intensive care, and others."

Hanan Al-Numani called for providing basic and quality education opportunities for girls in schools in all Yemeni regions, especially rural ones, and providing adequate infrastructure for health education in villages and remote areas, also providing training and development programs for teachers in the medical and health sector because of its positive impact on girls. In addition to strengthening partnership and cooperation between universities, health institutes, and the Ministry of Health to intensify and implement integrated educational programs in various medical departments, including specialties related to women.

Al-Numani continued saying, "One of the requirements for helping girls in health education is financing and providing financial resources and scholarships by international organizations and local institutions to promote health education for girls, organize continuous awareness campaigns targeting their parents, encourage community participation in the importance of health education for women, and reject customs and traditions, especially in rural areas, as well as increasing financial support and equipment to facilitate girls' learning in a better environment."

Enas Moawadah also mentioned that the requirements include providing materials and models through which practical application can be carried out while explaining lectures in classrooms rather than relying solely on theoretical explanations that are of no great benefit to students, targeting girls in the early stages of basic education with awareness programs that encourage them to pay attention in the medical and health field, and granting equal opportunities between genders in health education and development. It also requires the government to pay attention to the education of Yemeni girls and enhance their status in all fields, especially medicine to improve the quality of the Yemeni health sector at the Arab and international levels.

Citing the success of many regional countries in medicine, through equal opportunities between genders and attention to the educational aspect as a primary pillar in the development and renaissance that these countries have achieved through equality between males and females, our country must therefore invest the potential of women in all sectors, including the health sector, and improve its quality in the future.

Although remarkable progress has been achieved in the field of empowering girls and providing them with educational opportunities in various specializations, there are challenges they face, especially in the fields of medical and health sciences. Therefore, the status of female students in Yemeni universities must be enhanced by providing appropriate educational requirements. Local institutions and international organizations are also supposed to focus on educating girls in health, specifically at this stage and the circumstances that the students' families are going through, which will contribute to improving health services in Yemen and promoting sustainable development.



How Education and Experience Shape Women's Proficiency in the Medical Sector

Female doctors and nurses are equally capable and efficient in the medical sector, differing from their male counterparts only in terms of physical strength. Women have the ability to gain competency, qualifications, and experience through experimentation and work. In fact, women possess all the necessary abilities to excel in the medical sector, just like men.

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

Dr. Hanan Hibatullah emphasizes that women are no different from men in healthcare work. They possess the same capacity for learning, understanding, knowledge, and intelligence. Those who excel in these areas can perform exceptionally in the field of medicine. This explains why we see men and women working side by side in medicine, particularly since women often possess a deeper understanding of the healthcare field in general. Women can be equally competent as men, and in many cases, they excel, as proven by various experiments and studies.

Men Have Greater Physical Strength

Dr. Hanan further added, "In terms of physical strength in the field of medicine, men are considered stronger than women. While performing their work in medicine, particularly in the operating room, male doctors are able to stand for longer periods of time compared to female doctors who may not be able to endure long hours in the surgical operating room. There are examples of surgeries that require significant effort and time, such as excisions, tumor removals, orthopedic surgeries, and others. However, when it comes to emergency departments and other medical departments, both women and men work equally and with the same efficiency. Therefore, medical cases in general require both genders to have extensive knowledge and experience."

Tremendous Efforts

The relevant authorities support women in the field of medicine and in many other areas by providing them with special and general support and services. Dr. Zainab Al-Qaisi, Director of the General Administration for Women's Development at the Ministry of Public Health and Population in Aden, expressed the presence and capabilities of women in the medical field, stating, "Women play a significant role in providing healthcare services. The percentage of women in the healthcare workforce is higher than men by about 60%. In terms of their capabilities, they are equal to men in enduring hardships, as they

perform tremendous work under the current circumstances."

Dr. Zainab continued, saying, "In the Ministry of Health and Population, in accordance with the minister's directives, the General Administration is making tremendous efforts to develop women and improve their status in the healthcare sector. We also provide services for women in various medical and technical fields through the establishment of women's development offices in provinces, directorates, and units in hospitals to provide services for women who have survived violence and psychological support at referral (specialized) and central hospitals in all provinces. We also have protection units in hospitals to provide services around the clock."

Protecting Women from Harm During Work

Dr. Zainab added, "The increase in violence against women and their fear of any harm while performing their duties has led us to protect them and provide assistance in the healthcare sector. The violence that women face is a result of the current situation of poverty and poor living conditions, which leads families to fear for their women. Consequently, fathers stop their daughters from working in medicine or other fields due to the increased prevalence of crime."

Women's Share in Positions is Limited Compared to Men

Dr. Zainab Al-Qaisi says, "The presence of women in senior and

Women excel in health, showcasing unique capabilities compared to men

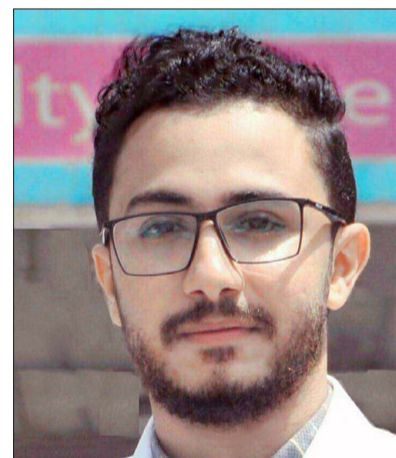
leadership positions in the healthcare sector is very limited. They do not receive promotions in their jobs on par with their male counterparts, despite their significant role in the healthcare field. They participate in providing medical and technical services in all healthcare sectors. The majority of female healthcare professionals specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology surgery, nursing, and midwifery for women in central hospitals, comprehensive emergency centers, and primary healthcare centers."

Dr. Zainab Al-Qaisi calls for "Raising awareness among society to reduce violence and educate the community about the existence of safe units with female staff to provide services and treatment in hospitals and units across the southern provinces. It is also important to promote awareness and social justice between men and women."

The Capabilities of Women in Dentistry

As for the field of dentistry, Dr. Riad Samir, a dentist, had a completely different opinion, as it is a vast field. Regarding the capabilities of women and men, he believes that the difference is societal and nothing more.

Dr. Riad Samir expressed, "Women have made significant strides in the medical field, especially in dentistry in recent times, whether they have abilities and experience or not. Women work in both cases due to the demand from hospitals and pri-



Dr. Riad Samir

private institutions for female doctors, especially in our Yemeni society. When a citizen comes in with a female patient, they are not satisfied with a male doctor treating her, so the responsibility falls on the female doctor."

In particular, Dr. Riad described, "In the field of dentistry, women and men are educated in the same halls, colleges, and universities. Both graduate from university, and while men excel in practical work, they face difficulties in finding employment. This is because the demand for employment falls more on women, albeit very little. Men and women work equally, and if there are any differences, they are minimal."

He continued, "In some Yemeni communities, there are institutions and hospitals that prefer women to work instead of men, especially in dentistry and nursing. This is because society does not accept a wife, daughter, or sister being treated or examined by a 'man.' This indicates that women in the medical field are capable and, if provided with a positive environment, can surpass their male counterparts. They lack nothing but the opportunity to gain

more knowledge and experience."

The Capabilities of Women in Nursing and Midwifery

Nurse Narmeen Al-Aqeeli says, "The capabilities of women in the medical field vary among Yemeni communities. There are communities that do not accept women working in any field, whether it is in medicine or elsewhere, and this affects them. On the other hand, there are other communities that allow women to work in medicine. Recently, there has been a noticeable presence of working women in the healthcare sector. Therefore, I can say that women are capable of working in the medical field just like men. However, they differ in terms of physical health. Many nurses cannot stand for 24 hours in emergencies, unlike their male counterparts who can work for 48 hours."

Nurse Saliha Muhammad says, "In the obstetrics department, a male doctor cannot study or practice in this field. Only women can perform this work. Therefore, the door must be opened for girls to train, enhance their skills and capabilities in obstetrics, and teach them the latest methods. Although this field is specialized for women, we see many girls specializing in various fields other than obstetrics, leaving this field for high school graduates."

Women are capable of performing all their duties and medical requirements in the work assigned to them. They are scientifically competent and well-informed about the available possibilities in this field. They will gain experience through extensive training. They are capable of being just like men, and do not differ from them in anything.



Struggling Results in Success

Balancing Family and Medical Duties: The Struggle Faced by Female Doctors

Yemeni female doctors face exceptional challenges compared to their male counterparts, as they strive to strike a delicate balance between their roles at home and their duties within hospitals and healthcare facilities. These remarkable women often carry the weight of managing household responsibilities and raising children, all while dedicating themselves to their medical profession during demanding working hours and shifts.

By: Afrah Borji
 Women in Development and Peace

The challenges encountered by Yemeni female doctors in their pursuit of harmonizing family and professional responsibilities are undeniably daunting, requiring immense patience and wisdom to overcome and adapt to.

Within the confines of their homes, these women embody the roles of mothers and wives, while in their workplaces, they bear the responsibility of being doctors entrusted with the lives of many. Consequently, the efforts they exert carry significant value and merit both appreciation and attention from society.

It is imperative that concerted efforts be made across various sectors to overcome the obstacles hindering their ability to fulfill their domestic and professional duties.

The lack of health institutes in the Yemeni countryside hinders the development of this field

Experience Sharpens Skills

Doctor Asmaa Taqi says, "I can gain my skills by managing time in a way that suits my family responsibilities; to set aside time for reading, learning, and researching new things in the field of medicine, as well as by reviewing the topics that confront me at work and taking advantage of the time available in the hospital departments to learn a lot of new experiences."

While Dr. Nour Nourh expressed her ambition, saying, "I never thought about giving up developing my skills. I started with developing my experience, as I used to go to an obstetrician and gynecologist for training during my vacation, and I took two courses after I graduated from medical school, in addition to working in several medical centers. I currently work as a teaching assistant at the College of Human Medicine at Sana'a University." Nour's self-proofness is evident in the fact that her ambition did not depend on obtaining a bachelor's degree only, but it was necessary to develop by studying a lot and gaining experience through the experiments that she carried out during the training, it helped her greatly in that she arranged her priorities.

Suffering Shapes the Individual



"The medical journey is not easy at all, especially since I gave birth to a child," this is how Dr. Nour began her speech, as she had three responsibilities:

postgraduate studies, her work as a doctor, and her responsibility as a housewife. Regarding taking care of a husband and raising children in addition to the responsibilities of the house, her mother and husband help her a lot in her journey. Doctor Nour's struggles with her work until nine in the evening and returns home to fulfill her role as a housewife, cooking food and tidying the house.

Doctor Nour added, "Sometimes my husband returns home before me, and I used to hear a lot of negative talk from those around me, but I got over them by adapting and getting used to them. Thus, female doctors must accept that they have to do their job and their responsibilities towards their family, and that this is their way of life."

Nour continued, "One of the sufferings that I encountered was that my child was distracted by psychological and physical stress, and as for me, I do not have time to rest. Also, my attendance at family visits decreased and I somewhat distanced myself from the participations that they do, in addition to marital problems due to the shortcomings that resulted from me

because I was busy with work, and over the days my husband began to accept the situation."

Many Responsibilities

In addition to the family responsibilities and suffering that Nurse Aisha Hassan faced, she had to work in the morning and afternoon so she can meet all her family's financial needs to provide them with a good life.

Aisha says, "Before my mother died, I did not think about how to quickly leave the hospital to go to my children, because she was replacing me at home during my absence. The situation worsened when she died, and I began to get used to it then. Before going to work, I carry out all my duties and family responsibilities towards my family, from cooking food, tidying up the house, etc. As I work as a nurse in a government hospital in the morning and in the afternoon, I work in a private clinic, I went through a lot of suffering that made me neglect my children and my duties towards my home. Due to the poor living and economic conditions in Yemen, the salary from my government work that came for a period of time (was not enough for me) unfortunately, it stopped for months. Many female doctors – as well as nurses – were looking for other work in addition to their work in government hospitals, only to face the difficulties of life in terms of living burdens and difficult economic conditions."

Nurse Aisha concluded by saying, "If I had given up when my mother died, I would now have been inside the house only as a mother and housewife, but determination and persistence made me complete with ease. Reconciling work duties and family responsibilities is nothing but an investment of time and effort for the benefit of a hardworking woman."

Effort Makes Tasks Easier to Perform

Doctor Nour describes her situation, saying, "As for me, I try hard to reconcile my duties in medicine with my responsibilities towards my family. Whatever happens, the house remains clean and I cook all meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner), in addition to being present with my husband for times and days that I allocate for him. The person who tries to invest his time in an excellent way will be able to reconcile their job and their home."

Giving Up Temporarily

Doctor Nour added by saying, "I cannot deny that there were several months in which I was submissive. I was unable to reconcile my medical duties, my family responsibilities, and my studies. I felt that all of this would be beyond my capacity, and as the days passed, I felt that this life was not the life I wanted. I will not study medicine and make an effort to reach this point with myself and just be a housewife, because I am able to be a doctor at my work and a housewife at home, the mother to my two children,

and a wife to my husband. I thought a lot at the beginning that it would be difficult to organize my time, and that vacation was a big lesson for me. I learned to adapt, occupy my time, and create determination to continue on the path together with my family, in addition to my work in medicine."

A Woman Embodies Several Personas

Women occupy an important position, whether in work or within the family, as they are half of society, and their presence in societies has become widespread. In this regard, Dr. Asmaa Taqi says, "I cannot say that a woman has one personality, rather she has several personalities, we live one life after all. Seven years of study for general medicine and another five years of study for specialization. If we add up the number of years that a medical student spends in studying, it will be 12 years of study. Likewise, marriage is not considered the end of the world, so a woman must reconcile her work with her study of medicine."

A woman in medicine or in any other field is the same mother, sister, and wife at home. Therefore, her responsibilities are very great, and she has to reconcile her work with her home responsibilities, as we see many female doctors carrying out this social responsibility towards their families and their medical duties towards patients with love and dedication, so all thanks and appreciation to that persevering and ambitious woman.

The Implications of the Lack of Healthcare Facilities in Rural Yemeni Regions

EDMI NOTE 8 PRO

By: Hebah Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

Access to universal healthcare is a fundamental right that should be available to every member of society. However, in Yemen, rural areas encounter significant challenges in delivering essential healthcare services to their population. The lack of healthcare institutions in these regions demands careful consideration and in-depth analysis, as it exacerbates the educational disparity between rural and urban areas while also detrimentally impacting the lives of rural residents. This report aims to thoroughly examine the causes and effects of the absence of healthcare institutions in rural Yemeni areas and propose strategies for improvement and development in this critical aspect.

Lack of Health Institutes in Rural Areas

Rural areas in Yemen face great challenges in terms of the availability of health institutes and medical services, and this absence is a real problem that negatively affects the level of health education among individuals in those areas and increases the difficulty of accessing medical services in rural areas, due to the lack of health institutes to qualify and train students in rural areas. "In fact, Yemen suffers from the lack of health institutes in rural areas as a result of the ongoing conflict and difficult economic conditions, which increases the growing challenges on the countryside in Yemen and stands as an obstacle to rural development. There are hundreds of young people in rural areas who aspire to become their dream of opening health institutes in their areas," says the director of the Technical Institute in Ibb Governorate, Mr. Najib Al-Nashmi.

He continues, "Many rural youths who come to cities to complete their education at various health institutes and universities suffer from difficulty of access due to the high transportation costs from the countryside to the city, the difficulty of obtaining housing, in addition to the high cost of living. All this has made the opportunity to enroll

in vocational or university education limited for rural youth, widening illiteracy and the lack of medical staff."

Sumaya Ali, from the district of Al-Uddin in Al-baadon region of Ibb Governorate, says, "After I completed high school with an excellent grade, my ambition was to enroll in a medical institute. However, as a result of difficult circumstances and the lack of health institutes in the village of Al-baadon, I stayed at home for five years, and I dream every day to become a doctor; to help the people of my village. But I am like most girls in all rural areas".

Sumaya continues, "One day my mother fell seriously ill. It was one o'clock at night, and we immediately set off to the nearest health center in the city, but time was not on our side. My mother died on the way; it was the shock of my life. Since that moment, I decided to continue my university education in the medical field, no matter the cost. I asked my siblings to help me, and I moved to Ibb city and enrolled at Jibla University of Medical Sciences in the Midwifery Department".

Sumaya points out that today she is in her last year at the university. She has been away from her family for years, and she has been patient with the cost of living. If there were health institutes in the countryside, it would ease the bitterness of remoteness. It would open promising opportunities for many young people living in rural areas, and it would provide rural areas with medical cadres who can provide healthcare to rural children by opening health centers in those areas.

Challenges

There are many challenges that have stood in the way of rural development in Yemen in all fields, including the health field. These challenges have resulted in the absence of health institutes in those areas, including economic, security, and social aspects. Dr. Abdallah Al-Waqsh, director of the modern medical institute in Ibb Governorate, stated, "the Medical Institute was a pioneer in the work of many free courses in the health field in rural areas, as a kind of partial

contribution to solving the problem. We were aiming in the future to open health institutes in rural areas, but many challenges stood in front of our continuation in achieving this goal, because of the deteriorating security conditions, we were robbed".

He continues, "After a branch of the Medical Institute was opened in Sabra, Ibb Governorate, and the institute was seized, and its name was changed to certain entities, and the same happened in the village of Al-Hasha, one of the rural areas in which we opened a medical institute, the current situation does not help us to open health institutes in rural areas."

Mr. Najib Al-Nashmi points to a number of difficulties that hinder the existence of health institutes in rural Yemen, including: the difficulty of having medical academic staff of doctors and specialists in rural areas to teach in medical institutes in rural areas. This is primarily due to the difficulty of access to these remote areas, lack of transportation means, and the absence of government hospitals in rural areas for training and field application.

"Another of the current challenges is the lack of health funding. Yemen is suffering from major financial challenges that affect the ability to provide health institutes in rural areas. The ongoing conflict and difficult economic conditions have led to a decline in government revenues, and the resources available to the health sector are shrinking. Therefore, it is impossible to allocate the necessary funding to improve infrastructure and provide the necessary materials for health institutes in rural areas," Nashmi continues.

"These challenges are a contributing factor to the absence of health institutes in rural areas in Yemen, and negatively affect the rural population's access to basic health services. There may be a significant disparity in the level of medical education between rural and urban areas, as cities are usually more available for health institutes and advanced medical services," he concluded.

The Consequences of the Absence

of Health Institutes in Rural Areas

The absence of health institutes in rural areas in Yemen is a matter that results in significant negative effects on the local population and the health environment in general, and the most important effects resulting from the absence of these institutes. Professor Najib Al-Nashmi says, "The rural population faces difficulty in accessing basic health services due to the absence of health institutes which would provide qualified medical cadres for medical work. Individuals are forced to travel long distances to cities, or other areas to obtain the necessary health care. This can be a problem especially in emergencies and chronic diseases, which require constant and effective care".

Dr. Abdallah Al-Waqsh adds, "the absence of health institutes in rural areas can have a negative impact on the local economy and society. Individuals may have to spend their limited resources on traveling to get health care, and this increases the financial burden on them. In addition, the absence of health institutes may affect the ability of individuals to work and participate socially fully, which affects sustainable development."

Solutions & Recommendations

Rural areas in Yemen are facing great challenges as a result of the absence of health institutes and the lack of basic health services, and this situation has a bad impact on the population and leads to an increase in the burden on health institutes and medical centers available in urban areas. Therefore, it is necessary to solve this problem and take effective measures and simple options. Here are some suggestions and recommendations that are important from the point of view of specialists and those concerned.

Dr. Ibrahim Al-Hilyani, the director of the labor market and the private sector at the technical education office in Ibb Governorate, says, "There

The lack of health institutes in the Yemeni countryside hinders the development of this field

are alternatives to health institutes in rural areas that can be worked through projects for educational and training programs in the health field,

first aid and midwifery courses at a level that corresponds to practical skills and abilities as initial stages, and are carried out through the directorates centers that mediate villages and areas to facilitate educational and training involvement in the health field as a primary path of targeting."

Dr. Abdallah Al-Waqsh points out the need to improve and expand transportation means and access to rural areas to facilitate the access of medical teams and cadres to those areas and strengthen funding and partnerships by increasing funding allocated to the development of health institutes in rural areas. Partnerships can be formed between the government, non-governmental organizations, and private institutions to enhance financial sustainability, and provide the necessary resources.

He believes that in order to achieve sustainable change in rural areas, there must be comprehensive strategies that focus on strengthening health care, opening health institutes and hospitals; to improve health infrastructure, promote health education, and provide local employment opportunities. This requires cooperation and coordination among stakeholders, allocate the necessary resources to achieve these goals, and ensure the right of the population to basic health care in rural areas.

"Addressing the absence of health institutes in rural areas requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only the establishment of health care facilities, but also the improvement of health care infrastructure, the recruitment and training of specialists, and the provision of adequate medical equipment and supplies," says Professor Najib Nashmi.

"Community engagement, awareness campaigns and partnerships between the government, NGOs and international organizations are critical to finding sustainable solutions and improving long-term medical education services in rural areas," he added.

Empowering Yemeni Female Doctors: The Crucial Role of Local Media in Raising Awareness and Fostering Dialogue

In Yemen, media serves as a crucial tool for educating society on a wide range of social, cultural, and health-related matters. Its role in fostering discussions on women's issues, particularly in the field of medicine, cannot be overstated. Through various platforms such as television, radio, newspapers, and social media, the media possesses the capacity to disseminate knowledge and raise awareness about the presence of women in the medical and health sectors.

By: Ahmed Bajoaim
 Women in Development and Peace

Nevertheless, the ongoing conflicts and political divisions that have plagued Yemen since 2015 pose significant challenges for women's issues in medicine. Consequently, local media outlets have shown diminished interest in addressing these concerns. Considering the importance of these issues in driving the country's development and progress, with equal participation from both genders across all sectors, it is imperative for the media to play a proactive role in discussing women's issues within the realm of medicine and health.

The media has a crucial role to play in addressing women's issues within the realm of medicine and health

The Role of Television

Aidroos Al-Khulaifi, the director of Al-ghad Almushreq channel in Hadhramout Governorate, emphasized the significance of media as a reflection of society. It strives to challenge the stereotypical images that people hold across various aspects of their lives. Many Yemeni channels actively dedicate programs to discuss women's issues in practical, professional, and cultural domains. In today's diverse media landscape, messages can be conveyed to society in a more persuasive manner compared to other means. Notably, Alghad Almushreq channel places great importance on women's issues and features them in numerous programs.

One such program, according to Al-Khulaifi's statement to Women in Development and Peace, is "Soft Hands." This program primarily focuses on individuals who have faced significant hardships in life but have managed to pave the way for a brighter future amidst Yemen's current challenging conditions. It sheds light on the struggles and challenges faced by women in their communities and immediate surroundings. Periodically, the program highlights reports about female doctors specializing in various medical fields, including midwifery.

Al-Khulaifi further elaborated on the "Soft Hands" program, stating that it examines the journeys of female doctors, their various challenges, and their determination to achieve success. It also emphasizes their ability to strike a balance between work and family responsibilities, in addition to showcasing the accomplishments of women midwives in the healthcare sector. Although television programs focusing on women's issues, including medicine, are relatively scarce, their impact has been positive and fruitful.

Journalist Mohammed Aydah lamented that the media, in its current state, tends to prioritize major political and military issues and the resulting events. It often struggles to keep pace with local, regio-

nal, and international changes. Aydah stressed that if the media were to address women's issues in the field of medicine, it receives only minimal attention, often relegated to the sidelines. The media tends to highlight the success and progress of women in

this field from a practical and scientific standpoint.

Ayдах attributed the absence of discussion on women's issues, including medicine, in the Yemeni media to several factors. These include the media's lack of interest in featuring women doctors, social and religious restrictions that hinder women doctors from engaging with the media, insufficient media outlets providing substantial coverage for women doctors to convey their scientific and practical messages to society, lower representation of women in the medical field compared to men, and the predominance of men in leadership positions within the Yemeni medical community.

He added that when television, whether local or international, devotes attention to discussing women's issues in the health field, it has a positive impact. It helps build confidence among women working in this domain, enhances their position within the medical community and society at large, and shortens the journey for aspiring female students pursuing medical or health-related goals in universities or institutes.

The Radio

Dr. Amna Al-Sharafi, a general physician and broadcaster on Salamatak Radio in Mukalla, specializing in medicine and health, highlighted the pivotal role played by the media, including government or community radio stations in Yemen, in addressing and discussing important issues such as women's issues. By creating public opinion, studying all the details and perspectives, and involving specialists and analysts, the media can raise awareness and amplify the presence of women in the field of medicine. Salamatak Radio, in particular, dedicates a significant portion of its programs to this cause, broadcasting them on a weekly basis.

Al-Sharafi further noted that despite these efforts, the Yemeni media has not focused on women's issues to the extent that is desired. She emphasized the need



Mohammed Aydah



Zayed Barashaid

for radio stations and other media outlets to allocate more programs to women's issues, considering that women constitute half of society. Just as these outlets allocate programs that incite conflict among warring factions, they should also intensify their efforts to broadcast meaningful content that has a positive impact on society, with a particular emphasis on women. This can be achieved by increasing awareness about women's rights to education and health and promoting their active participation in the country's growth and development.

Additionally, Al-Sharafi stressed the importance of the media highlighting the role of midwives in healthcare. Midwives play a crucial role in caring for women during pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal care. It is essential to showcase their significant responsibilities and make society aware of the valuable tasks they perform. She pointed out that there is a notable shortage of midwives in hospitals, especially in rural areas. Therefore, institutions and organizations should provide scholarships for midwives to enhance the workforce in health centers and address this shortage.

Press and Other Media

Zayed Barashaid, a journalist and the editor-in-chief of the Sadda News website, emphasized the significant contribution of the media, including electronic and print press, in raising awareness and addressing the unique challenges faced by women in the field of healthcare. He highlighted their influential role in shaping public opinion and driving discussions on various topics. Barashaid expressed the urgent need to evaluate the effectiveness of local media coverage of women's issues

in medicine, with a particular focus on encouraging girls to pursue education in universities and medical institutes across all specialties. This is essential to ensure the availability of qualified personnel in health centers dedicated to serving the women's sector, especially in a conservative society.

Continuing, Barashaid stated that he closely follows the developments related to women's issues in the Yemeni press with great interest. He acknowledged the crucial role played by the media in shaping public discourse and societal attitudes, particularly in raising awareness about women's health concerns. He expressed optimism and looked forward to the media's effective participation in enhancing the role of women in various fields, both presently and in the future.

Given the wide reach and ability of the media to capture the attention of millions, Barashaid emphasized that it can serve as a powerful catalyst for positive change. He suggested that through various forms of media, including new media, the stories of exceptional female doctors, researchers, and healthcare providers can be showcased to challenge stereotypes, inspire action, and highlight the achievements and research results of women. Barashaid described the local press as working effectively despite its lack of independence in the current situation faced by the country. He emphasized its role in raising awareness, challenging stereotypes, and motivating change.

Recommendations to Enhance the Role of Media

Mohammed Aydah, a press correspondent, presented several recommendations to enhance the role of the media

in discussing Yemeni women's issues in medicine. The most important recommendations are as follows: Firstly, Aydah emphasized that all types of media should give media attention to women doctors and healthcare professionals in order to highlight their efforts and excellence in the field. It is crucial for the woman doctor to establish a connection with the media to ensure that her message reaches society more quickly, as she carries a medical message that requires her active participation. Secondly, society must accept and recognize the legitimate rights of women working in any sector, including the medical field. The relationship between the media and medicine should be strengthened, and the female doctor should be provided with the space and opportunity for active participation and media presence. This will enable her to effectively convey her role and contribution to society, particularly to women.

Dr. Amna Al-Saqqaf proposed further strategies to activate the role of the Yemeni media in discussing women's issues in medicine and enhancing their presence. These proposals include intensifying and diversifying programs on official and community radio that encourage women's participation in various sectors, highlighting their rights, and airing them during peak times. It is also important to cover seminars and activities targeting women doctors and midwives, reaching the largest possible number of listeners. Additionally, providing midwives with greater opportunities to participate in radio talk shows can showcase their successes, as well as address the challenges they face in their field.

Ayдах emphasized that the Yemeni media must play a more effective role in promoting discussions about women's issues in the medical field. This will help bridge the gap between men and women in the profession and raise awareness about the challenges faced by women in healthcare. By engaging in these discussions, girls can receive support and encouragement to pursue their ambitions and goals in the medical profession. New media platforms, such as social networking sites, also provide avenues for female doctors to communicate, interact, and exchange experiences, knowledge, and mutual support.

Despite the economic, political, and societal challenges faced by various Yemeni media outlets, their impact on the ground in promoting the status of women, discussing their issues, and shaping public opinion is evident.

Triumphs and Trials: The Inspiring Journey of Yemeni Women Doctors Filled with Challenges and Accomplishments

Amidst the turmoil and adversity of war-torn Yemen, where the dreams of the youth often remain elusive, and the path to a better life seems obstructed by countless challenges, emerges an extraordinary tale of resilience and determination. Driven by unwavering hope and unwavering courage, a young Yemeni woman, Dr. Kholoud Ghober, defies the odds and navigates through the intricate web of economic, social, and cultural transformations. Within these lines, we delve into the intricacies of her remarkable journey, unveiling the remarkable details of her story.

By: Hebah Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

Childhood & School Years

Kholoud grew up in Ibb Governorate, in an environment that adhered to customs and traditions, from a very simple and middle-income family. She was the eldest among her sisters, so she bore a great responsibility on her shoulders. Kholoud attended primary school, where she suffered from the cruelty of her teacher who scolded her every day, as well as from the children in class, who would all make fun of her. Tears would fill her eyes as her parents were preoccupied with life's circumstances.

Kholoud says, "My life in primary school was the worst because of my family being busy, the responsibility placed on me, and the teacher scolding me every day. Therefore, one day I decided to change my academic level by myself without the help of my family, who didn't know anything about my academic level. When I reached the fourth grade, I made a plan to study, work hard, and organize my time."

She continues, "It was my first year of school in which I passed half the year and got a tenth rank. That was a strong incentive for me to continue working hard and diligently to achieve top grades in school. In fact, I ranked first in all grades until I moved on to high school, but at a school that was very far from our village because there are no high schools in our area."

High School & University Phase

Kholoud refers to the many difficulties she faced in high school and in her new school, as she said, "I used to endure the hardship of commuting every day, walking for two hours or more until I reach school. My love for my family and my beloved mother motivated me to endure fatigue and hunger, to fulfill my dream of becoming a doctor, and help my family financially."

After Kholoud reached her last academic year, which is the third year of high school, she was honored by the school administration and some Yemeni companies for ranking first in the first half of the academic year. After completing high school with a 91% average, she felt that her dream was getting closer, and there were just a few steps left for her to overcome with patience and determination.

Dr. Kholoud says, "My father registered me in the College of Dentistry, so the next step was to pass the college admission test. I actually passed the test and ranked second among those accepted. The years of study in the College of Dentistry were like fighting in a battle: you either win or lose".

Conflict & Its Economic Impact

The difficult living conditions resulting from the conflict had a major impact on Kholoud's family life and her studies at university. She says, "I faced difficult challenges. My father was the director of a government school, and when salaries were suspended for teachers in Yemen, my father was unable to cover the costs of my university studies. At that time, my father was my first supporter, so I had two options: either to stop enrolling in the uni-



versity until my father gets another job, or I look for any job and continue my university education."

Indeed, Kholoud stopped going to university for ten days to look for work, and after a week of searching, she was able to get a job with a low salary that would cover her university expenses. She worked in a dental clinic as a doctor's assistant in the afternoon.

Dr. Kholoud says, while recounting the details of her life, "I used to go to the university in the morning according to the schedule of lectures, and then leave the college directly to the clinic. When work ends at the end of the day, I return home with fatigue destroying my body. Moreover, what exacerbated the difficulties was the treatment of doctors in college with us in a very harsh manner, as well as the absence of some of them from the lectures due to the interruption of their salaries, causing the student to bear the negative consequences of that."

The Feeling of Joy & Fulfilling the Dream

She added, "In recent years, we struggled with practical training, lack of medical materials and devices in college, as well as occasional power outages. The conditions of the college were very bad, however we showed patience, determination, and the drive to succeed. Indeed, I finished my academic career with an honors grade. Feeling success after pain, fatigue and patience, is a very beautiful feeling. You see the joy and happiness overwhelming your parents, and they are proud in front of everyone who doubted my success in my university studies."

After years of pain, patience, and fatigue, Kholoud tasted the feeling of success. Today, she is one of the best dentists in Ibb Governorate. She is the primary breadwinner for her family after the circumstances of the conflict led to the interruption of her father's salary. She built a large community base because of her dedication to work, her love and her appreciation for others. She has helped many poor families by offering two days a week free of charge for poor and displaced families.



Dr. Al-Zahra'a Alsoswa

From Passion for Media to Becoming a Doctor

Not everything we love is easy to get, and not everything we want is good for us. The things we avoid may be the right path to a better future. All of this is embodied in Dr. Al-Zahra Alsoswa, a Yemeni young woman born in Taiz. She was the eldest of six sons and daughters. She took responsibility at an early age. Dr. Al-Zahra'a says, "Despite my love for studying and learning, I used to pass with very weak grades. This was because I had the responsibility of taking care of my siblings and working at home. I did not find enough time to study."

Dr. Al-Zahra'a continued, "The situation continued as it was until I reached high school. I felt psychological pressure because of the many responsibilities. I would go to school and then go to the institute in the afternoon, then return home at the end of the day. Everyone there was waiting for me to prepare dinner and clean the house. I didn't get a chance to read and study."

Al-Zahra'a completed high school with a grade point average of 84.37, in the

year 2006. She had an ambition that had haunted her since childhood, which was to join the Faculty of Mass Communication. Al-Zahra'a says, "I felt very happy that I would begin the first steps in realizing my dream of entering the Faculty of Mass Communications, but my father's surprising rejection was a shock. My father completely and categorically rejected my entry into the field of media, and the reason was, from his future point of view, that the media had no future in Yemen."

Al-Zahra'a points out that her father gave her two options, with no third choice: either to enroll in the English Literature Department or enter General Medicine. Her father asked her to pray Istikhara (a prayer for guidance). She had 24 hours to make her final decision. However, Al-Zahra'a had no interest in both departments, and she did not want to make a final choice. In the end, she chose the best of the worst for her, which was to register at Taiz University Faculty of Medicine.

She explains that her desire at first was not in medicine, but she endured the consequences of that. She failed five subjects in the first year, so she entered the

second round to repeat the subjects she failed in. However, she failed again in three subjects, so the penalty for this in the medical law in Taiz at that time was expulsion from the university.

A Ray of Hope

Dr. Al-Zahra'a says, "Thanks to Allah and fortunately for me, a new law was issued enabling students to repeat the entire academic year, but with a minimum passing grade of 65%. I said to myself, I did not succeed when the minimum passing grade was 50%. I entered into a state of despair and frustration, but thanks to Allah, then Dr. Qais Amer, who is now my husband, he gave me a strong push and hope to continue studying and start again."

Dr. Qais continued by saying, "All the college doctors were betting on my failure, and that the doctor's daughter was a failure, especially since my father was the dean of the Faculty of Arts at Taiz University. This created a greater challenge for me in overcoming the psychological state I was in. I completed the first year with 85% and I completed the five academic years. In the sixth year, I obtained distinction, and graduated from college in 2014/2015."

Dr. Al-Zahra'a and her husband, Dr. Qais Amer, chose Ibb Governorate as a place to settle. They each opened a private clinic there and began a new life. She continued her master's studies in the specialty of obstetrics and gynecology and ranked second in her class. She worked in government hospitals, gaining new opportunities and specific skills through work and training.

Dr. Al-Zahra'a Alsoswa concluded her speech by saying, "My husband and I went through very difficult circumstances, but with the cooperation of my family and my husband, we overcame all these difficulties, and now I love my work very much. I do not imagine myself in another place. I thank my dear father because he guided me to the right path. Today, I feel I am very happy, and I am helping many women by supporting them in facing the challenges of reproductive health, saving their lives in some late cases, and spreading awareness for the benefit of the mother and child."

A Midwife's Triumph in Yemeni Society

Fatima Al-Mawjani: Bridging Passion and Dreams in the Midwifery Profession

Each of us harbors a childhood dream. While some may falter and drift away from their aspirations, fearing they will get lost amidst life's challenges, there are those fortunate few who tenaciously hold onto their passions and pursue them unwaveringly. Fatima Al-Mawjani is one such individual who transformed her childhood dream into a tangible reality, using it as a means to make a positive impact on her community. In the following lines, we will delve into the inspiring story of a resilient woman—a struggling girl turned successful mother—who has achieved her goals and continues to inspire those around her.

By: Hanan Hussein
Women in Development and Peace

The Start

Meet Fatima Saleh Al-Mawjani, an ambitious woman hailing from Sana'a Governorate. Currently married and a mother to a three-year-old child, her passion for medicine was ignited when she observed her older sister working as a physician's assistant for a renowned obstetrician and gynecologist. From a young age, Fatima's dream revolved around providing care for women and supporting expectant mothers as a midwife.

The journey towards fulfilling her dream began during her childhood, but it took shape when she completed high school. With unwavering determination, Fatima immediately stepped into the role of a nurse, temporarily taking over her sister's responsibilities after she got married. Filled with passion and a strong work ethic, Fatima embraced her new role wholeheartedly. As she embarked on her first steps in the medical field as a physician's assistant, Fatima found herself gravitating towards the maternity department. It was there that she discovered her true calling—caring for pregnant mothers and offering them valuable advice. With her heart set on this path, Fatima made the decision to specialize in midwifery and obstetrics, dedicating herself to this noble profession.

Her Education

Despite the challenging nature of her job and the demands it placed on her as a young woman transitioning from school to a more profound stage in life, Fatima was determined to continue her personal development. She embarked on a journey to enroll in a medical college and pursue a specialized education in midwifery and obstetrics. While simultaneously working in the field, Fatima dedicated herself to academic studies, combining theoretical knowledge gained in college with practical experiences in the clinic. After three years of diligent effort, she successfully graduated in 2016 and obtained a diploma in midwifery and obstetrics. Fatima proudly recounts the unwavering support she received from her parents, with her father constantly encouraging her by saying, "You make me proud." Determined to contribute to her education costs, she juggled work and studies, demonstrating her commitment to personal growth.

Reflecting on her early experiences with child-

birth operations, Fatima admits that while college provided some knowledge through instructional videos, the actual experience brought forth a wave of fear and anxiety. However, she persevered and gradually overcame these barriers, gaining confidence and becoming accustomed to the process.

She passionately remarks, "I find my work incredibly gratifying and purposeful. There is nothing more profound than assisting a mother in bringing new life into the world. The joy that envelops a mother in that moment permeates my being, filling me with happiness and fulfillment, even if I had no prior connection with that particular mother."

Fatima emphasizes that neither her marriage nor her own pregnancy hindered her societal responsibilities. She continued working in the clinic throughout her pregnancy until the final month before delivery. After a brief break following the birth of her child, Fatima resumed her studies and sought to further her knowledge in another area, specializing in "Women's Ultrasound." This specialized field involved using

ultrasound technology to detect pregnancies, understand the various stages of pregnancy in detail, and even determine the gender of the fetus.

Accompanied by her husband and child, Fatima temporarily relocated to Hodeidah Governorate, where she spent three months working with ultrasound machines and assisting women during childbirth. However, due to difficulties adapting to the new environment, they eventually returned to Sana'a.

Difficulties

Fatima encountered several significant challenges during her field visits to hospitals and medical centers for practical application during her studies. She shares, "One of the most common difficulties I faced, along with my colleagues, was the lack of responsiveness from certain hospitals. On some occasions, the agencies we visited for application did not treat us with the respect we deserved. Instead, their focus seemed to be more on using us as cleaning and assisting personnel rather than providing proper

guidance and teaching us the essential skills."

One particular challenge Fatima patiently navigated was the pressure of finding suitable cases for theoretical application during her studies. She explains, "Throughout the study period, it was often arduous to find a delivery case at the designated time and day. This led to long hours spent in hospitals, sometimes extending until sunset or even late into the night, waiting for an appropriate case. Additionally, we had to wait for permission from the doctors to participate in the practical application, which was not always granted." She emphasizes, "Despite the exhaustion resulting from a full day of studying, I now recognize that these demanding efforts have translated into valuable learning experiences. They have taught me patience, precision, and various professional skills." Fatima never gave in to despair and persevered, dedicating herself to mastering the fundamentals of caring for pregnant women, providing them with guidance and advice, and assisting during childbirth. She takes pride in the fact that she has become well-known among friends and neighbors, emerging as a respected and influential midwife within her community.

Her Message

Fatima has an encouraging message for girls who aspire to join the field of midwifery, particularly obstetrics. She advises, "I urge girls to pursue their dreams relentlessly and always maintain a strong motivation for continuous learning and development. Never let despair hinder your progress."

Furthermore, Fatima advises them not to let academic grades define their success. She believes that true success lies in mastering the practical and theoretical aspects of the field with honesty. She emphasizes the importance of treating patients with utmost compassion, mercy, and professionalism, as doctors are often seen as angels of mercy.

In her message to society, Fatima underscores the significance of parental support for girls entering this field. She views midwifery as a communal service, a source of pride, and an opportunity to assist others. She also stresses the necessity of having at least one hospital or clinic in every locality, ensuring that women are active partners in these healthcare facilities. This, she believes, will help disseminate health-related ideas and strengthen the foundations of healthcare across all segments of society, regardless of education levels. By building a conscious society and fostering sustainable development, we can secure a brighter future for generations to come.

Dr. Afnan Overcomes Numerous Challenges to Achieve Her Aspirations

This is the story of Dr. Afnan Abdel Salam, a tenacious and ambitious young woman who pursued her dream of specializing in dentistry despite enduring difficult and painful experiences during the outbreak of the conflict in Yemen. Despite the immense personal cost she bore, she never wavered in her determination.

By: Ahmed Bajoaim
Women in Development and Peace

Dr. Afnan, born and raised in Hodeidah Governorate in northern Yemen, is 27 years old. Her formative years were spent in the city of Zabid, where she completed her primary and secondary education. In 2015, she embarked on her university journey, which coincided with the onset of armed conflict, intensifying her struggles further.

Her University Education

In 2015, the young woman, Afnan, registered at Hodeidah University, specializing in dentistry. The date for the differentiation tests for general admission was set. Dr. Afnan recounted to Women in Development and Peace the beginning of her university stage, saying, "Unfortunately for me, on the day of the differentiation test, there was an armed conflict between local factions which disrupted the road between the cities of Zabid and Hodeidah. This prevented me from reaching the university to take the exam. I despaired of securing a seat in the same specialty, but my father - an agricultural doctor who moved us to live in Hodeidah - did not lose hope and continued trying. He followed all the procedures until he was able to obtain a study seat in the parallel system of studying, as a result of

one of the students withdrawing so that I could replace him, two months after the start of the university year."

Afnan continued to tell her story, "Here my suffering began in dental college (a delayed start with the curriculum because I was two months late in entering). I tried as much as I could to keep up with my colleagues, and thanks to Allah I was able to, and I passed the first level with a percentage that was - to some extent - satisfactory. During the break the house we lived in, located near my father's work site in the Tihama Development Authority, was bombed. Fortunately, we were out with a relative when the house was bombed. We then returned displaced to the city of Zabid."

Afnan added, "After the destruction of the house, the family's displacement to Zabid, and my father leaving his job, I had to live in the university's female student dormitory. This in itself was torture because I am sitting

among people I do not know in a new environment, far away from my family. All of these obstacles presented challenges for me. Those difficulties affected my educational career at that time. I continued to be transferred from one residence to another until the end of the third level, i.e., 2018. I finished my lessons and some exams were before the month of Ramadan, and four exams remained that were postponed until after Eid al-Fitr."

A New Setback in Afnan's Academic Journey

Afnan says, "After school was suspended and the rest of the exams were postponed until after Ramadan, I went to Zabid to spend Ramadan and Eid with my family, to refresh and change my mindset and way of living. The seventh day of Eid al-Fitr, June 18, 2018, was the date for the postponed exams. However, due to the poor security conditions in the governorate, bloody clashes broke out lasting

for several days between the warring parties. This caused me to be late for university since I was in Zabid. Consequently, I had to repeat the third level. I was filled with sadness, despair, and intense anger at the situation we have reached as a result of the conflict. We, as citizens, are the ones paying the price."

Afnan as a Graduate

Dr. Afnan did not surrender to all these challenges. She returned and repeated the third level again by paying 50% of the fees for the parallel system of studying, because it was considered a new academic year. She continued the subsequent university years with less pressure, and she grew stronger and more mature in her resistance until she obtained her university degree with distinction. She emphasizes, "this success was a very defining moment in my life, as it came after suffering and harsh circumstances that I went through with my family from the beginning of the conflict until today."

Afnan graduated as a dentist, but unemployment awaits her; much like the majority of Yemen's youth who have been devastated by the circumstances the country is going through and the deteriorating economic conditions. However, she did not lose hope, nor did despair creep into her heart. She did not remain confined to her home. Rather, she went to all governmental and private medical centers and hospitals displaying her certificates, capabilities, and merit. This was in the hope of getting a job to support her family in light of the current crisis that most of the Yemeni people are suffering from. She remains in a state of waiting.

In addition, on November 30, 2018, the "Sharika Wa Laken" website, a feminist website based in Lebanon, stated that "more than 90% of Yemeni girls have been deprived of their right to complete their education," and it is likely that the reason for this is due to the gender gap and inequality in the field of education, in addition to the humanitarian situation that Yemen has witnessed during the past eight years. This has prevented many girls from continuing their education, whether at university or even secondary school, it has caused the level of illiteracy to rise to very large proportions, compared to before the armed conflict, and also some societies' adherence to customs and traditions, which leads to girls being deprived of continuing their education.

The success story of dentist Afnan Abdel Salam is a living lesson and an example of steadfastness and defiance against all the compelling and difficult circumstances, which forced many of our young people to abandon their dreams and surrender to the current situation, and to the uncertainty of the future of education, as they say. Her story reminds us of the importance of achieving dreams at any cost, as will and determination can achieve the impossible. It is the story of a young girl who proved that difficult times do not hinder achievement, and that determination and passion are capable of transforming dreams into a tangible reality on the ground of contemporary reality.

Working Women in the Health Sector: Where Are They Absent, and Where Are They More Prominent?

The health sector in the country has been severely impacted by the ongoing conflict, which has lasted for eight years. Numerous medical facilities have been deliberately targeted, leading to infrastructure damage. Additionally, many healthcare professionals have migrated to other countries, while some have chosen to leave the medical profession altogether in search of alternative employment opportunities that offer better livelihoods. This is particularly true for those working in the government sector, as their salaries have been significantly reduced.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez
Women in Development and Peace

According to a report published by the World Health Organization on September 28, 2016, titled "Health services are deteriorating as the conflict in Yemen continues," a total of 274 health facilities across 16 Yemeni governorates have been damaged. Out of these, 69 facilities were completely destroyed, while 205 suffered partial damage.

The report highlights that only 45% of the country's health facilities are fully operational, with 17% having completely ceased operations. Furthermore, there has been a significant decline in the number of medical staff available in the country's health facilities.

Despite the extensive destruction faced by the health sector, it is noteworthy that women are actively engaged in this field. Their contributions have played a vital role in the sector's recovery, as they have persevered in delivering various health services and assisting individuals in combating diseases and epidemics. Women have actively participated in awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and diverse activities aimed at enlightening the population.

The material conditions that many families and individuals go through have made many women specialize in specific medical fields



Medical Fields Where Women Exist

Yemeni women have become an important part of the medical team in all facilities, centers and hospitals in various regions of Yemen in rural and urban areas, working in intensive care units, inpatient and emergency departments, operating rooms, laboratories, pharmacies, radiology departments, as well as serving as representatives for various healthcare institutions, marketers, and performing other tasks.

However, the material conditions that many families and individuals go through have made many women specialize in specific medical fields, due to the high costs required by studying some specialties and due to customs and traditions that control the movements of individuals in some regions. As a result, you find women working in certain jobs as nurses or doctor's assistants.

Regarding this matter, Afrah Hamid, a gynecologist and obstetrician, says that universities, institutes and health colleges have appeared greatly, and there are different specialties. You find most women when they join medical universities choose specific fields, including nursing of all kinds, such as clinical nursing, child and maternal health nursing, emergencies and accidents, intensive care, in addition to midwifery specialization, assistant doctor or laboratory technician.

She adds, "It is rare to find women specializing in psychiatry, pharmacy, and general medicine due to the inability of families to pay the high fees in those fields. Many Yemeni girls who are interested in studying medical specialties are more concerned about the costs than their interests."

She adds, "As soon as you enter a hospital or medical center, you find women confined to specific fields and absent in many specialties, including internal medicine, cardiology, orthopedics, liver and kidney diseases, ophthalmology, urology, cosmetic medicine, and other healthcare specialties, which are predominantly occupied by either men or non-Yemeni female doctors."

The doctor attributed the reasons to the inability of families to afford sending their daughters to study abroad, especially since most of these specialties are not available in Yemeni universities, and if they are available, their quality of education is not up to the required standard. The majority of medical professionals in the country are graduates of Arab and foreign universities.

She added in her talk with Women

in Development and Peace newspaper, "Customs and traditions may be among the reasons. Especially since many families find it difficult for girls to travel to other countries for study. They may encounter problems when they return to work due to the social stigma that restricts women to specific fields."

For her part Muna Hajri says, "The most medical fields where Yemeni women working in the health sector are found in Yemen is midwifery, which is an easy field of study and costs. In addition to being a field that does not require high grades to join. I do not exaggerate if I say that there are a group of midwives who did not study. And they perform delivery based on experience or necessity they put themselves into."

She adds, "This desire is due to the interest of international organizations in this matter. The vast majority sponsor motherhood and childhood services for pregnant women and diseases that accompany them during pregnancy."

Abdulrahman Thabit Numan, an internist at Al-Sakhna Hospital in Hodeida, says, "Women are part of society and they play a significant role in healthcare, especially in primary care, such as vaccinations, family planning, and nutrition. They are nurses and doctors who contribute to meeting the community's healthcare needs."

He adds, "Multiple courses have been conducted in the field of family care, and women have had a greater share in these courses. This is because women have been more involved in this field than men, and they excel in it. It seems that selection is based on this basis."

Women in the Healthcare Workforce

Regarding the percentage of women working in the healthcare field in the country, Zainab Al-Qaisi, the General Director of Women's Development at the Ministry of Health in Aden, says, "The percentage of women in the healthcare sector represents more than men, with a rate of 65% in the healthcare sector."

Al-Qaisi believes that there are many

challenges that threaten the continuity of women working in the healthcare sector, including conflict, displacement, the spread of COVID-19, low salaries, high transportation costs, long periods of unemployment, and family pressures. Some families in certain areas prevent girls from continuing to work due to fear of crimes.

She adds in her interview with Women in Development and Peace newspaper, "Women working in the healthcare field have played an important role during the conflict, providing first aid to the wounded, raising awareness, and conducting various training courses in the healthcare field, in addition to treating COVID-19 patients and others."

She continues, "Despite the significant efforts they have made in this field, they still suffer from marginalization in leadership positions. There is no general director, minister, or deputy minister. There is no social justice or equality at all."

Dr. Muna Hajri points out that women working in the medical field in Yemen face many challenges, including the lack of appreciation for their competence and experience, as well as the scarcity or absence of salaries, which makes them vulnerable to despair and disappointment.

She adds, "In her dedication, a woman is the homeland. When all avenues are open to her in her society, she blends with her ambitions and opens up horizons without despair. She contributes in various fields, especially in the medical field, as a doctor, nurse, and pharmacist, in addition to her significant responsibilities and efforts within her home and family."

The workforce in the healthcare sector is the backbone and foundation of any country, and those working in this field in Yemen are an important element in serving humanity. Many healthcare workers have persevered in their workplaces despite the noticeable deterioration that has affected the healthcare sector in the country. The presence of women in medical facilities has had great importance in assisting Yemenis.



Challenges Faced by Women in Yemen's Health Sector

In Yemen, women play a crucial role as indispensable partners in delivering healthcare and promoting community well-being. Despite their invaluable contributions, women working in the health field continue to encounter significant challenges that impede their professional growth and hinder their ability to effectively carry out their duties. This report seeks to examine and shed light on some of the primary issues confronting women in the health sector in Yemen.

By: Hebah Mohammed
 Women in Development and Peace

Women in Yemen's Healthcare Sector: Necessity & Harm

The ongoing conflicts in Yemen have severely impacted the health sector, pushing it to the brink of collapse. Yemeni women employed in government health positions have been particularly affected by the negative economic changes that have weakened the sector. Despite these challenges, they continue to work tirelessly, often without receiving any remuneration. Iman Al-Sahbani, a nurse at the dialysis center in Al-Thawra Hospital in Ibb Governorate, shares her experience, "I have dedicated ten years of my life to working at the dialysis center. We face numerous difficulties due to the center's paralyzed state caused by a lack of medical equipment and devices. Despite the halt in salaries, we persistently work at the center, using limited resources to assist the hundreds of individuals who rely on us for essential treatment."

She further adds, "Many of my female colleagues also contribute their efforts to the center, driven by their sense of duty and passion for their work. However, this commitment comes at a cost, as they endure long hours that extend into the late night. They face the consequences of neglecting their families and the absence of financial incentives. Moreover, women workers in the health field often grapple with societal prejudices and discrimination."

Layali Mohammed, another worker at the same center, highlights that numerous female employees from government hospitals and medical centers have migrated to the private health sector. This has resulted in increased workloads for some women in hospitals and government health centers. Many women have taken up employment in the private sector to support their families, despite facing societal challenges that obstruct and discourage their progress.

Challenges & Difficulties

Yemeni women working in the health field play a crucial role in the country's healthcare workforce. Despite the significant contributions they make in providing healthcare to the Yemeni community and advancing the health sector, they encounter numerous challenges and issues.

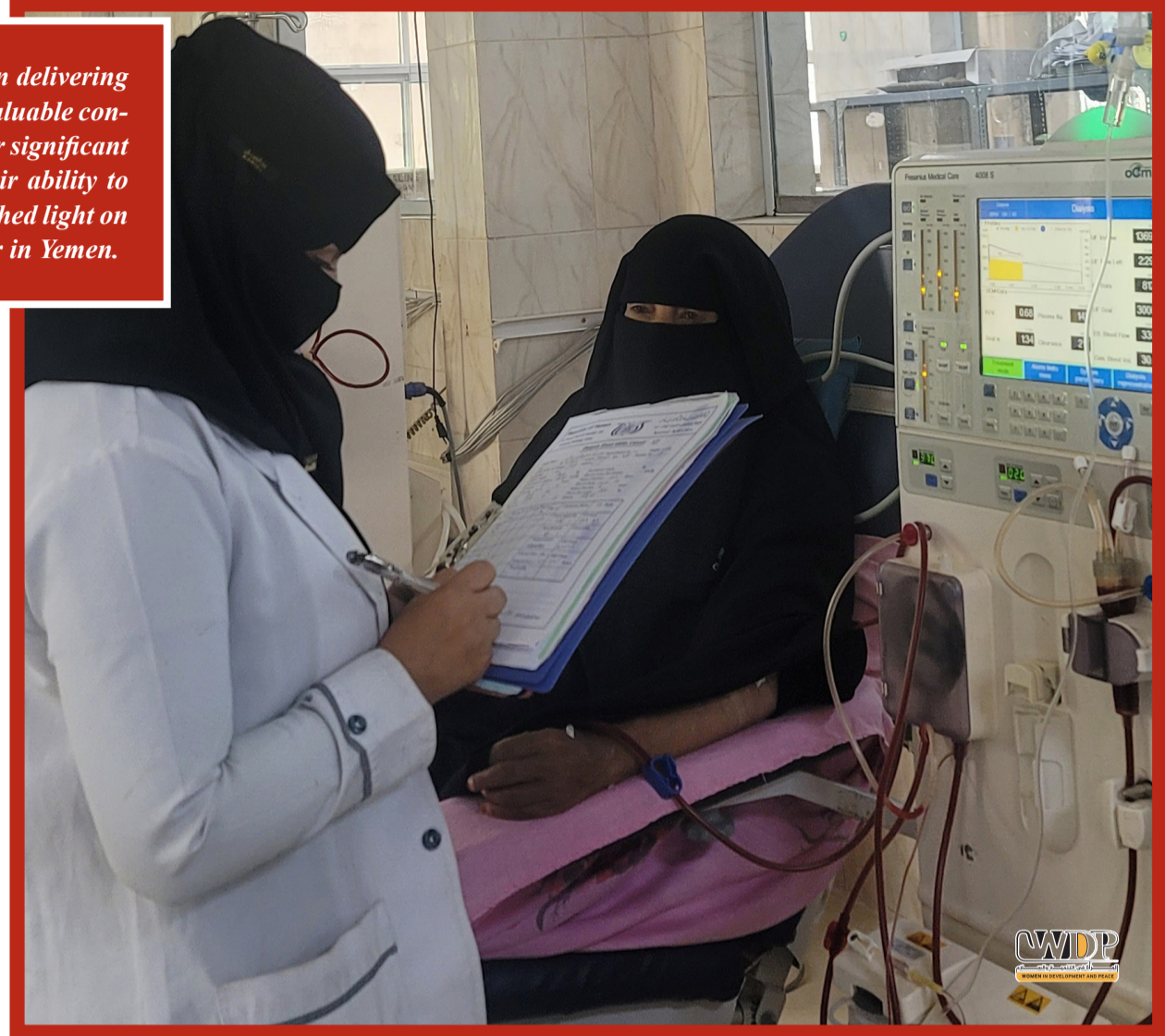
Dr. Ahlam Al-Khawlati, an internal medicine specialist at a government hospital in Ibb Governorate, highlights that despite the substantial representation of women in the health sector, they face difficulties in recruitment, promotion, and training. These challenges arise from traditional cultural beliefs that deem women to be less qualified than men in the medical field.

She further explains, "Women working in healthcare also struggle to obtain regular, paid sick leave and maternity leave. They often find themselves compelled to return to work quickly after giving birth, affecting their health and limiting the time they can spend with their infants."

Dr. Al-Khawlati points out that female health workers experience pressure and excessive workloads due to the shortage of healthcare personnel and resources. Consequently, they shoulder heavy responsibilities and face high professional demands, often working long and arduous hours in challenging and harsh conditions, leading to physical fatigue and exhaustion.

Nawal Ali, a midwife at Mothaikhera Hospital in Al-Udayn District in Ibb Governorate, adds, "The health sector in Yemen suffers from severe resource shortages, including medical equipment and modern technology. This adversely affects women's ability to provide high-quality and effective healthcare, forcing them to work in inadequate conditions without the necessary tools and equipment."

Nawal believes that women working in the health field in Yemen face limited awareness of their rights and the importance of their role in society. There is sometimes a cultural tendency to diminish their role, confining them to traditional positions, hindering their progress, and limiting opportunities to obtain higher-ranking



positions and achieve their professional aspirations.

She highlights several problems encountered by women in the health field, stating, "Some managers exploit the needs of female workers, assigning them multiple tasks without providing them their entitlements. Some women are also forced to work far from their place of residence, leading to financial and psychological harassment. In some cases, it may even escalate to moral harassment."

Furthermore, she continues, "Women working in healthcare also face negative perceptions, with some believing that they entered the field due to deviant tendencies. Additionally, interference from colleagues regarding the nature of their work impacts their psychological well-being and professional performance. On the other hand, some female workers struggle with the

pressures of balancing work and family responsibilities, leading to problems with their spouses that may even result in divorce."

Dr. Kholoud Ghober asserts that women working in the health field in Yemen confront cultural and social challenges. Traditional social values and expectations often assign women key roles in the family and raising children. This can create conflicts with the demanding work demands and professional responsibilities in the health field, leading to opposition from society and family members when deviating from traditional gender norms.

Solutions & Recommendations

Yemeni women demonstrate remarkable flexibility and strength, persevering through challenging circumstances while tirelessly providing essential healthcare to society. Despite the obstacles they face, it is crucial for local and international communities to take immediate action to protect and support women health workers in Yemen, strengthen the healthcare infrastructure, and provide necessary supplies to enhance healthcare in the country.

Dr. Zahraa Alsoswa, an obstetrics and gynecology specialist, asserts, "Women working in the health field in Yemen should receive the necessary protection and support, enabling their active participation in decision-making processes and the development of health policies. The government, local communities, and international organizations must collaborate to establish a safe and equitable environment for women in the healthcare sector, promoting their rights, professional opportunities, and improving work-life conditions."

She emphasizes the need to enhance training and professional development opportunities tailored to the specific needs of women in the health field. Specialized training programs should be implemented to enhance technical and leadership skills, organizing workshops and courses to augment knowledge and capabilities in family healthcare, sexual and reproductive health, and related areas.

Suad Ahmed, a midwife working in a rural center, highlights the challenges faced by women in the health field in Yemen, adversely affecting job opportunities and professional growth. Addressing these issues requires promoting gender equality and combating discrimination, which is paramount to improving the status of women health workers in Yemen.

She adds, "Strong directives and policies should be reinforced to ensure equality in employment, training, promotions, and to eliminate disparities in salaries and benefits. Directives and programs should be strengthened to enhance women's leadership roles and increase their representation in positions of authority. Maternity rights and sick leave should be improved, while providing a safe and supportive work environment. Additionally, investment in health resources and technology should be enhanced. By addressing these problems, the role of women in delivering high-quality healthcare can be strengthened, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of the health sector in Yemen."

"It is essential to bolster Yemen's health infrastructure and create favorable conditions for women working in the health field. This entails improving the infrastructure of hospitals and health centers, ensuring the provision of necessary equipment and tools, as well as reliable access to electricity and water. Furthermore, a secure and protected working environment should be guaranteed for women, including safety measures, protection against violence, and training on handling emergencies," Dr. Kholoud Ghober said.

She emphasized the importance of collaboration between society, the government, and health institutions to promote women's rights and establish a fair working environment in the health field. She underscores the significance of enhancing education and vocational training for women. Opportunities for promotion and leadership should be provided, awareness of women's rights should be increased, and efforts to combat discrimination in the workplace should be intensified.



International Organizations Pledge Support and Financial Commitments to Empower Women in Yemen's Healthcare Sector

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has severely impacted the healthcare sector, leading to a deteriorating infrastructure that hinders the provision of essential services to the community. Healthcare workers face numerous obstacles in delivering adequate healthcare to the population.



By: Alia Mohammed
Women in Development and Peace

According to the Health Sector Policy Memo issued in 2021, only 50% of healthcare facilities are currently operating at full capacity. This means that more than 80% of the population encounters significant challenges in accessing healthcare services. International reports have shed light on the escalating health crises and the deterioration of the healthcare sector. These issues have resulted in alarming levels of child malnutrition, the rapid spread of diseases, and a distressing decline in maternal and child health.

A report released by UNICEF in 2019 classified mothers and children as one of the most vulnerable groups affected by the conflict in Yemen. Shockingly, the report revealed that one mother and six children succumb to the dire circumstances every two hours. This highlights the urgent need for immediate attention and support to address the healthcare crisis in Yemen.

The Role of International Organizations

The healthcare sector in Yemen has relied on the support of many international organizations. In 2022, the World Health Organization, along with 44 partners and 4 other United Nations agencies, provided support to hospitals and healthcare facilities by supplying them equipment and health training. In 2023, the United Nations Humanitarian Response Plan targeted the healthcare sector and pledged \$392 million to provide essential services to approximately 13 million vulnerable Yemenis.

The World Health Organization has been able to maintain and enhance basic healthcare services. In the first phase,

they collaborated with local authorities and partners working in the healthcare sector to preserve the healthcare system.

The World Bank has provided financial support to Yemen, including projects to enhance basic healthcare services and improve reproductive and sexual health services.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) has supported women working in the healthcare sector in Yemen by providing psychological and social support. The organization has worked to address the humanitarian crisis in Ye-

men and called for a swift response from Yemeni authorities and the international community to ensure the immediate payment of healthcare workers' dues.

Médecins Sans Frontières has ensured care that improves the health situation for women and children in the country. They have provided medical care, psychological support, and social support to women working in the healthcare sector.

These services are part of the efforts to support women in the healthcare sector in Yemen and deserve significant appreciation and support.

programs to improve their skills and abilities, providing financial and technical support, improving the quality of healthcare services, and enhancing the technical and professional capacities of female workers in this field.

She continued, "Several international organizations have organized seminars and workshops to support female healthcare workers socially and psychologically. One of the notable initiatives was the seminar on improving maternal and fetal healthcare in Yemen, which aimed to improve the quality of maternal and fetal healthcare services and enhance the technical and professional capacities of workers in this field, including women. Additionally, a training workshop for midwives was organized with funding from the World Health Organization."

In a related context, Qaima Abdallah, a midwife, said, "UNICEF and the World Health Organization have implemented projects to support midwives in Yemen, including training us in basic and advanced healthcare skills to improve the health situation of mothers and children."

She added, "We conducted awareness and educational campaigns for pregnant and breastfeeding women to increase awareness of the importance of women's and children's health. In addition, several female healthcare workers joined workshops and training courses, such as first aid training, diagnosis and treatment, and family healthcare."

International organizations did not limit their role to that. They also provided logistical support to female doctors in Yemen during the conflict to enable them to provide necessary healthcare to patients. They provided safe accommodation for them to work in a secure environment. Other organizations provided support by providing transportation and necessary supplies to female doctors to ensure their access to the most affected areas.

During the years of conflict, the Yemeni health system heavily depended on the assistance provided by international organizations

Steps to Enhance the Role of Female Doctors in Healthcare Provision

Manal Mahdi, a nurse, highlighted the role played by international organizations during the conflict to enhance the role of female doctors in healthcare provision in Yemen. She said, "Many organizations have been keen to provide training, financial, and professional support, and have taken several measures to enhance the role of female healthcare workers in Yemen."

She added, "These measures aimed to enhance the role of female doctors in healthcare provision, improve access to healthcare services, and enhance the quality of care provided to patients." She mentioned the support provided to female healthcare workers, such as encouraging female doctors to participate in decision-making related to healthcare, providing training and capacity-building



Women in Yemen's Health Sector: Boosting Support for the Entire Healthcare Industry

International Report: Women in the Health Sector Earn 24% Less Than Men

Yemeni women are not only pivotal in the healthcare sector but also shoulder numerous responsibilities such as raising children and managing household and family duties. Their dedication yields significant outcomes, actively bolstering all aspects of the healthcare field. Despite the healthcare sector's decline over the past 9 years due to ongoing conflicts, women continue to display unwavering efficacy and maintain a substantial presence across vital sectors.

By: Hanan Hussein
Women in Development and Peace

Conferences, Training Courses & Workshops for Women

Women in the healthcare sector are one of the groups that need support from responsible entities in the state, as well as civil society organizations and others, in order to enhance their valuable role in society.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other international organizations fund many training and educational workshops to support women in order to promote their role in society and maintain the health of individuals. This support empowers women and helps steer society towards safety.

In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated in a declaration that the medical sector is operating at about half its capacity, with only a third of healthcare facilities functioning. Reproductive health services are not provided due to a lack of staff, supplies, and the inability to meet operational costs or equipment damage due to conflict.

The organization then stated that women make up 67% of the healthcare and social workforce, emphasizing that investing in the healthcare workforce presents an opportunity to create decent employment opportunities, especially for women and youth.

The need for education for a group of women from all remote and rural areas, in particular, has emerged, and the Community Health Workers project was launched in Yemen in general.

According to an international report issued by the WHO, women make up 70% of the healthcare and social workforce, compared to their proportion in all employment sectors estimated at 41%. Midwifery and nursing account for a large share of the female workforce.

According to the report, women in the health sector earn wages that are 24% lower than those of men.

Community Health Workers Project

This project is characterized by active cooperation between the local community and health volunteers, and it helps promote health awareness and raise awareness of health issues surrounding local communities. It serves as an example of the humanitarian efforts made by UNICEF.

Health workers in the field educate needy families about health and basic nutrition, as well as raise awareness among pregnant and breastfeeding mothers about the importance of personal hygiene and breastfeeding. They also assess the condition of children through examination and measurements, and then refer cases suffering from severe malnutrition to health centers for necessary care, according to UNICEF.

In 2021, UNICEF trained 720 commu-



nity health workers in six governorates, recruiting them from remote and distant areas. This posed many challenges and fears for them when they had to travel from their homes to the training site.

Each health worker joined the community health worker training program for various reasons, each girl in the group having a special connection. Some of them had personal experiences that deeply affected them, while others felt a strong desire to help their community when no family member or known person could get the necessary assistance in a timely manner, according to the WHO.

Approximately 1,000 people benefited from the services provided by each community health worker, equivalent to about 170 families on average.

In a report published on UNICEF's website, the importance of supporting and developing health workers was mentioned. It stated that "through training community health workers, UNICEF helped restore the healthcare system in Yemen and improve the quality of life for thousands of mothers and children living in hard-to-reach areas."

In 2021, community health workers were able to reach over 1.8 million beneficiaries with primary healthcare services in rural areas. In addition, 585,000 children under the age of five and 640,000 women of reproductive age received basic healthcare services in hard-to-reach areas. UNICEF supported capacity building for more than 2,790 community health workers throughout Yemen, as stated by UNICEF.

In March 2023, the WHO conducted an initiative to empower community health workers. Through this initiative, a rapid assessment was conducted to analyze the

gender aspects of the Emergency Human Capital Project activities. It revealed that women accounted for only about 18% of participants in training courses, workshops, field visits, and other activities related to daily wage allowances.

The WHO then sent these results in an official letter to the authorities in Aden and Sana'a, requesting support to achieve 50% female participation in all activities funded by the World Bank in the future.

Afterwards, the Ministry of Public Health and Population responded to the WHO the following day and appointed a gender focal point officer in Aden. The WHO sought to provide care for various groups, including survivors of violence, as well as training 129 nurses, midwives, and doctors in psychological first aid to improve services available to individuals experiencing gender-based violence.

Currently, there are more than 1,800 male and female community health workers in Yemen who have been trained by local health authorities with support from UNICEF and the European Union. They contribute to achieving better health outcomes for children and empowering women, according to UNICEF.

Community Health Nutrition Volunteers Project

UNICEF launched the Nutrition Volunteers project in Dhali', funded by the Japanese government in August 2020, to improve the health situation of the population in the area due to numerous humanitarian difficulties. They suffer from the spread of many diseases, epidemics, malnutrition, and lack of healthcare.

According to reports published on the UNICEF website, the volunteers in

the field share information with needy families about health and basic nutrition matters. They also work on raising awareness among pregnant and breastfeeding mothers about the importance of personal hygiene and breastfeeding, in addition to assessing the condition of children through examination and measurements. Cases suffering from severe malnutrition are then referred to the health center to receive the necessary care.

This project highlighted the great importance of volunteer work in providing healthcare and healthy nutrition to needy children. By transferring knowledge and health skills to local communities, it can have a significant impact on improving the health of children and needy families, representing hope in the face of the difficulties faced by the population in Dhali'.

Challenges & Achievements

The difficulty of the situation, the lack of resources, contributions, and support - as in the rest of the world - have stood as a barrier for Yemeni men and women alike. Perhaps women suffer more than men for various reasons, most notably the traditions and customs of society that restrict women and hinder their performance in the medical field in all its specialties.

This is what Sabah Al-Dhafiri, the head of the Yemeni midwives' association, spoke about, saying, "The situation of working women in the health sector is difficult, especially for Yemeni midwives. Their situation is complicated due to many negative factors that affect their ability to provide comprehensive and effective health services."

Al-Dhafiri explains that Yemeni midwives face many problems and challenges that affect their performance and impact on women and children in society. One of the most important challenges facing Yemeni midwives is the difficult economic conditions in Yemen, resulting from salary cuts. Many midwives also suffer from irregular or nonexistent payment of their salaries.

In the same context, she explained that Yemen, like other developing countries, suffers from a lack of an adequate number of midwives, which weakens the population coverage rate of reproductive and maternal health services. The rate of home births is about 77%, of which 22% are assisted by trained hands, while 23% give birth in healthcare centers. Only 13% of women receive postnatal care and follow-up.

Hind Nashir, a midwife, confirms by saying, "Women in the health sector in general, and midwives in particular, are the ones who seek personal qualification and training through application and work."

Tips & Guidance

Sabah Al-Dhafiri emphasizes that it is necessary to provide support and necessary resources for Yemeni women in all fields, especially midwives, including professional training, qualification, and comprehensive healthcare, in order to improve their situation and enhance the quality of healthcare in Yemen. She states, "Yemeni midwives suffer from a lack of comprehensive care, training, and necessary qualification due to the difficult conditions in Yemen, which makes it difficult for them to obtain the necessary training and professional qualification to develop their skills and knowledge of the latest midwifery practices and techniques."

Al-Dhafiri adds, "This factor affects their ability to provide good and safe healthcare for women and children, resulting in a lack of appropriate and professional healthcare for women and children in Yemen."

She emphasizes that this may lead to an increase in early mortality rates and chronic health problems for women and children.

She affirms, "In recent years, through the Yemeni Midwives Association and with the support of our donors, we have been able to implement many activities and increase the percentage of positive health indicators, such as the number of pregnant and breastfeeding women receiving healthcare, postnatal supervision by skilled midwives, and facilitating women's access to healthcare and maternity services in locations close to their residence."

Sabah explains that in addition to spreading knowledge and raising awareness about the risks of early marriage and closely spaced births, it also contributes to the health aspect and enhances the role of doctors, nurses, and others.

One of the most important aspects of supporting women in the healthcare field is encouraging them to establish their own facilities and centers. This is mentioned by Sabah Al-Dhafiri in her statement that the Yemeni Midwives Association helps women by opening clinics specifically for them through their qualification and support in operating small projects for them. It also enables needy families and graduates of health institutes to obtain decent livelihood opportunities.

She explains that the assistance in enabling Yemeni midwives to perform their roles efficiently in saving the lives of mothers and newborns through providing necessary home care significantly contributes to reducing the rates of maternal and neonatal diseases and deaths by increasing the percentage of skilled births and contributing to the provision of distinguished healthcare services to the community.

Women in the Health Field: Exploring the Yemeni Society's Perspective

Yemeni women are met with warmth and welcome in various fields, especially in the health sector. There exists a multitude of perspectives regarding the essence and significance of their work, and Yemeni society takes immense pride in their contributions throughout the years. However, despite this admiration, certain challenges and difficulties persist. Overall, Yemeni women in the medical sector assume a vital role in delivering healthcare and medical services to the community.

By: Hanan Hussein
Women in Development and Peace

Community Respect

Women hold significant importance in the field of healthcare and are highly valued and respected by society. This fact is evident as recent years have witnessed a surge in the number of women pursuing careers in the healthcare sector in Yemen, whether they are doctors, nurses, or pharmacists, according to Nurse Amal Abdullah.

According to activist and journalist Fatima Al-Aghbari, it is crucial for women to be actively involved in the healthcare field and across all specializations. This is particularly important in a society where men often leave their wives, sisters, or daughters unattended when they fall ill, resulting in tragic outcomes where they pass away at home due to their inability to be examined by male doctors. Moreover, having female doctors serves as a source of encouragement for women, who feel more comfortable when attended to by a female physician.

Dr. Tayseer Sadiq, a dentist, believes that families and society have developed a heightened level of awareness and support for women in the healthcare field. They have come to recognize the immense significance of their presence. However, there is still a segment of society that prefers their women not to be treated by male doctors. Consequently, they opt to seek medical assistance from female doctors.

Dr. Sadiq further emphasizes that experience, precise disease description, adherence to schedules, and adherence to professional ethics have all contributed to society's eagerness to encourage women to pursue nursing as a minimum requirement. She also confirms that many rural Yemeni families are sending their daughters to urban areas to pursue university education or obtain diplomas in the healthcare field. These families proudly boast about their daughters' accomplishments, stating, "My daughter is a doctor," highlighting the immense importance they place on their daughters' achievements.

Various Difficulties

Jim Campbell, the Director of the Health Workforce Department at the World Health Organization, highlighted in a statement published on the organization's website that women comprise the majority of health and care workers in Yemen. However, he pointed out the existence of structural biases that lead to appalling prejudices against women in many countries.

Campbell emphasized that despite these challenges, there are success stories that inspire optimism and pave the way for progress. Some countries have demonstrated a commitment to equal wages and have implemented salary increases. Nonetheless, it is evident that certain women working in the medical field may face lower wages compared to their male counterparts. This is often



due to the multiple roles they fulfill in their lives, while men do not face similar constraints. Nisreen Adel, a nurse, shared her experience, stating, "My colleague can earn more for his shifts than me, while my maternal responsibilities prevent me from being away from my children for extended periods throughout the day, unlike him who can be available at any time."

Adel further added, "We should not overlook the fact that despite the societal developments and the increased awareness and support from parents for their daughters to pursue careers in medicine, there are still individuals with a narrow perspective. They fail to recognize the importance of nurses and doctors who work late hours in hospitals."

According to a new joint report by the International Labor Organization and the World Health Organization, the health and care sector witnesses the highest gender pay disparities compared to other economic sectors. Women in this sector earn 24% less than their male counterparts.

The report's analysis highlights that the wage gap between men and women is unjustifiable, particularly considering that women constitute 67% of workers in the global health and care sector. This discrepancy may be attributed to discriminatory practices against women.

Narrow Perspective

Sondos Taher, a sociology graduate, believes that despite the progress the world has made, there are still individuals who hold onto outdated mentalities



Fatima Al-Aghbari

who hold onto outdated mentalities when it comes to their daughters. Some people prohibit their daughters from pursuing medical specialties, using the excuse that medicine involves working late hours outside the home and interacting with men. Taher shares an example, saying, "One of my relatives prevented his sister from completing her studies in medicine because he found it difficult to accept her interacting with her colleagues. He considered it a shame to treat and follow up with male patients on her phone."

Dr. Noha Al-Areqi explains, "Yemeni society has two contrasting views towards working women. The first view is held by those who completely reject women's work, regardless of the nature of the job.

This group looks down upon doctors and views their role through a narrow lens. They see doctors interacting with patients without understanding the professional requirements of the job. This type of mentality is very strict. The second view is held by those who support women in general but exclude their own women from this support. They concentrate their support in areas that indirectly benefit them. For instance, they support women doctors or teachers so that their wives and daughters can safely go to them to receive an education or medical treatment. They prefer not to expose their women to unfamiliar men or have them interact with them directly. However, they refuse to allow their own women to take on these roles."

Experience & Competence

Haifa Adel Haddash, a dental assistant, affirms that Yemeni society acknowledges the competence of women in the healthcare field and recognizes their ability to provide quality healthcare to patients. She further emphasizes, "Women are renowned for their exceptional efficiency and professionalism in carrying out their tasks. They pay meticulous attention to every detail concerning the patient, which encourages patients to seek their assistance."

However, Khaled Al-Qawsi, a patient in a hospital, holds a contrasting viewpoint. He disagrees with Haddash's opinion, stating, "Women cannot possess comprehensive experiences like men. Men have a broader range of experiences

due to their ease of movement between villages and rural areas, enabling them to acquire knowledge. Conversely, women face societal reservations that limit their mobility in various ways, including cultural customs and traditions. As a result, they cannot move freely without a male companion."

On the other hand, Sumaya Al-Haimi, a resident of Sana'a, recognizes the significance of women specialists in the healthcare field in promoting health awareness and delivering healthcare to the community. She explains, "A female doctor in rural or remote areas can offer care and guidance to others. Additionally, she can introduce healthy practices and provide training to individuals."

Support & Advice

According to Fatima Al-Aghbari, it is crucial to raise media awareness about the equality of women doctors with their male counterparts. She believes that women have an equally vital role in the medical field, and their presence is of utmost importance, especially in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, it is essential to encourage businesspeople to establish hospitals with women in leadership positions and on their board of directors. Despite the challenges faced by women in Yemeni society, positive changes, development, and increased recognition of their significance in the healthcare sector are being witnessed. Continuous efforts are being made to strengthen their role and demonstrate their presence and importance in this vital and crucial sector.

Throughout history, women have played a pivotal role in the renaissance of ancient and modern societies, showcasing their ability to drive positive change. Their remarkable presence extends across various aspects of life, particularly in the health sector, where they stand alongside men and provide crucial support. This serves as evidence that women are indispensable in driving societal transformations.

Yemeni Women Spearheading the Medical Sector: Overcoming Obstacles, Embracing Future Prospects

Dr. Abeer Mohammed
Advisor of Women in Health Sector in Yemen Issue - «Women in Development and Peace Newspaper»

The pursuit of positive change in societies heavily relies on the empowerment of women and their ability to fulfill their roles, both in general society and specifically in the health sector. Women hold essential positions in nurturing their families and contributing to the health system. However, they face numerous challenges and societal customs that hinder their educational opportunities, professional advancements, and decision-making roles within the health sector.

Women assume a significant and indispensable role in the foundation of healthcare, whether within health facilities or through community-based health initiatives that extend beyond traditional confines. They also bear the responsibility of spreading health awareness.

Despite their invaluable contributions, women encounter various obstacles, including unequal access to education and job opportunities within the health sector, as well as limited representation in leadership positions. It is imperative to develop a comprehensive strategy to address gender inequality in the workplace and promote qualified women in decision-making roles.

Achieving gender parity will enhance the participation, performance, productivity, and efficiency of Yemen's health workforce, thereby strengthening the overall health system. This is crucial for improving health outcomes in Yemen, which has long been grappling with the consequences of armed conflict, economic deterioration, and institutional collapse.

The ongoing challenges have made it increasingly difficult to establish functioning healthcare infrastructure, such as hospitals and primary care centers, due to the weight of the conflict. Consequently, a large percentage of the population faces significant hurdles in accessing essential healthcare services.

The current state of Yemen's health facilities is dire, with only 50% operating at full capacity. This poses significant challenges for over 80% of the population, particularly in accessing vital resources like food, drinking water, and healthcare services. Women and children make up the largest segment affected by these

limitations. The scarcity of human resources, equipment, and supplies further impedes the provision of adequate healthcare.

Furthermore, the ongoing conflict has worsened the already existing health challenges and led to poor management of the healthcare sector. As a result, the health system heavily relies on external funding and primarily depends on local and international organizations to implement health projects and deliver essential services.

These projects, funded by various organizations, have created employment opportunities for many healthcare workers, particularly women. Community activities play a crucial role in raising awareness and providing healthcare services beyond the confines of traditional healthcare facilities, ensuring that a larger number of women and children can access these services. The contributions of Yemeni women working in the healthcare sector remain vital in encouraging women and their children to seek the assistance they require.

Despite the significance of healthcare workers in the sector, the World Health Organization's March 2023 report stresses the need for gender equality and addressing gender-based violence, given the increasing restrictions faced by women in the healthcare field. In 2022, reports of restrictions on women's movement in Yemen began to surface. For instance, in many governorates, women are prohibited from traveling unaccompanied (without a mahram, such as a father, brother, or husband). This restriction hampers female health workers' ability to participate in multi-day training activities organized by the World Health Organization outside their place of residence.

The impact of these restrictions is evident in the estimates of maternal mortality in Yemen. In 2015, before the humanitarian crisis, Yemen recorded an estimated 164 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Last month, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs jointly released new estimates indicating a concerning rise in Yemen's maternal mortality rate. As of 2020, the rate is projected to reach 183 deaths.

When examining the challenges faced by midwifery and reproductive health services, practical experience highlights several prominent issues:

Shortage of midwives: The limited number of midwives leads to heavy workloads and makes it difficult for employers to retain them, particularly in the current situation. The workforce crisis stems from an inappropriate population density and poor distribution of healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, midwives, and other essential staff (less than 2-3 per 1000 people).

Lack of comprehensive human resources strategy: There is a lack of a comprehensive strategy to address issues related to retaining and deploying midwives. This includes the absence of incentives to practice the profession, especially in areas with the greatest need. Additionally, there is a high turnover rate of qualified health personnel, resulting in poor distribution of midwifery professionals between rural and urban areas, exacerbating the scarcity.

Insufficient high-quality competency-based midwifery education programs.

Shortage of qualified midwifery trainers as well as inadequate resources allocated to skills laboratories and insufficient clinical training and training sites.

Midwifery associations lack the necessary strength and leadership skills to effectively advocate for the importance of midwives and address their needs.

Inadequate funding for midwifery programs.

Limited capacity for supervision, evaluation, and monitoring: There is a lack of capacity at lower levels to address issues related to accountability, transparency, and optimal resource utilization.

Recommendations & Solutions

Investing in the workforce, particularly in Yemeni women working in nursing and midwifery, is a crucial element in achieving substantial and tangible outcomes to ensure the population's access to quality healthcare services in Yemen. However, there is still a long way to go in attaining the sustainable development goals, especially in Arab countries and particularly in Yemen. This is due to various challenges, weaknesses, and fragilities that exist in key aspects related to workforce availability, practices, and performance.

In recognition of this, the Council of Arab Ministers of Health has adopted the Arab guiding strategy for the advancement of nursing

and midwifery professions for the period of 2022-2030. This adoption took place through Resolution No. (7) during the council's regular session (57) held on 5/22/2022 in Geneva.

Furthermore, the council urged the cooperative launch of this strategy in collaboration and coordination with the ministries of health in the Arab member states, the United Nations Population Fund, the Regional Office for Arab States, and the Regional Office of the World Health Organization for the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Arab strategy for the advancement of nursing and midwifery professions (2022-2030) builds upon several important global and regional strategic frameworks. Its purpose is to address the challenges faced by nursing and midwifery professions in Arab countries, including Yemen.

In the context of addressing these challenges, the strategy presents strategic priorities and relevant measures to strengthen the nursing and midwifery professions. These priorities are deemed appropriate for the Yemeni situation, especially considering the current circumstances. The strategic priorities are as follows:

Strategic Priority 1: Leadership & Governance

This priority focuses on strengthening the leadership and governance of the nursing and midwifery professions. It aims to ensure that these professions play their vital role and that their workers are recognized as integral parts of the health workforce and members of multidisciplinary health teams. Additionally, it aims to enhance the leadership capabilities of nursing and midwifery cadres to achieve comprehensive health coverage and fulfill national health priorities.

Strategic Priority 2: Education & Continuing Professional Development

This priority emphasizes the importance of quality education and continuing professional development. It advocates for the development of academic education programs and strategies that incorporate best practices and the latest technological means. These programs should be tailored to the needs of the country, ensuring the graduation of a sufficient number of qualified nursing and midwifery staff. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of providing continuous professional development programs throughout

their careers.

Strategic Priority 3: Support for the Nursing & Midwifery Workforce in the Labor Market
This priority focuses on policies and plans related to workforce planning and management in the nursing and midwifery fields. It aims to maintain an adequate and competent number of professionals, well distributed based on scientific foundations, and possessing an appropriate mix of skills. The goal is to enable them to provide quality services aligned with national health priorities. This priority also includes initiatives for retention, talent management, and enhanced job security.

Strategic Priority 4: Regulating Nursing & Midwifery Practices

This priority emphasizes the need to develop a strong system to regulate the education and practice of nursing and midwifery professions. It calls for an appropriate legal framework, institutional standards, and procedures within the country's health workforce regulatory system.

Strategic Priority 5: Monitoring & Evaluation

To ensure the effective implementation of the strategy, it is crucial to monitor progress using process and outcome indicators. Additional indicators may be added as needed and appropriate, aligned with the strategic priorities and actions.

Continued external funding is vital for implementing the aforementioned strategic priorities, particularly in various specialties within the Yemeni health sector. Responding to the recommendations of donors, such as the World Health Organization, is also crucial in overcoming the challenges.

The health sector is currently facing a significant decline in external financing compared to previous years. This underscores the need to implement projects that enhance the sector's flexibility. It is essential to consider the implementation of all strategic priorities to enhance the role of women working in the health sector. This includes removing obstacles, training a cadre of female health workers, and qualifying them in various health facilities and specialties. These efforts aim to ensure access to services and improve local health referral systems. Yemeni women working in the health sector play an essential role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal No. 3, which focuses on ensuring good health and well-being for people of all ages.

Dr. Rima: A Model Showcasing the Struggles of Female Doctors

By: Haneen Al-Wahsh
Women in Development and Peace

In our conservative Yemeni society, the significance of female healthcare professionals cannot be overstated, particularly when it comes to the ease of interaction and comfort experienced by Yemeni women seeking healthcare services. This is particularly true in women's clinics. Dr. Rima Ismail, a highly regarded obstetrics and gynecology consultant in Aden, shed light on this matter.

A Journey of Success

Reflecting on her extensive experience of 22 years in the field, Dr. Rima Ismail proudly states, "Throughout my career, I have served as a consultant in obstetrics and gynecology. I am the owner of a private women's clinic, and I am also employed by the government in various hospitals."

Furthermore, Dr. Rima Ismail highlights, "On a daily basis, we handle an average of one to two deliveries, and we are occasionally personally requested by pregnant women to assist with their deliveries."

On Her Way

On her way to completing her postgraduate studies and specialization, Dr. Rima says, "I did not face any difficulties or obstacles, but rather the challenges were routine during the period of specialization for studying the academic master's degree. Then came the Arab Board, which required me to exert double effort to obtain higher degrees. It was a matter of balancing my home, work, and studies. Thanks to Allah and then my family and my husband who stood by my side, I was able to achieve what I aspired to."

Down Memory Lane

Regarding the events and difficult cases that she encountered that have stuck with her, Dr. Rima recounts, "I encountered many cases, some of which I was able to save, and difficult cases that I was able to deal with, such as ectopic pregnancies, convulsions, pregnancy toxemia, miscarriage bleeding, uterine tears and ruptures after difficult deliveries."

She continues, "One of the cases that I remember and was able to save was a patient that came suffering from

vaginal bleeding. The placenta or membranes were positioned over the fetus, and all her previous deliveries were by cesarean section. Her blood pressure was very low, her pulse was weak, she was unconscious, her blood count was five grams, and her blood type was rare."

She says, "An emergency cesarean section was performed to save her life, and during the operation, the placenta was adhered to the site of previous surgeries, and we tried to remove it, which caused bleeding. This led us to perform a hysterectomy, and the difficulty was in not being able to obtain blood easily, and also in obtaining consent for the hysterectomy, especially since the patient's husband was outside of Yemen. In addition to that, the case was an emergency - saving a life - one that cannot be delayed to prepare for the operation properly."

The Importance of Qualification

Regarding qualifying midwives to become ready to assist and deliver babies, Dr. Rima explains that she trains and qualifies midwives due to the importance of the role they play. They need to be capable of engaging in this

field because childbirth is about saving lives and bringing souls into the world. This requires experience, precision, and agility, which come from learning and practice, not by chance.

In the context of the importance of women in the healthcare field, Dr. Rima emphasizes that women working in healthcare, whether doctors, assistants, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, or surgical technicians, all contribute significantly. Their presence makes a difference, with no one of them being superior to the other. All doctors have a common noble goal they work towards, which is saving lives.

She adds, "Most female patients find it easier to deal with, feel more comfortable, and not be scared or embarrassed when they receive services from a healthcare facility, whether it is government or private, provided by a woman like them. Especially in the field of women's health and childbirth, the beneficiary can express her complaints and illnesses without shame. Particularly when dealing with sensitive parts of a woman's body, there have been objections from some men about women going to specialized

doctors in this field (women's health and childbirth) because society has not yet fully accepted the idea that there is no shame in medicine. Therefore, they prefer to take their daughters, sisters, or wives to a female doctor."

Recommendations

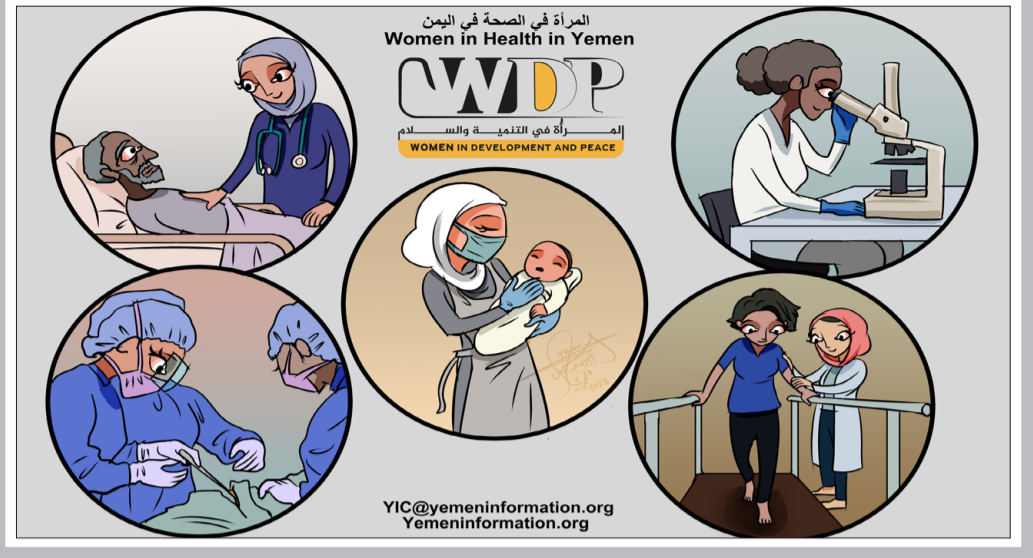
In the same context of discussing the role of women in the healthcare field, Dr. Rima encourages parents to support their daughters' aspirations to work in the healthcare sector and not to stand against their desires. This sector provides important and diverse services, and there are multiple job opportunities available, especially during this exceptional period of conflict and the widespread outbreak of diseases.

She emphasizes that the field of midwifery must be studied in order to acquire scientific, theoretical, and practical knowledge. It should not be learned solely through experience, as it involves the lives of pregnant women and their unborn babies. Therefore, it is necessary to approach it with greater responsibility, and any actions should be taken under the supervision of a qualified doctor.



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90% Believe that Numerous Obstacles Hinder Women's Participation in Health Sector in Yemen

By: Yomna Ahmed
Women in Development and Peace

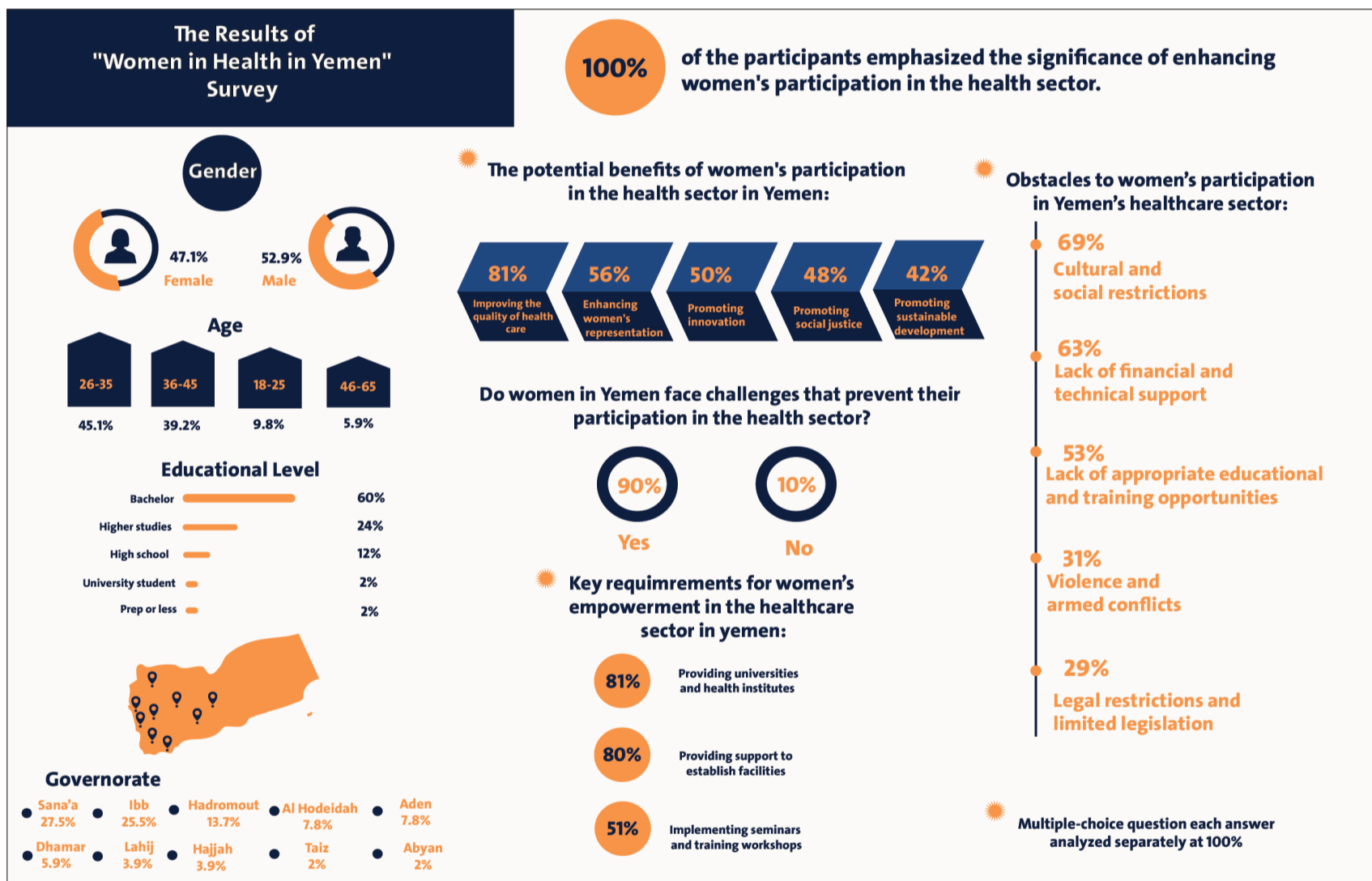
Women's participation in the health sector in Yemen is crucial, given the multitude of challenges faced by the country. The ongoing conflict, spanning over nine years, has severely impacted the health-care system, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas.

Despite the prevailing circumstances, Yemeni women encounter significant obstacles that impede their effective involvement in the health sector. These challenges encompass poverty, persecution, gender discrimination, and security threats associated with the conflict. Women's active engagement in Yemen's health sector plays a vital role in strengthening the national healthcare system. Their involvement brings numerous advantages that contribute to the sector's development and improves access to appropriate health services for women and other vulnerable groups. Furthermore, women's participation in the health sector empowers them and enhances their societal standing. It provides them with opportunities to assume leadership positions, enabling more balanced decision-making, resource allocation, and equitable distribution of health services.

To gain comprehensive insights into the reality of women's participation in Yemen's health sector, the Information and Opinion Survey Unit of the "Yemen Information Center" conducted a survey titled "Yemeni Women's Participation in the Health Sector in Yemen." This survey aimed to gather public opinions on the challenges and opportunities related to women's involvement in this critical sector.

The survey involved a sample of 250 participants, with 52.9% male and 47.1% female respondents. The age distribution of the participants varied, with 45.1% falling within the 26-35 age group, 39.2% within 36-45, 9.8% within 18-25, and 5.9% within 46-65.

Regarding academic qualifica-



tions, 60% of the participants held a bachelor's degree, 24% held higher degrees, 12% had a high school diploma, and 2% possessed a middle school certificate. University students and individuals with a middle school certificate each constituted 2% of the sample.

The survey encompassed ten governorates, with the highest representation from Sana'a (27.5%), followed by Ibb (25.5%), Hadramout (13.7%), Al-Hodeidah and Aden (7.8% each), Dhamar (5.9%), Lahj and Hajjah (3.9% each). The lowest percentage (2%) of respondents came from Abyan and Taiz separately.

Main Results

According to the survey, 100% of the participants emphasized the significance of enhancing women's participation in the health sector. The respondents identified several reasons for this impor-

tance, with the following percentages associated with each choice (each answer analyzed separately at 100%):

80.8% believed it would improve the quality of healthcare.

55.8% highlighted the importance of enhancing women's representation and involvement in decision-making.

50% saw it as a means to promote innovation and development in the health sector.

48.1% viewed it as a way to promote social justice and gender equality.

42.3% recognized it as a factor in promoting sustainable development.

When asked about the difficulties and obstacles faced by Yemeni women preventing their participation in the health sector, 90.2% of respondents identified the following challenges (each answer analyzed separately at 100%):

68.6% cited social and cultural restrictions.

62.7% pointed to the lack of financial and technical support and resources.

52.9% identified a lack of appropriate educational and training opportunities.

31.4% mentioned violence, conflicts, and armed forces.

29.4% highlighted legal and legislative restrictions.

However, 9.8% expressed that there are no significant obstacles or difficulties hindering Yemeni women from participating in the health sector. On the question of the impact of the conflict in Yemen on women's participation in the health sector, 90% of participants believed that the conflict played a significant role in limiting opportunities, while only 10% felt it had little effect.

The survey participants also proposed necessary steps to en-

hance women's participation in the health sector. The most important steps, according to the respondents, were (each answer analyzed separately at 100%):

80.4% suggested providing universities and health institutes.

80% recommended supporting the establishment of health facilities and centers for women.

51% emphasized the implementation of seminars and training workshops specifically for women in the health sector.

In conclusion, the participants of the survey view enhancing women's participation in the health sector in Yemen as pivotal for strengthening healthcare and improving the national health situation. Empowering women and granting them opportunities to actively participate in decision-making and policy implementation can lead to positive and sustainable changes in the health sector of Yemen.