

Women's Work in Yemen

Bridging the Legal Gap and Gender Diversity to Ensure the Continuity of Women's Work

Yemeni Women: Running Small Businesses in the Shadow of Conflict

Providing Job Opportunities and Improving Standards of Living through Working Women's Economic Empowerment



Psychological and Physical Effects of Workplace Violence Against Women

Lack of Women's Representation and Superficial Handling of their Issues in Yemeni Media

Rural Working Women Imposed to Underpaid Heavy Duties and Burdens



Challenges and Obstacles of Women Participation in Judiciary

Enabling Women's Participation and Ensuring their Rights... Outcome of National Dialogue...

Yemeni Women Break into the World of Small Businesses



Contributions of Working Women to Development

The UN's 2018 report, "Women and Work", indicated that women contribute to the global gross domestic product, and this contribution may reach \$28 trillion by 2025 if they are able to participate fully in the global economy.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez

The report revealed that empowerment of women opens up a wide range of economic potential at all levels of society, from the state, government and private sectors, to women, the family and society.

"Women are one of the most important contributors to achieving sustainable development. Their role is no less than that of men in finding solutions to developmental, political, economic and social challenges, and supporting efforts for a sustainable future," confirmed Bahia Al-Saqqaf,

Deputy Executive Director of Peace Association for Sustainable Societies (PASS). In her interview with Sawt Al-Amal about the role of working women in development, Al-Saqqaf believes that it is necessary to involve women in a real partnership in all political, economic and social fields, and to not limit their role to

one area over the other. She emphasized the impossibility of achieving development without full equality between the two genders, eliminating all forms of discrimination, and focusing on the active role of women as main pioneers of change. "Women are the nucleus of society, and have a great influence on children and men. They can bring about change in consumer culture in society. If we can develop or change the behavior of women, then we can change the behavior of society as a whole," she added.

Working Women Are an Institu-

tional Development Movement

Yemeni women have been able to play an important developmental role in society despite the recent challenges that have been imposed on them. Today, Yemeni women have a significant role in the advancement of society in all fields, and many local women's institutions and initiatives have emerged. These institutions represent one of the most prominent types of women's participation in the development process. Women have contributed significantly to providing a helping hand in light of the bitter reality that Yemen is experiencing. They have also succeeded

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Contributions of Working Women to Development

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in providing food, shelter, medicine, money and many other forms of humanitarian needs, whether through the support they receive from donors or from their own money.

Nassim Ahmed Salem Saleh, head of the Arman Society Development Foundation, pointed out the importance of the role played by women's institutions in driving development, despite the collapse in the country's infrastructure. She emphasized that women have achievements in building peace and developing society. This was the result of the international and local community's call to support women at all social, political, economic and scientific levels, and to liberate them from the discrimination they suffered from, proving to the world that they desire to contribute effectively in development and community service. "Feminist movements drew their general framework and were initiated to defend women's rights, fulfill their demands, and bring about positive changes in their situation, by demanding the enforce-

ment of laws, launching protest campaigns, and expressing opinions in the various media," she added.

Women are an Integral Component in the Development Process

Yasser Sultan, a community activist, says, "Development is a great goal that can only be achieved with the solidarity of all segments of society and with the cooperation of all societal and official frameworks. In our country, women are an important tributary of development and their role is extremely important." Sultan believes that women participated in the development process in all fields, most notably education, industry, entrepreneurship, agriculture and health, in addition to media, journalism, research and studies, and were able to make a successful mark. He added, "In addition to the fact that Yemeni women are active partners in development, they have succeeded in practicing their own private lives, the noble and greatest role represented in motherhood and raising children,

keeping the family entity together, and preparing the emerging generations to contribute to the construction, development and fulfillment of the message for which Allah has placed man on Earth.

Majed Al-Khulidi, President of Youth without Borders, agreed with him, emphasizing that Yemeni women can lead economic activities in addition to being teachers and educators for generations. He believes that their participation in properly raising their sons and daughters will ensure an active generation that contributes to development.

Women Independence Contributes to Developmental Participation

Dalia Mohammed, a community activist, reported that women who are financially and intellectually independent are the most involved in development. She added, "Women's independence reflects a state of psychological and moral stability,

as they find themselves in real roles towards society, in addition to possessing sufficient strength to fight the challenges they face in society."

Mohammed affirms that rural women have a great role in the development process. They raise livestock that are sold in the markets and participate in many industries such as manufacturing cheese and all kinds of handicrafts products that are transported to the markets, in addition to their significant contribution to agriculture, and their activities in areas such as education and health.

On the other hand, Tayseer Aqlan, a social researcher within the NODS YEMEN team, says, "Women are present today in various development disciplines as field and academic experts. Therefore, working women have been able to participate in driving development, as there are a significant number of prominent women in Yemeni society." Aqlan pointed out that women's creativity is not limited to the fields of women,

children and human rights, and that many have tried to confine them only to this. She stressed the presence of women in all areas of health, education and business, in addition to the ministries that regulate the state's foreign relations.

On the most important challenges and obstacles confining women's participation in the development process, journalist Ammar Ali says, "Several areas are available to Yemeni women, but in return, there are societal restrictions and controls that prevent them from participating in development, most notably: customs and traditions, lack of family support when problems happen at work, widespread ignorance, and a decline in societal awareness of the importance of employment for women."

Aqlan called for the importance of concerted efforts to achieve gender equality in community participation, empower and qualify women, and raise awareness of the importance of their role in achieving development.

"...Enabling Women's Participation and Ensuring their Rights..." Outcome of National Dialogue

By: **Afrah Ahmed**

Yemeni women have made significant achievements in obtaining their rights, as evidenced by the outcomes of the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference (NDC) that are represented in the dialogue document. There are several issues within the dialogue document that are considered a victory for women's rights, especially those relating to women and the government's commitment to ensuring them at least 30% representation in each of the three government agencies. Additionally, they have made a significant achievement in consolidating and empowering women economically, politically, culturally, and socially. They have also achieved notable accomplishments in terms of their right to social services, social security and welfare, the right of pregnant women to care for their newborn, their right to equality and criminalization of violence and discrimination against them, in addition to many other issues, freedoms, and rights. These topics emerged as a confirmation of their profound awareness of the privacy of their key roles and positions in society in light of their significant contributions over the course of their long careers to the process of change.

The National Dialogue aimed to free the country from all forms of conflicts and violations that plagued it and to try and establish a present and create a future where the Yemeni individual has rights and freedoms, in which he enjoys equal citizenship and a modern civil government.

Participation Models in the National Dialogue Conference and its Outcomes

The National Dialogue's activities began on March 18, 2013, and Yemeni women had an active participation with 40 seats. According to Sabah



Al-Sharabi, one of the women participating in the NDC, whose outcomes enabled women to have their right in political participation and other issues, "Women are essential and active partners in the National Dialogue Conference, and they are partners in the preparation, implementation and formulation of its outcomes, which granted women all rights."

"Although the outcomes of the National Dialogue are not being implemented, many women adhere to these outputs, many dreams were built on them, and they have served as a starting point for many women interested in participating in community, politics, humanitarian participation, and peace-making. Although these outcomes were simple, they nonetheless played a crucial role during the conflict," she added.

"The outcomes of the Comprehensive National Dialogue prompted me to engage in the human rights, economic, social, and media fields and provided me with an incentive

and motivation to reach the highest levels," Al-Sharabi added. She also stressed the need to implement the outcomes of the NDC by the government and parties, in addition to the need to involve women in the process of political, social and economic development. She pointed out that the methods and procedures for implementing outcomes on the ground depend on the security and stability of our country, in addition to exerting pressure and advocating for women's empowerment, in accordance with these outcomes.

Mesk Al-Maqrami, a prominent female activist in society and a participant in the NDC, undertook the cause of marginalized women and advocated for them. She also worked hard to achieve the principle of equality and build confidence with all components of society. Al-Maqrami stressed the importance of involving women in decision-making since they are the group most affected during conflict.

Outcome of the NDC: "... Empowering Women to Enter the Labor Market"

The Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference came out with texts that had a major role in consolidating the relationship between women's active participation and their rights in civil society. The most prominent of these outcomes are: the state is committed to representing women so that they can participate actively in various bodies, state authorities, and elected and appointed councils by at least 30%. The state guarantees divorced women's right to housing if they care for their children.

The state guarantees the provision of all necessary needs in terms of physical protection and economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights. The state guarantees women all civil and political rights and is committed to enabling them to exercise all citizenship rights.

The document of the NDC stipu-

lates that women are equal with men in human dignity, and they have their own civil personality and independent financial liability.

In addition, the state guarantees the participation of rural women in rural development by developing and implementing development planning at all levels, facilitating information, advice and services for them, obtaining all types of training and education, including those related to functional literacy. The state also provides them with access to economic opportunities and credit, agricultural loans and appropriate technology.

During the period of saving the National Dialogue Conference, women strived for the largest number of such sessions to be held to discuss and evaluate the political, economic, legal, and social conditions of Yemeni women.

The presence of women in large numbers (27%) in the various components of the NDC undoubtedly helped to convey a message to men that Yemeni women are present and have an exceptional presence, especially since they represent 51% of the population.

Many of those who participated in the NDC unanimously agreed that its sessions provided a great opportunity for women to exchange and converge ideas, especially those women who were absent due to politics. This is what Yemeni women have recently enjoyed, "getting an opportunity to be among an elite group of distinguished women." They stressed that many different components agree on texts and recommendations that help Yemeni women obtain their right to participate.

Many of them are still optimistic that the day will come when Yemeni women will be given the opportunity and status they deserve to build and bring about positive and real change in this country.

Providing Job Opportunities and Improving Standards of Living Through Working Women's Economic Empowerment

Between June and December 2022, about 19 million people (i.e., 60% of the total population) were estimated having experienced acute food insecurity, according to a recent report by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on September 5, 2022. Yemen is enduring the worst economic crisis the country has witnessed in decades.

By: Ahmed Omar

The raging conflicts for eight years have affected the economic situation, and caused many people, including women, to lose their jobs. As a result, there has been a dire necessity for promoting gender equality, empowering working women economically in society, improving the living conditions of families, raising the national economy, and reducing unemployment rates. Unemployment has reached 26.1% in 2015, according to the field survey developed by the International Labor Organization and the Yemeni Central Statistical Organization.

Efforts to Economically Empower Women

In light of the difficult economic situation most Yemenis suffer from, international organizations continued their efforts to empower working women economically. The Cash for Work project has emerged in various governorates and districts of Yemen. It aims to alleviate the economic crisis which has affected most of the country's population.

The World Bank implemented the Cash for Work project to empower approximately 423,000 people and obtain paid job opportunities. 22.8% of women benefited from the project, and more than 5 million people received basic services. On September 3, 2021, the World Bank's statistic report indicated that about 700,000 pregnant and lactating women had received nutrition assistance.

In addition, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) implemented several projects in 2017 with the aim of enhancing livelihoods and restoring basic social services in Yemen. The program also provided \$105 million to cover its activities in all Yemeni governorates.

During their participation in health and nutrition training and awareness sessions, 13,400 women received monthly cash assistance from UNDP. This helped them identify many cases of severe malnutrition.

In a press statement to Sawt Al-Amal, Eng. Nasima Al-Aidarous, Director of Programs and Activities at Dar Al Maarif for Research and Statistics and a researcher in wom-



en's affairs, said, "the importance of empowering women economically lies not only in improving their financial income, but also in helping them participate in society and achieve social justice. Economic empowerment is the first step to empowering women in other fields."

Eng. Maria Yassin, the Head of Marico Foundation, summed up the ways that achieve women's economic empowerment and the continuity of their projects as follows: addressing low amounts loaned to women and strict conditions for loans which many women are unable to meet, limited access to training courses, and social restrictions imposed on women's movement. In addition, addressing the limited support of the central and local authorities to empower women and develop their own small businesses and projects is a key factor in their economic empowerment. In an exclusive statement to Sawt Al-Amal newspaper, she indicated that the repercussions of the conflict have caused a drop in the number of women borrowers from donors by half, compared to their number before the conflict. The number of women borrowers has reached more than 100,000.

Najat Salem, one of the 20 beneficiaries of the Protection and Livelihood Support Project, Safe Space for Women and Girls in Mukalla, benefited from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-funded modern cooking course, which was implemented at the beginning of 2022 to empower them economically by distributing cooking utensils to start their own projects. She told Sawt Al-Amal newspaper that she works as one of the productive families in Mukalla to support her family.

Ways for Women's Economic Empowerment

In light of the dire situation that

Yemen is going through, many international and local organizations have relied on conducting training workshops and opening small businesses for women to empower them economically. This enables women to manage their own projects in order to generate income for them to support their families.

On July 4, 2021, HUMAN ACCESS distributed UNFPA-funded grants in Wadi Hadhramout to enable 30 families of women beneficiaries of the Protection and Livelihood Support Project, Safe Spaces for Women and Girls, in the confectionary, pastries, sewing and tailoring industry, with the aim of empowering these families economically. The grants included the distribution of 15 sewing machines and confectionary supplies to 15 beneficiaries.

In Al-Ghaydah District in Al-Mahra Governorate, east of the country, HUMAN ACCESS, in partnership with the UNFPA, distributed economic empowerment bags to 13 beneficiaries on December 1, 2022. The bags included tools for sewing and tailoring, confectionary and pastries making, and mobile phones maintenance in order to empower them economically and help them start their own small businesses.

"Women should be given the right to employment opportunities in all fields on an equal basis with men," the researcher Al-Aidarous stated. She noted that a large number of women in Yemen have not completed their education, which makes it difficult for them to obtain government jobs. Therefore, banks and donors should provide financing and grant loans to women to establish their own small projects through which women achieve economic sustainability. "To improve women's living conditions, they should be given more grants and loans," she added. She also indicated that the grants offered by international organizations are too little

and do not cover women's needs.

Women Entrepreneurs in Hadhramout

In partnership with local and international organizations, MARICO Foundation in Mukalla, Hadhramout works to promote women's entrepreneurship and contributes to creating an enabling environment to develop the spirit of entrepreneurship. The Foundation has a database of more than 1000 women business owners in the governorate.

Maria Yassin, the President of the Foundation, told Sawt Al-Amal that MARICO, as a foundation to support and assist women entrepreneurs, has concluded many conventions that will be launched early next year, including the MARICO Market. It is an important online market and a unique platform, which seeks to support and market women's projects internally and externally. It will be launched at the beginning of 2023.

Women's Economic Empowerment and its Relation to Job Stability

Maria Yassin told Sawt Al-Amal that the relationship between job stability and women's economic empowerment lies in improving women's opportunities to earn material income, and to broader economic development in developing economies, for instance through higher levels of school enrollment for girls. Women's economic empowerment also plays an important role in providing job opportunities and improving the standard of living and the quality of life for them and their families.

Women's economic empowerment is an important pillar in achieving sustainable development. It contributes to increasing job opportunities for women and alleviating their suffering which is getting worse day after day.

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.

Acting Editor-in-chief

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Women Between Labor Law and the Challenges of Reality

Women have been given special consideration in national laws and legislation, and their protection has been guaranteed in the provisions while taking into account their physical, biological, and intellectual natures without compromising their material or moral rights.

By: **Hebah Mohammed**

The provisions of Yemeni law have supported women, considering them to be the vulnerable party in the employment contract given their significant contribution to societal development. However, reality has proven the opposite, so, where are the provisions of the law and the constitutional requirements regarding women's work today? Are they applied and acted upon, or are they merely words on paper? During our investigation, we raise questions about the most significant legislations that dealt with laws related to women's work, and the main obstacles and difficulties that impede laws related to Yemeni women.

Yemeni Women and Work is a Life Project

Najat Al-Omari, the Director of the Women & Girls Safe Spaces project, believes that women's work is a fundamental pillar and has economic, political, and social importance. "Prior to the years of war, women's employment was mostly for self-affirmation and personal growth. Now, in light of the ongoing conflict and the difficult economic conditions, women's work has become a need and an urgent necessity, because thousands of women have been forced to look for job opportunities, and have held numerous jobs in various fields in order to meet and provide for the needs of the family in light of the current conditions, which caused the loss of work for some heads of families, and some families to lose their breadwinners," she added. Al-Omari explained that the work of Yemeni women has solved many social problems, and women have become a supportive factor for men regarding enduring difficult living conditions and providing basic necessities.

Similarly, Khawla Al-Sharafi, the head of the National Committee for Women in Ibb Governorate, claimed that Yemeni society, like other Arab and Islamic societies as well as societies of third world countries, suffers from a decrease in its civil and human rights, most notably is the women's right to education, work and political participation. The fact is that Yemen, as a government and a system, was a pioneer in address-



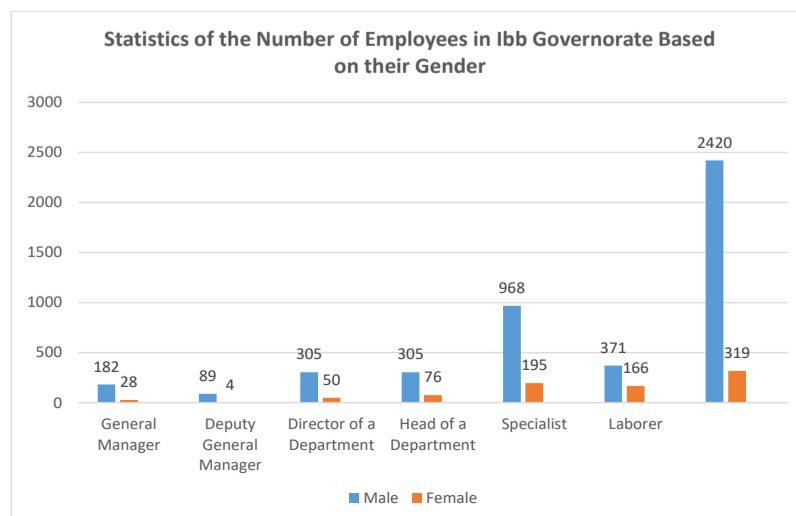
ing the issue of women's work with its legal and political dimensions. Yemeni law and constitution stipulate women's rights and social justice. Additionally, Yemen is one of the leading countries in terms of enacting legislations related to social justice and the political and legal rights of women.

Unfortunately, Yemen is at the forefront of the Arab, Islamic and third-world countries in terms of the

shortcomings related to women exercising their practical and applied roles and obtaining their rights. "When looking at the realistic numbers for the participation of women of all age groups, in practical and educational activities, we will notice that there is a significant gap between what is required by law, what is put into practice, and what people believe. However, it is important to point out that this view

is not generalized to society as a whole, because there are undoubtedly numerous bright models of women's engagement and their pioneering roles in Yemeni society. She explained that at the present, Yemeni women have a strong presence in all aspects of scientific and practical life, and in varying proportions, such as female doctors, engineers, teachers, counselors, researchers, industrialists, and Yemeni businesswomen. There are even pioneers in political and development work, as well as prominent activists in civil and human rights. It is worth noting that Yemeni women have assumed a number of ministerial portfolios and leadership positions in the country. They also have proven that they are highly qualified and able to work and gain great achievements for this country," she concluded.

Khawla Al-Sharafi declared that due to the high population density of Ibb Governorate and the multiplicity of civil society components present there, it was necessary to reveal the status of women working in the public sector. Thus, the



Women's Advocacy Committee was launched to support and promote women in government offices. It began its first step in advocacy through the Women National Committee in the governorate, and it conducted the functional field survey of gender in 2021 to find out the total number of issues that women suffer from in the governorate offices, which amounted to 103 offices. Al-Sharafi explained that the field survey came as a preliminary survey to discuss and classify the problems and difficulties facing women working in the public sector to come up with solutions according to the Civil Service Law adopted in the Republic of Yemen, considering it a primary source for amending the precarious working conditions of public sector employees.

The committee came out with several shocking facts, the most prominent of which are:

The presence of women in leadership positions in public offices is significantly weak, reaching 13%.

Women's absence from decision-making positions in offices where women make up the majority of the workforce.

The presence of women is obvious in the lowest positions of the occupational division (labor, specialist), as shown by the following figure:

The Position of Legislation and Laws Regarding the Work of Yemeni Women

The labor legislation concerned with Yemeni working women is based on the principle of gender equality in all conditions and criteria pertaining to the job and the nature of the work, without discrimination, in order to achieve equality between men and women. Dr. Bashir Al-Imad, Dean of the College of Law, confirmed, "Article 29 of Yemeni law stipulates that every citizen has the right - without discrimination - to practice the work that he himself determines according to the law. It also stipulates that work is a right and a necessity for the development of society. The law also regulates professional work and the employer's relationship with workers". Al-Imad pointed out that Article No. 5 of the Labor Law of 1995 stipulates equality between men and women in terms of rights and duties related to work without discrimination, in addition to equality between men and women in wages, salaries, career development, promotion and training, and in social security.

In addition, Al-Imad clarified some aspects of the law regarding women's work during pregnancy. For example, article No. 44 of the law stipulates that pregnant women should not work overtime during pregnancy, taking into account their health conditions. Besides, article No. 45 gives pregnant women the right to a paid 60-day leave during the full period of childbirth. Moreover, if her delivery was difficult,

or if she underwent a caesarean section or gave birth to twins, the law allows her to take an additional 20 days of leave. Al-Emad pointed out that the legislation and laws related to women's work prevented employment of women in dangerous, arduous and harmful jobs, and prohibited the employment of women at night during the month of Ramadan, as stated in the text of Article No. 46. Article No. 47 stipulates that women's workplaces should be visible to all." A working woman has the right to take a paid leave in the event of the death of her husband, starting from the date of the husband's death, for a period of forty days in order to complete the waiting period. She is also entitled to take a leave of no more than ninety days without pay," he added.

According to the Yemeni Constitution, Article No. 31 stipulates that women are the sisters of men, and they are equal with men in rights and duties. Article No. 25 stipulates social solidarity between Yemeni society based on freedom, justice and equality in accordance with the law, and the equality of women and men in remuneration for work if they perform the same work, in accordance with the agreed upon conditions. The law also gave a retirement pension to working women when they reach the age of 60, according to Insurance and Pensions Law No. 25 and 26 of 1991.

The journalist Ahmed Al-Sharifi believes that women's work should not be taken from a single perspective or discussed from the point of view of the law in an abstract way because there are several factors through which one can talk about this issue. For example, one of the obstacles affecting women's work is the lack of freedom of movement. Regarding the legal situation, there is a duality in legislation. For instance, the constitution and the law state that all citizens are equal, and freedom of movement is guaranteed for both sexes. However, it also states that freedom of movement for women is conditional on the approval of a male guardian, which shows the contradiction in that law. "If there is no legislative impediment, there is a realistic impediment experienced by working women, most



notably customs and traditions and society's view, which still considers women's work a shameful thing," he added.

Abdulrahman Al-Zabibi, a legal advisor, confirmed that the labor law included positive provisions, including equal wages for women and men as well as the rights of working women, but unfortunately it is not applied. "The inactivation of legal texts related to the rights of working women constitutes gender-based violence, and it is a reason for halting the development process, which views working women as its most significant component," he added. Furthermore, Yemeni society restricts women to certain jobs without legal or social justifications. For example, some families allow their women to work in the field of education and medicine and prevent them from working in the field of engineering, security or trade.

Working Women at the International and Local Levels

Dr. Walid Al-Kuthairi, a legal

advisor and human rights activist, believes that Yemeni legislators pay attention to Yemeni women, whether at the international or local level. At the international level, we find that Yemen has ratified many agreements that include the protection of both men and women. For example, Convention No. (86) regarding employment contracts (national workers) for the year 1946, and the 1971 agreement regarding freedom of association and protection of the right to trade union of 1948, including those that seek to grant special protection to women, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979, was ratified by the Republic of Yemen in May 1984, and Convention No. (100) on equal pay for male and female workers, where the value of work is equal was issued in 1951 and ratified by the Republic of Yemen in 1976.

"There are numerous laws that regulate and seek to defend the rights of working women in domestic legislation, keeping up with what is

already in place and is ratified in international agreements. This is evident by examining the provisions of the Civil Service Law No. 19 for the year 1991 and its executive regulation No. 122 for the year 1992, which regulates the rights of working women who hold a public office position, as well as international labor organizations' agreements No. 132 regarding annual paid leave, issued by the organization in 1970, ratified by the Republic of Yemen on November 1, 1976," Al-Kuthairi added. "This protection is manifested through the text of Article 12 of the Civil Service Law, which stipulates a set of principles, the most important of which is equal opportunities for employment, and the prohibition of discrimination between men and women," he continued. He explained that women working in the private sector have special provisions in Law No. 5 of 1995 regarding the Labor Law, in Chapter One of Part Four of this law, i.e. from Articles 42 to 47, in addition to separate articles, including Article 69 and Article 5, which do not deviate from what is stated in the Civil Service Law in terms of taking into account women and giving them the special care they deserve in performing their work. These include the prohibition of unsuitable jobs, maternity leave, limitation of working hours, and the right to retire.

Reality and Ambition of Laws and Legislation

The legal advisor, Walid Al-Kuthairi, stated that although there are protections for working women, in reality we do not see their effects. The reason for this is due to many factors, the most prominent of which is the lack of a suitable environment in which they can obtain their full rights, the lack of real qualification and training for women to enable them to perform their work, and the lack of legal awareness. "There are many rea-

sons that may override the previous reasons, the most prominent of which is the failure of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor as well as its offices in the governorates to perform the role entrusted to them by law," Al-Kuthairi added.

Consequently, the stagnation of this Ministry negatively affected the rights of workers in general and women in particular, and prevented them from obtaining their rights, despite the importance of what is within the competence of the ministry to inspect workplaces, and to coordinate with the Ministry of Information in order to carry out awareness campaigns about the working women's rights. He pointed out to the absence of the role of trade unions, despite their broad powers through which they can protect the rights of workers in general, and women in particular, and provide an appropriate environment for working women during the performance of their work. Al-Kuthairi stressed that talking about the causes of the problem does not mean that the goal is to criticize; rather, it means the desire to apply the laws related to these rights, because, through the application of law, it is possible to achieve an appropriate environment that moves the economic and commercial activity of the country and benefit it in the future. This will not be possible unless the competent and concerned authorities play their role in providing a suitable environment for working women.

According to Abdulrahman Al-Zabibi, the legal advisor, "We hope that extensive legal amendments are prepared currently, and that positive texts for working women can be put forward to be included in the matrix of amendments."

The Yemeni labor law needs more positive texts for working Yemeni women to comply with the international conventions that Yemen has ratified, which requires the national legal system to comply with them.



Lack of Women's Representation and Superficial Handling of their Issues in Yemeni Media

Women's issues have recently been the focus of the media's attention. However, only a limited number of media outlets have been interested in covering women's issues related to gender. Despite this improvement, Yemeni media did not reflect a positive image of women and failed to bring about any changes in societal culture.

By: Alia Muhammed

Based on the contents of the media and social media, we conclude that the media has restricted itself to covering women's issues in a way that represents public culture. It portrayed Yemeni women as powerless and ineffective, just the way the men want them. Therefore, they frequently appear in TV shows playing domestic roles and doing nothing but raising children, taking care of the house and so on. This has limited women's economic participation due to their failure to be involved in the labor market.

According to a study issued by the Center for Studies and Economic Media in 2017, which targeted 7 Yemeni channels, few Yemeni women were present in the media (TV channels). The participation of women was 9.7%, while men's presence was 90.3%. The study indicated that the Yemeni media ignored Yemeni women's issues and their roles as decision-makers.

Women are Emotional and Unable to Make Decisions

Amr Mohammed, a radio director, believes that the media contributed to presenting a superficial image of working women's issues, and did not reflect the true image of women, showing them as weak and governed by their emotions. Thus, in addition to their failure to work, the idea that women are unable to assume leadership positions has become entrenched. "We always see that the roles attributed to women in drama take on the role of a housewife who is concerned with children, the house, cooking, and cleaning. We hardly ever see women in institutional roles. When we do, they are typically subordinate to men and carrying out their commands. Accordingly, they ought to accept the preference of the men and satisfied in staying in their inferior status," he added.

Establishing a Culture of



Shame Among Generations Is Wrong

"In light of the conditions the country is going through, it is quite rare to see the media play a positive role in presenting a beautiful and good image of working women," said Amal Waheish, a media figure. She added, "unfortunately, it tends to enhance negative stereotypes about women. This is due to the fact that there is a war against women that seems undeclared, but it is clearly evident in limiting the roles of women and creating a wrong perception among generations, considering women to be shameful and unworthy of life."

Basma Al-Hakimi, a journalist and radio presenter, confirmed that the media still gives stereotypical images about women and does not offer working women adequate space and opportunities in their programs to discuss the difficulties and challenges they face in Yemen. She added, "The media played a major role in opening the doors to bullying and criticism and encouraging a

culture of shame against women. Due to this, many women refused to apply for various employment opportunities, and some of them chose to work from home." She stressed on the importance of giving space to women's issues, allowing them to talk about their difficulties and challenges and observing the marginalization practiced against them, in addition to raising awareness of the importance of women's work and their role in economic growth and development.

Yemeni Drama Undermines the Role of Women and Highlights the Role of Men

Shoaib Al-Afif, a playwright and actor, believes that Yemeni drama undermines the role of women in society. On the other hand, it portrays men as the dominant ones. He said, "there is weak societal awareness of the significance of women's roles and the necessity to acknowledge their status in Yemeni culture." He explained that the lack of artistic production contributed greatly to the transmission of this stereotype. The

majority of Yemeni drama writers talk about how women's roles are insignificant, portraying them as being ignorant, illiterate, and unable to understand anything. They also overlook showing the effective role of women in society. Al-Afif blamed the channel executives and those in charge of the drama industry, especially those who belong to strict religious currents, while others believe in the principle of customs and traditions. He added, "Some people still think that women are incomplete and inferior to men. This is evident when we present dramas that discuss the situation of Yemeni women, and they are rejected." In an exclusive statement to Sawt Al-Amal, Al-Afif said, "I presented a fantasy theatrical work a while ago, entitled The Kingdom of Women. Its events revolve around how the world could change if it were governed by women. Unfortunately, this work was rejected despite its importance in enhancing the role of women in society."

Similarly, Amat Al-Rahman Al-Afour, a journalist and com-

munity activist, stressed that the media did not provide any positive role towards the issues of Yemeni women in general and working women in particular. They continue to retain the old character in what they present and could not contemporize. She explained that Yemeni drama has shown Yemeni women sit within the walls of the houses doing nothing significant. However, there are models for working women on the ground; there are female media workers, engineers, doctors, teachers, judges, and other working women, whose roles in balancing between home and work must be highlighted.

Recommendations and Solutions

Mansour Abdullah, a social researcher, believes that Yemeni satellite channels lack clear strategies in dealing with women's issues. They did not provide any real solutions to women in society. Moreover, they use traditional discourses that emphasize the traditional role of women. He mentioned a number of old radio programs and TV series which contain phrases and scenes confirming that the women's place is at home, while the men are the ones who should work. He explained that we need media outlets that present topics concerned with gender equality and address gender issues in all aspects, in addition to shedding light on women's participation and pioneering roles in the development of society. "A number of projects that contribute to improving the image of women must be financed," he added.

Similarly, Al-Afour stressed on the importance of concerted efforts to provide meaningful and informative content that discusses women's issues and shows the real balance between men and women who should complement one another. The study "The Presence of Yemeni Women in the Media" resulted in a number of recommendations to bridge the gap between the media and its coverage of women's issues. The most prominent recommendations include raising the level of media content related to women in radio programs, television, social media and news websites to achieve a kind of balance between what is presented about women and men. They also include promoting media content that enhances the image of women, supporting their rights, calling for concepts of equality, raising the level of awareness of women's issues and establishing internal policies in institutions that are consistent with the portrayal of a fair and impartial view of women.

Psychological and Physical Effects of Workplace Violence against Women

Since 2014, Sarah Ahmed (pseudonym) has been moving from one job to another. She complains of being oppressed by those who run the institutions in which she works. She graduated from the Department of Mass Communication, specializing in program presentation and preparation. Although she aspires to start her career as a TV program presenter, the conflict caused great damage to media institutions in the country; some were shut down, some destroyed, and others looted. This prevented Sarah from realizing her dream and forced her to work in fields other than media.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez

Sarah said, "I had a single-shift job, from 8 am to 2 pm. I earned a salary of no more than 20,000 Yemeni riyals. Transportation expenses exceeded 9,000 riyals per month, and the rest of the salary did not cover food and my other needs." She confirmed to Sawt Al-Amal that every time she asked her boss for a pay rise, he told her that she must be patient like her colleagues, and that all employees start their job with low salaries, and after a period of work, the salary increases. "My father tried to persuade me to quit the job, but I my fear that I might not get a job, as is the state of many of my friends, forced me to continue. In addition, I hoped I would get a pay raise," she added.

She said that she worked for nine months without a contract in that center. She did not receive any insurance or have any rights, nor did she feel any appreciation for her work. She was also not allowed to take leave during her illness or any circumstances she went through, except for Friday and Eid holidays. She confirmed that every time she was late for work, she was threatened with deduction of salary or replacement with another employee. She continued, "I felt very stressed, my face started becoming pale, my hair falling out, and my skin peeling off. I didn't care about my health due to the constant pressure on and off work hours. In addition, the phone caused me constant anxiety. Being a secretary for the center and fulfilling the role of relationship officer in addition to my work, I had to answer calls from my boss or employees outside of my working hours."

Sarah's story is not very different from Fatima Ibrahim's. However, the latter used to work in a private school as a subject teacher from the eighth to eleventh grade and received a salary of no more than 25,000 riyals. Fatima said, "I endured the suffering at my work because of the conditions the country is going through and the lack of job opportunities. In addition to work pressure, I endured the ridicule of students from rich families and the lack of appreciation and respect from the school administration. Many Yemeni women struggle a lot to find sources of income and suffer from the reality they are living in", she added.

Many Yemeni women in the labor market are exposed to many pressures and various forms of violence. As a result, some of them were forced to leave their jobs despite their financial need, and others had to continue and bear all the pressures and harm. As they felt unsafe, insecure and unsatisfied, their work performance and production were greatly affected, according to many of those whom Sawt Al-Amal newspaper met.

Forms of Workplace Violence



Samia Al-Aghbari, a professor of journalism at the Faculty of Mass Communication at Sana'a University, defined workplace violence as "violence that occurs in a workplace, whether from the employer, manager, or co-workers. It is either verbal violence in which there is an insult to the dignity of the woman and to her person, and a kind of discrimination in dealing with her professionally because she is of lesser importance, or physical violence by sexual harassment, assault and beating."

Similarly, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Haddad, a psychologist, mentioned a number of forms of violence that working women may be exposed to. The most important of which are physical violence and administrative violence. Physical violence includes beating by hand or by any other means and which requires muscular effort. This type is widespread in workplaces. Administrative violence refers to force and compulsion used against women while they are within their administrative and functional work. Usually, the man is the one who controls women's administrative activity and directs it according to his interest, and against women's aspirations in management and business organization. He added, "working women face another type of violence, which is psychological and emotional violence."

Al-Haddad defined violence as insulting women's dignity and humiliating them or looking down upon them, underestimating their qualifications and abilities, telling them hurtful words, and shouting at them in front of others. He pointed out that this type of violence degrades and demeans all working women and makes them lose their dignity and self-confidence. He went on, "there is a gender-based violence. Such violence is practiced as a result of the wrong and unfair upbringing between males and females since childhood. Preference is always given to men at the expense of women." He emphasized that social violence is one of the extreme forms of violence against women. It involves socially rebuking her in front of others, attacking and casting false and fabricated charges against her, restricting her freedom, and limiting her activities.

Workplace Harassment

Ibrahim Al-Haddad believes that workplace harassment is widespread and falls within sexual violence. It has to do with assaulting a woman's body by touching parts of her body against her will or forcing her to have sex against her desire. He confirmed that many girls are subjected to sexual harassment at work. Such cases are shrouded in strict secrecy, in order not to reach the judiciary and the police because this would harm the reputation of the family and the future of its members.

M. N. A is a working woman. She has suffered sexual harassment by her boss at work. She told Sawt Al-Amal, "I am one of the girls who completed their studies and graduated from university. I started looking for a job, and I was excited about that. I found a job in a private consulting firm. After months of work, my boss began to approach me in an inappropriate way. He was trying to touch different parts of my body. I tried to ignore that for fear that no one would believe me, and for fear of losing my job, which I desperately needed." "His behavior got worse, and at that point I decided to talk to him and reject his acts. However, he soon demanded my dismissal, on the pretext that I am incapable and negligent, so I lost my job," she added.

L.M.D was also not spared from sexual violence while searching for a job. She said, "I applied for a job at an institution and contacted the head of the institution, who asked me to come in for a job interview. I went and submitted my papers. He told me we will contact you later. Two days later, I received a message from him on WhatsApp asking me about my qualifications and experience. He asked me if I was engaged or married, I did not pay attention to his question at the time. However, when he started flirting with me and speaking to me with shameful words, I blocked him, and I did not communicate with them again."

External Risks

As her father's salary was interrupted due to the ongoing conflict, Afaf Hussein, a working student, had no choice but to look for work, so that she could

complete her studies. She applied to work in a food factory in Sana'a where she lives. Luckily, she was accepted into an evening shift which starts from one o'clock in the afternoon until nine at night.

Regarding the situation she experienced while working in that factory, she said, "I was not forced by anyone to work, but I myself chose to do so. The situation that I strived to overcome outside the factory was more severe. Working late is never good. I used to finish my work at nine o'clock every day. Since our house was near the factory, I returned home on foot, which exposed me to a lot of verbal and even non-verbal harassment. This affected me psychologically so I stopped working in the factory to protect myself. I even stopped going to university until I found another job."

Afnan Mohammed, a psychologist, said that there are a large number of institutions that do not provide protection services for working women, which increases their vulnerability to more risks. "These risks have negative effects that reduce women's participation in the development process. Therefore, a suitable environment must be provided for working women which protects them from exposure to psychological and physical pressures," she continued. She also pointed out a number of physical risks to which some working women are exposed. For example, due to the lack of personal protective equipment, women working in the health sector are exposed to a number of diseases. There are also other practical risks affecting women working in the legal and journalistic fields, such as kidnapping, threats, extortion, and verbal and physical violence. In her interview with Sawt Al-Amal, she emphasized the importance of supporting working women, providing them with psychological support, and respecting them inside and outside their workplace.

Psychological and Physical Effects of Workplace Violence

Samia Al-Aghbari believes that workplace violence negatively affects the mood and psychological state of women, and causes them to be stressed, anxious, depressed, and unwilling to

achieve. Psychological pain may often turn into physical pain, such as stomach and joint pain, pressure and diabetes. It can also manifest as dizziness and physical and psychological fatigue. She continued to say that many women often get very frustrated and bored. They may even hate work and look for another full time job or work remotely as result of the violence they are subjected to.

In addition, Yasmine Ghilan, a psychologist, said, "the impact of workplace violence is not only limited to work, but the anxiety and psychological stress working women feel negatively affects their families." She added, "a number of women are exposed to job pressures which negatively affects their families. They cannot tell what they are exposed to in their workplace. As soon as they arrive home, they vent by shouting and yelling, which affects the stability and security of the family."

Urgent Need for Monitoring Public and Private Institutions

Yasmine Ghilan believes that monitoring civil and governmental institutions and the way they deal with employees is an urgent necessity to identify the types of violence practiced against employees in general, and women in particular. In addition, the duties and rights of women must be specified, taking into account the psychological aspect of the employee because of its important role in boosting their creativity and skills. The personal and psychological ability of employees should be developed to realize the importance of their presence in the career ladder.

Al-Aghbari stressed the importance of enacting a law that criminalizes anyone who tries to abuse women, practices any form of violence and discrimination against them in various fields of work, and deprives them of their employment rights under various pretexts. She also noted the important role that all women's and civil society organizations concerned with human rights and women's rights must play in supporting women by all available means to counter this violence. In addition to conducting awareness campaigns for women to be familiar with their employment rights.

How Does Society View Women's Work?

Yemeni women are an integral part of society and have proven to be an important resource that plays a vital role in development. No kind of social development can be achieved without women. However, Yemeni women did not reach this status easily. They live in a conservative society where some still believe that the role of women is limited to housework and raising children. Some of them criticize and prohibit women from getting into the labor market. In our report on "The Reality of Yemeni Women Work", we will review society's acceptance and rejection of Yemeni women's work.

By: Alia Muhammed
& Ahmed Omar

Customs and Traditions Disadvantage Women's Work

Despite the progress and change in societal perception of women's work, there are still Yemeni girls who face the restrictions of customs and traditions and society's view that shames women's work. These restrictions stand in the way of their entry into the labor market.

K.M.A., 30 years-old, comes from a conservative family that refuses to let girls work. She painfully told us, "I am a mother of a 7-year-old girl. I got divorced three years ago. The money my daughter's father gives is not enough for us. So, I started looking for a job so that I can provide my daughter's needs. However, my family rejected my request because they consider women's employment a bad thing." She added, "My father said our girls do not go out to work or mingle with men. If you need something, I will provide it for you. I tried to convince them, but in vain. Their condition was that I work from home and not go outside the house, but unfortunately I did not find such chances, so I gave up." She asserted that as a woman, she and her daughter have needs, and her family will not be able to provide everything they need.

Lina Al-Harithi, a community activist, believes that women have been "historically" disadvantaged because of their gender and the highly patriarchal society. From the perspective



of the patriarchal system, women are minors who lack reason and religion. That is why the patriarchal system imposes a barrier around them and controls the details of their lives. The man is the one who allows or does not allow them to leave the house. He is the one who decides to enroll them in education and then in the labor market, or to deprive them of that. He is also the one who often acts on their behalf in deciding their marriage and choosing their life partners. In her interview with Sawt Al-Amal, Al-Harithi explained that the Yemeni government has made efforts to improve women's rights in Yemen, including "forming a women's development strategy and a women's health development strategy." However, many cultural and religious norms and the weak enforcement of this legislation by the Yemeni government have prevented Yemeni women from enjoying equal rights with men. Yemeni women did not enjoy many economic, social or cultural rights until 2017. She added, "History has shown that women played major roles in Yemeni soci-

ety. Some women in Yemen before Islam and the early Islamic era in Yemen had a distinguished position in society, such as the Queen of Sheba and Queen Arwa, who took care of the infrastructure and made a prosperous historical transformation during their reign. However, contemporary Yemeni women are subject to a society that largely reflects agrarian, tribal, and patriarchal traditions. All these along with illiteracy and economic issues, have consistently denied women their rights as Yemeni citizens."

How does Islam View Women's Work?

Wrong family upbringing makes some members of society acquire wrong beliefs about women's work. Some also prohibit women from working based on their personal opinions and ideas.

Ahlam Al-Faqih, a Yemeni working girl, faced many challenges in her study and career. She was attacked by her family members when she went out to work, on the pretext that work for women is not permis-

sible and that there is no place for women better than the home. However, she was able to overcome them and prove her worth in her work.

In addition, Samira Yaslam, who works in an institution, stated that Islam guarantees women the right to work provided that there is no harm or loss. She pointed out that work in Islam is a means, not an end. Women work to earn a living, to reduce poverty, and to support their families. "Women used to work in commerce, and transactions in the markets," she added in her statement to Sawt Al-Amal. "Working women must abide by the rules at work. They must work according to the rules that oblige both men and women to work without discrimination." She stressed the importance of protecting and safeguarding women, giving them their full rights and wages, just as men, and avoiding harassing them.

Similarly, Professor Ahmed Aidarous Al-Jafri, a lecturer at the Faculty of Sharia and Law, Al-Ahqaf University in Hadhramout Governorate believes that the work of women is permissible just as it is permissible for men. The same kinds of work are forbidden for both men and women. This indicates work equality between men and women. He pointed out that Islam respected the job division between the two genders in accordance with their natures. Examples of the prominent jobs of women are maternity, nursing and housework. He also noted that Islam did not prohibit women from working outside their homes, and that they are able to play their roles effectively because they possess real resources and capabilities that have been proven in the past, especially in the Islamic era. Such experience must be utilized, supported and managed with the aim of reaching a set of achievements to improve work and society.

In turn, Dr. Fayez Al-Sumahi explained to Sawt Al-Amal that Islam

takes into account the differences between men and women in terms of ability and endurance, in proportion to their nature and inherent attributes. This does not detract from the status of women, but rather increases their elevation and status. It is not reasonable for a woman to perform hard work such as construction. "If a woman needs to work outside the house, there is nothing wrong with working in a way that suits her nature and does not burden her," he said.

Positive Shifts

Yemeni women have been able to create a positive transformation; breaking the barrier of fear and starting to work to prove to everyone that they have a great deal of confidence. They have become one of the most effective and engaged segments of society who participate in the labor market.

Similarly, Amira Ahmed Abdullah Al-Shatibi, the Director General of Human Resources at the Department of Higher Education Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance, said, "Yemeni women deserve all appreciation and respect because they have proven their success at home and at work." She added, "The conflict greatly affected Yemeni women. Some lost their jobs, and others lost the sole breadwinner for the family. Women take on the role of men outside and inside the home. They have become competitors to men in the labor market. Working Yemeni women have become able to create a major transformation, and the societal view towards their work has improved. In her speech, Al-Shatibi stressed the importance of supporting women's participation in the labor market, providing them with technical expertise and socially empowering them to achieve development."



Wage Differentials: An Injustice to Women & Decline Sectors' Performance

Article No. 42 of the 1995 Yemeni Labor Law guarantees gender equality in all aspects of professional life, including rights, duties, and interpersonal connections. The law also took into account gender equality in social security, training, promotion, and employment. Under Yemeni law, women are also entitled to wages. According to Article No. 67, if a working woman performs the same task under the same conditions and specifications as a working man, she is entitled to compensation that is equivalent to a working man.

By: Ahmed Omar

Marwa Jaber, a Yemeni worker, was working in a shop selling bags and cosmetics in Al-Shaher district - east of Hadramout Governorate. She claimed that because of the pay inequality between her and her male coworkers, she was unable to exercise the legal rights that were given to her. "I am one of the victims of wage gap, and I receive the lowest wage among my fellow males under the pretense that the men show up for work early and help in transporting and loading goods," she said. She indicated, in her interview with Sawt Al-Amal, that she stayed at her job for a year before leaving it due to financial discrimination. She expressed her indignation at the disparity in financial rights between the sexes. "My coworker used to come to work only half an hour or less before me; however, he would earn 45% more than my salary, despite the fact that he did not have any skills in terms of experience or the period he began working in the shop," she added.

Sanaa Yahya (pseudonym) has been working as a nurse in one of the private medical centers in the city of Mukalla for more than three years. She stated to Sawt Al-Amal that the salary differentials between her and her coworkers reached approximately 30%. This means that she also experiences a wage gap. According to Sanaa, some of these income disparities are the result of her young coworkers working more late-night shifts while she is denied those shifts. This is due to societal restrictions that deprive girls of certain working hours, as well as the contract that was made with the management of the center.

Studies Showing Factors Behind the Widening Gender Wage Differential Gap

"Despite the significant progress in women's education and high rates of participation in the labor force in many countries,

closing the gender pay gap has been exceedingly slow," according to the report issued by the United Nations in September 2020. The report indicated that women's income from work is less than 80% of what men earn, or less than that. The UN report indicated that, at the current rate, achieving economic parity between women and men may take 257. This indicates that gender parity has not been achieved at the present time or immediate future. September 18 was designated the International Day for Equal Pay between the Genders, and such a day is devoted to affirming the United Nations' commitment to human rights and combating all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women.

In addition, the World Bank website stated, in a report dated April 20, 2022, that women fell behind men in terms of job opportunities. The wage gap and gender segregation has become large, which is pushing women towards less productive jobs in many countries around the world. According to the "Women, Business and the Law 2022" report issued by the World Bank, 2.4 billion women of working age do not have equal economic op-

portunities, in addition, there are 95 countries that do not guarantee women equal pay for work of equal value.

According to the development report issued by the World Economic Forum, in 2021, Yemen ranked 155 out of 156 in the global gender gap index, which explains the significant gender disparities, not only at the level of wages, but also in various aspects of life.

The Conflict in Yemen Increases Gender Discrimination

The ongoing conflict in the country has increased gender discrimination in job parity and wages. It has also created an environment suitable for inequality between the two groups. Moreover, many women left their jobs due to the lack of security in some governorates that are experiencing armed conflict.

The United Nations Development Program in Yemen issued a report in late 2021 on "Assessing the Impact of War on Development in Yemen" from the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals for the Empowerment of Women. The report stated that there are significant medium- and long-term benefits to addressing gender inequality,

raising wages and work participation rates, and reducing disparities in health by 2050.

Salem Saeed, an economic researcher, believes that the increase in the wage gap between women and men in the private sectors is due to the exploitation of girls who are looking for work, in light of the weak oversight by the concerned authorities and their failure to fulfill their role in achieving gender equality. He indicated that these differences greatly affect economic sustainability between the sexes and cause high unemployment rates among girls. He urged the concerned authorities to step in and find ways to ensure salary equality between the sexes.

Strategies to Eliminate the Gender Pay Gap

Equal Pay International Coalition, according to the United Nations website in 2022, including the International Labor Organization, the United Nations Women, and other partners, aims to achieve equal pay for women and men in various countries of the world. This can be achieved by actors who have a wide range of interests in many fields and expertise to achieve equality and reducing the gender pay gap at the

international levels.

Nader Al-Jabri, director of book printing presses in Hadramout, confirmed that it is possible to bridge the pay gap between the sexes by raising a culture of societal awareness, amending some articles of the constitution and the civil service law, and educating heads of the private sector to make fair schedules that do not differentiate between the sexes. He explained that the strategy to eliminate the pay gap lies in the involvement and integration of women in the labor market, setting a unified ceiling for wages commensurate with the environment and the number of working hours, in addition to the exchange of expertise, experiences, solutions, and ideas that would eliminate this gap. Al-Jabri pointed out the importance of preparing an analytical report on the main reasons that lead to wage inequality between the sexes.

The elimination of wage differentials between the sexes and equality in employment opportunities remain top priorities for Yemeni working women to achieve comprehensive developmental economic participation, which is reflected in their positive impact on society.



Working Mothers between Family and Professional Roles

By: **Hebah Mohammed**

Some social and economic changes have contributed to making women an essential participant in building society and allowed many of them to work. Working women strive to balance their family life and work responsibilities.

Mukhtar Abdullah, a family counseling trainer, believes that the mothers' work brought about many changes in their lives, the most important of which is the replacement of family roles with professional ones. Working women have become strong and independent and are able to make their own decisions. He added, "it is not easy for a working mother to achieve balance between her job and her family life, especially since her need for work forces her to accept any job, without any conditions. This negatively affected her psychological health as well as her relationship with her family." He continued, "she often cannot balance home workloads and responsibilities in the workplace. For example, she may neglect the family for her work, and sometimes she neglects work for her family life." He stressed that achieving a balance between family and professional roles is not limited to women only, but rather with the help of the work environment and the family.

Employers' View of Working Mothers

Dr. Bashir Al-Imad, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Ibb University, believes that the employers' view of the working mother is deficient, devoid of human, moral and legal values. Many of them believe that the working mother is one of the causes of obstruction and delay in work. Although Yemeni labor law stipulates legislation that guarantees the right of working mothers to maternity leave, breast-feeding, and health care, unfortunately all of these have not been implemented. He emphasized the importance of

activating the role of oversight and field investigation visits to institutions, companies, hospitals, and other workplaces to evaluate and follow up the application of the law related to women's work.

Working Mothers Gain Employer's Trust and Confidence

Hayat Al-Kinai, President of the Yemeni Women's Union, confirmed that many working mothers have been able to prove their presence and competence, and have changed their employers' view of working mothers to one of pride and confidence. Wherever she works and wherever she is, work goes well. "The working mother has to prove her worth, competence, and distinction, and compel the employer to respect her, because with her behavior and competence, she will leave the employer with a good or bad impression," she added.

Working Mothers' Needs

Many of the working women interviewed by Sawt Al-Amal stated that there is a huge gap between their work and their basic needs. They emphasized that many employers, or even the family and society, do not pay attention or give importance to the working mothers' basic needs to ensure that they continue to work.

In this regard, Hayat Al-Kinai, President of the Yemeni Women's Union, Ibb branch, explained that working mothers need to take into account working hours to reduce the direct pressure on them from their work managers. They also need to give importance to their family role in raising children and caring for the family. She stressed that women in general, and working mothers in particular, need a safe, appropriate, stable workplace, so that they feel safe and secure, and are given room to develop their work.

In a related context, Amin Al-Khayyat, a social worker, indicated that societal recognition of

women's right to work will only be achieved through awareness-raising campaigns through audio, visual and print media. Al-Khayyat added that working mothers need employers and institutions to realize the value of women's work by giving them full equal rights with men and offering great opportunities to move up to higher positions. Women aspire to work in large great projects in major positions. Women seek to work in institutions that appreciate and value women's work, and provide the necessities of a working mother, such as providing a nursery for her children in her workplace among other things.

Obstacles to Working Mothers

Since before the conflict, working mothers in Yemen have faced numerous difficulties. Moreover, they have become trapped in the midst of many obstacles that they are unable to overcome for many reasons, the most significant of which is the absence of the important role that the competent authorities should play in caring for the affairs of working women. This is due to the fact that they are preoccupied with conflicts, while working mothers experience a huge wave of psychological difficulties and challenging situations.

"Working women suffer from harassment at work, especially if they work in a mixed environment as a result of the inadequate perception of underestimating them by their coworkers and even by women themselves, belittling their competence, being exploited by their employers, bartering them and giving them the lowest wage in comparison to men, as well as marginalizing their rights." Hayat Al-Kinai said.

Shaimaa Al-Sabri, a student at the Faculty of Law, mentioned some of the difficulties facing working mothers, saying, "Working women face a variety of problems related to the family, such as being preoccupied with raising children and the failure to care for them, the difficul-

ty in balancing between family and work, as well as lack of time to take care of the husband and children. As a result, the family broke up. Working mothers sometimes face extreme strain because of her husband and family's opposition to her work." She explained that some men's jealousy of women's financial independence created many excuses to prevent them from working. "A working mother may be exposed to criticism from people, or to some harassment that negatively affects her performance at work and her home responsibilities because of the idea of her inability to balance between work and other responsibilities. Working mothers and working women in general are viewed negatively and with a lot of doubt by society, and some reach the point of despising her because she works. Therefore, she faces pressures from the people around her and may be subjected to verbal abuse sometimes," she added.

Dr. Amin Al-Khayyat explained that the working mother suffers from a conflict of roles, between performing her role - as a mother - towards her children and performing her role as an ideal wife. This caused her psychological problems because work consumed most of her time. He stressed that the working mother still faces these challenges throughout all our Arab world including, Iraq, the Levant, Jordan and Egypt, but they are more severe and extensive in Yemeni society.

Urgent Solutions

There is no doubt that we are seeking for the best solutions for the advancement of working mothers considering their unique demands and the difficulties they face, whether from the perspective of the competent authorities or some

Hayat Al-Kinai: "Many working mothers have been able to prove their abilities and change the employers' views on working mothers."

social figures who are interested in women's issues or working mothers.

Noura Al-Saqqaf,

Director of the General

Administration for Women,

stressed on the importance of intensifying efforts to educate men about the need of accepting women by their side and treat them fairly, even if they are mothers. She also emphasized on the significance of educating working women about the necessity to deal with their coworkers carefully and sensibly, and that they should confront those who discourage them in order to prove their presence.

On the other hand, Muammar Al-Nadhari, a legal advisor, said that one of the most appropriate solutions to meet the challenges facing working mothers is the existence of government oversight bodies along with inspection agencies to monitor managers of works to identify to what extent do they apply laws and regulations that concern the protection of working women? "There is no objection to examining the current legislation for their development, because I am certain that they will contribute significantly, if they are applied. This is due to the fact that our problem is not represented in the law; rather, it is in not applying it," Al-Nadhari added.

On the other hand, Mukhtar Abdullah, a trainer, advises many working mothers to work one-shift in order to protect both their own and their children's health. In order to identify the administrative and family issues that working mothers face, Dr. Amin Al-Khayyat, a social specialist, suggested conducting social studies. He also recommended holding events, conferences, and training courses that contribute to spreading awareness of the importance of women's work in Yemen in general and in Ibb governorate in particular.

Lack of Yemeni Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Positions

Despite the presence of women cadres in the public and private sectors, this presence is limited to administrative positions. That is, they don't frequently make decisions in those sectors because men only hold positions of high leadership. This is due to the decline of educational attainment by girls compared to boys, in addition to the social and cultural ties that dominate the Yemeni environment.

By: Ahmad Omar

Obstacles that Prevent Women from Obtaining Leadership Positions in Yemen

Since the outbreak of the conflict in 2015, the opportunities for women in Yemen to hold leadership positions have decreased. Due to the complexity of the political environment Yemen has been experiencing over the past eight years, observers do not find it surprising that women's representation decreased during the war years.

Marei Fahmy, a journalist and community activist, said, "The ongoing conflict in the country limited the development of women in many leadership positions, and it is the main reason for their absence from the scene in all its forms." He stressed that women are unsuitable for roles requiring decision-making due to their naturally peaceful character. In an exclusive press statement to the Sawt Al-Amal newspaper, he claimed that another factor contributing to the decline in women's possibilities of holding leadership positions in both the public and private sectors in Yemeni society is the social and cultural constraints placed on them.

On the other hand, Mahrous Ba-Hussain, an activist journalist, believes that the lack of acceptance of



the presence of women in leadership and high positions is due to society's lack of acceptance of the term "gender". Furthermore, women are portrayed in simple departments such as media and culture.

According to Fahmy, the lack of training opportunities that would have qualified women to make changes considering the current crisis, as well as the lack of awareness of the active role that women have played throughout history in various leadership positions, are the causes for the reduction of women's roles and the failure to empower them. He emphasized that Yemeni women nowadays are capable of assuming significant leadership roles.

In the same context, Dr. Sarah Ba-Mahdi, a women's rights activist, stated, "Yemeni women suffer from many challenges that affected their access to leadership positions, most notably the difficult economic situation,

because women devoted all of their efforts to obtaining a living and working at the lowest wages to meet their necessary needs." In her exclusive statement to Sawt Al-Amal, Ba-Mahdi held the political parties and components the responsibility for the consequences of excluding women from the scene, despite the emergence of women with significant political experience. She noted that the political components did not present women in senior positions or peace negotiations during the past years, and that the representation of women is mostly a formality that has no connection with sovereign decisions.

The Middle East Center stated in a report, dated on February 4, 2021, that Yemeni women peacemakers face threats and acts of violence that have reached the level of fear for their lives in war zones because of their dominance in the humanitarian scene. The report, quoting organizations

operating inside Yemen, indicated that women peacemakers and human rights defenders are witnessing cases of unprecedented violence, calling on those organizations to transfer and settle these women in safe countries away from violence in Yemen.

Solutions and Strategies for Equal Opportunities between the Genders:

Menasati 30 mentioned statistics in the year 2022, showing that women obtained 18 ministerial portfolios, at a rate of 4.1%, compared to 95.9% ministerial portfolios for men, since the establishment of the first Yemeni government in 1990 to 2020. This statistic proves that women's access to leadership positions in the Yemeni government is very weak compared to men.

Mahrous Hussain, the journalist activist, stressed on the importance of imposing the presence of women in the Yemeni arena, in addition to proving their worth in assuming leadership positions, through advocacy campaigns for the empowerment of women. He also touched on proving and communicating gender law to decision makers so that gender equality in terms of rights and duties is achieved.

Dr. Ba-Mahdi stressed on the importance of achieving justice between men and women in all their legitimate rights including, their practice of politics, achieving economic and social security, providing educational opportunities, and raising awareness of the importance of UN resolutions related to women, the most prominent of which is Project 1325. This project aimed at raising awareness of women's rights, including empowerment, involvement, and protection of women in the world, which was adopted by the United Nations Security Council on October 31, 2000. She also stressed on the importance of focusing on developing the training and qualification strategy for women in all fields and providing the necessary facilities to participate in training programs and

conferences for women inside and outside Yemen.

Models of Women Holding Leadership Positions

In 2014, a republican decision was issued to choose the journalist, Nadia Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, as the Minister of Information in the Yemeni government. At the age of 26, she took over the editor-in-chief of the Yemen Times newspaper. In 2006, she won the "Gebran Tuani" award for the best editor in the Middle East, awarded for the first time by the World Press Association. In 2007, she was also one of the 43 Arab female personalities among 100 prominent personalities in various fields.

The same Republican Decree of 2014 also appointed Arwa Abdo Othman as the Minister of Culture, Qaboul Muhammad Abdulmalik Al-Mutawakkil as the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, and Dr. Samira Khamis Obaid as Minister of Government in addition to being a member of the Council of Ministers.

On August 8, 2022, Presidential Decree No. 21 of 2022 was issued, appointing Judge Sabah Alwan as a member of the Supreme Judicial Council, as the first Yemeni woman in the Supreme Judicial Council, according to the Yemeni agency, Saba. This decision is also an empowerment of Yemeni women in the highest positions in the hierarchy of the judicial authority, because this decision has received wide support, especially in women's blocs that defend women's rights.

Due to the current crisis, Yemeni women's status in obtaining the leadership role remains difficult, and they are only allowed to hold simple or formal positions. However, there are glimmers of hope in the Yemeni arena, promising for a leadership future for women with the presence of feminist role models who are holding the future of Yemen, which Yemenis have long hoped for.



Bridging the Legal Gap and Gender Diversity to Ensure the Continuity of Women's Work

Yemeni women have lived through years of marginalization and injustice in the field of work. However, recently, there has been a great deal of women activity, and quite a few women have joined the labor market. Despite the challenges and difficulties faced by Yemeni women, they have been able to play a positive role in public and private sectors and appear in an honorable and great manner.

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez
and Alia Muhammed

What is the status of working women today? What are the most important requirements and needs to ensure the continuity of women's work?

Sawt Al-Amal conducted this investigation to learn the requirements for encouraging working women from the point of view of researchers, working women and community views.

Bridging the Gender Gap

Societal cultural values and the inferior view of women's work have further increased gender gap, restricting the role of women to household and family work, while allowing men to work in various sectors.

Amin Al-Aliani, Associate Professor of Modern Literature and Criticism, Faculty of Education, Saber, University of Lahj, said, "Yemeni women have suffered for a long time from marginalization and injustice, as a result of various policies that were dominated by vague decisions, or tended to sanctify masculinity." He added, "during that period, by virtue of their biological function in reproduction, the role of Yemeni women was confined to domestic and child-rearing roles." He explained to Sawt Al-Amal that after Yemeni girls and women managed to enroll in schools, universities and institutes, their situation has changed from what it was decades ago. Although women are still suffering in many Yemeni governorates and on many levels, they have imposed their presence as an integral part of the structure of society and are active with scientific contributions and cultural products that have been published all over the world and in all languages.

Samah Al-Khawlani, Director of Commercial Zones and Economic Clusters, confirmed that the women's file received great attention from the Yemeni government and relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Civil Service and Labor. From this standpoint, the steps of Yemeni women towards empowerment have accelerated due to the issuance of many decisions, legislations, and regulations that enhance women's status in society. Thus, women have become an active partner in national development in all fields, economic, social, scientific,



and refrain giving them the opportunity to prove their capabilities at work, which marginalizes women and makes them vulnerable to harassment by their co-workers." Another employee, preferred not to disclose her name, said that salaries of men are higher than those of women, although tasks and working hours are the same, and women's performance at work may be better than men's. This problem is prevalent in many institutions, whether public or private. She added, "many private service organizations prefer to hire women, because, unlike men, they willingly accept lower wages. Women are exploited by employers, because they know that their acceptance is out of need and weakness."

Samah Yousif, a gender consultant, emphasized that we live in a time when all administrative concepts and tools have changed, and this has become a motive for women to provide national services no less than those provided by their male partners. She explained that working women in Yemen still face many challenges that impede their development path, the most important of which are lack of government aid for women, women's inability to obtain sufficient information that helps them start their own businesses, lack of material resources for women, women's inability to access job opportunities, lack of acceptance of the culture of diversity, men's nonacceptance of women in the work-force or that women are their equal partners, not less qualified and competent than them.

Equal Pay and Promotions

Sabah Ali, an employee in a private sector, said, "women in some private institutions face racism from their managers who assign them simple tasks

and refrain giving them the opportunity to prove their capabilities at work, which marginalizes women and makes them vulnerable to harassment by their co-workers."

Another employee, preferred not to disclose her name, said that salaries of men are higher than those of women, although tasks and working hours are the same, and women's performance at work may be better than men's. This problem is prevalent in many institutions, whether public or private. She added, "many private service organizations prefer to hire women, because, unlike men, they willingly accept lower wages. Women are exploited by employers, because they know that their acceptance is out of need and weakness."

Mona Ahmed, who works in the private sector, confirmed that many service institutions in Yemen look for the lowest paid labor force to reduce their cost. Therefore, women are paid less than men.

The International Labor Organization said that the work done by women and men should be valued fairly, and ending pay discrimination is essential to achieving gender equality.

Journalist Fatima Bawazir stressed the importance of equal pay and promotions between men and women. She explained that inequality in wages and promotions is one of the most important problems that impede working women. Bawazir indicated that most private and public departments and sectors are not interested in promoting women to administrative positions despite their entitlement. Promotions and rewards go to men even if they are incompetent. This reduced the chances of women joining the labor market. She added, "I met a colleague who works in a government

department. She told me that her manager is not well qualified and has only a diploma, and she has a bachelor's degree. Despite that, he is the manager, and she is his deputy."

Career Development Programs

Samah Al-Khawlani believes that every work environment automatically creates mechanisms to protect women, the first and most important of which are the ethics and behavior of individuals and people, and the creation of a work environment in which differences between workers are appreciated, with the aim of reducing disparities in working conditions and opportunities. She added, "to encourage women to join job opportunities, a positive image of women's employment in the workplace must be promoted, working women should be supported and motivated, and a supportive and inclusive environment should be created, in addition to raising awareness of policies related to women in the labor market."

She emphasized that working women need to identify potential career advancement tools for women, analyze the feasibility and effectiveness of tools, and develop regulatory legislation that supports women's work in the labor market.

Regarding the availability of opportunities for women to assume middle and senior leadership positions, Al-Khawlani explained that working women need training in various public and private sectors as well as a conducive environment to participate in the labor market.

Enacting Laws and Creating a Safe Environment

In her study, entitled "Women's

Rights in Yemeni Labor Legislation from a Gender Perspective," Lazmeen Abdulwali mentioned that Yemeni legislation and laws have greatly contributed significantly to bringing about societal change regarding women's work. Yet, this created a gap between the legal text and its practical application.

In this regard, Hana Ahmed, an employee in one of the sectors, believes that to protect women from exploitation, laws related to women's work should be applied, and directors of government and private departments should be obligated to apply everything stipulated in the Labor Law, with regard to vacations, working hours, hard physical work, and working conditions. She added, "employers must allocate special places for women to rest and pray, especially in workplaces where women stay for long hours, and provide snacks for them as well as a safe environment for their children by opening nurseries and kindergartens in each institution, so that working women feel comfortable."

In the same context, Sabah Ali stressed the importance of building up trust between working women and other employees in institutions, conducting seminars to raise women awareness of how to satisfy their needs, improve the quality of their life and enhance their participation in activities conducted by their institution, providing the necessary material and human resources for the provision of services, giving them vacations, organizing trips, not forcing employed women to work on official holidays, and imposing financial fines on institutions that violate this.

The safe and appropriate working environment remains the most powerful and influencing factor that encourages women's work and ensures its continuity.

Challenges and Obstacles of Women Participation in Judiciary

Samah Abdullah was forced to accompany her brother to the Security Department in her city. Their father got his pelvis broken due to a motorcycle accident, and the person responsible for the accident refused to pay the costs of his treatment. She said, "because of my brother's young age, he was exploited and procrastinated by those responsible for the accident. My father has been bedridden since the accident. He remained nearly 20 days without treatment. The doctor had advised us to perform the operation early, but we could not afford the costs. Therefore, I had no choice but to go to the judge to take our rights."

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez

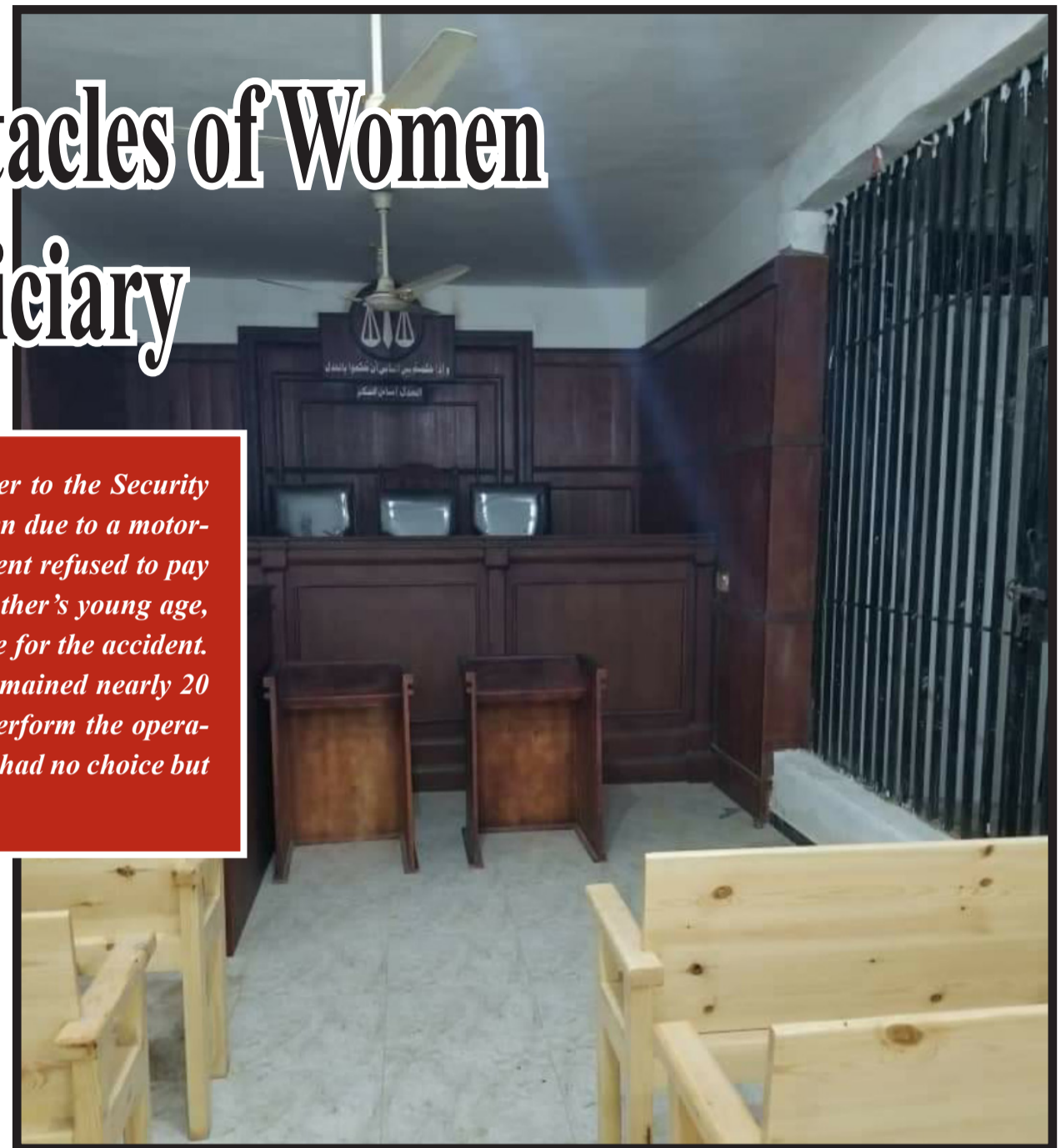
She added, "as soon as I entered the Security Department, some of the employees there made me feel anxious. It was like I was the first woman to enter these places. The restrictions imposed on women are now tightening the screws on them, even in the issue of obtaining their rights. What is wrong with women going to courts and police stations to get their rights?!" She continued, "It was a year ago. I still remember how the people accompanying the motorcyclist looked at me. The person who caused the accident told me in a low voice, "if you were from a respectful family, you would not come to such places. His words shocked me, and made me think of how do Yemeni women working in the judiciary and the legal professions face society? How do they overcome the challenges facing them?"

The Status of Working Women in the Judiciary

Women working in the field of

judiciary and legal professions face many obstacles and challenges that impede their effective participation in such fields. The Yemeni society is still ruled by men. Women are not allowed to work in male-dominated sectors, and their participation is only restricted to certain fields.

Judge Sabah Ahmed Salih Al-Alwani, a member of the Supreme Judicial Council, believes that society looks down on women judges or lawyers. Women are implicitly and overtly rejected by their colleagues and society alike, because they do not have confidence in women's ability. Despite the existence of constitutional and legal texts that authorize women to work in legal professions, long-held perceptions of women working stands in the way of their participation in the judiciary. Al-Alwani confirmed to Sawt Al-Amal that there are several restrictions imposed by society on women working in the judiciary, most notably non-commitment to achieving gender equality in national legislation and policy frameworks, weakness in the lev-



el of transparency and fairness in judicial appointments, stereotypes opposing women's involvement in the judiciary, and male narrow perceptions of women's role in society.

Lawyer Doa'a Al-Sarori said, "society imposes restrictions on women's work under the pretext of mixing with men, which makes male family members refuse women's work." She added, "society considers that women are not fit to assume judicial positions, because they are weak in judgment. The emotional side of women dominates over the logical, which does not allow them to be professional in making appropriate judgments." Judge Sabah Al-Alwani believes

that the challenges facing women working in the judiciary are numerous. The most important of which are society's narrow view of women's role, lack of confidence in women's ability to assume judicial affairs or any leadership position, lack of interest in qualifying women and increasing their participation in society, and gender differences in upbringing. All these are obstacles that prevent women from assuming any leadership or decision-making positions in which women could prove their ability to achieve and innovate.

In addition, Lubna Al-Qudsi, a lawyer and vice president of the Hemaya Center for Human Rights, said that one of the challenges facing women's work in the judiciary is the distribution of female judges in remote areas and outside the cities, and the restriction of female judges to personal and civil cases. She stressed the importance of expanding the work of women in the judiciary to include criminal cases and others, as women judges are no less competent than men in considering these cases. She also stressed the need to encourage female students from all governorates to join the Higher Judicial Institute. Moreover, it is necessary to put pressure on the concerned authorities in order for women judges to reach decision-making positions in the judicial authority and participate in drawing up public policies and drafting plans

and programs that include legal services for women in all stages of litigation.

Obstacles and Mistrust

"They are not convinced of appointing women in the field of judiciary, and they do not have the courage to give them this right," a women judge- who preferred not to be named- confirmed to Sawt Al-Amal. She indicated that there are restrictions imposed on women by the agency responsible for their appointment decision. "Politics plays a role in this aspect. Those in charge of judicial appointment have always preferred men over women. They have false beliefs that women are not potentially capable of assuming such positions," she added.

"I myself suffer discrimination," Amani Abdulaziz Makki said about her experience in the Court of Appeal in Al-Mahra Governorate. She continued, "I applied to the Higher Judicial Institute this year although the chief judge stood against me. Given his intellectual orientation, he does not believe at all in women's ability to work or give. Despite that, I was able to fulfill my dream." Makki also indicated that society still does not believe in the necessity of women's participation in the judiciary, relying on jurisprudential opinions or legal differences about the permissibility of a woman to be appointed as a judge. Regard-





ing women working as lawyers, there is confidence in her ability to do this work.

Noureddine Al-Mansouri, a lawyer and human rights activist, confirmed that before the year 1990, Yemeni women's participation in the judiciary was significant in southern Yemen, and low in northern Yemen which is a tribal society. However, after that, a

change occurred in the role played by women in this aspect. Women have been given the opportunity to participate in the judiciary. He added, "after 2011, women have been able to share many positions with men and began to participate significantly in the judiciary." He explained that the arrival of Judge Sabah Al-Alwani to the Supreme Judicial Council, and her classifi-

cation as the first woman to participate in the Council, represents an unprecedented breakthrough.

Similarly, Ali Abdo Hizam Al-Razhi, a lawyer and legal advisor, said that after 1994, women's participation in the judiciary began to shrink. However, women's movement continued to call for women's empowerment and equal rights with men within the profes-

sional arena, which brought the situation back to its former state before 1994.

"Despite their limited number, women have already been able to obtain an opportunity to enter the Higher Judicial Institute, the Police, and the Army. Gradually, their presence in these areas has increased," he added.

Opportunities to Encourage Women

According to Lubna Al-Qudsi, a lawyer, having women in the judiciary contributes to achieving justice and the rule of law, in addition to rapidly adjudicating backlogged cases and respecting human rights. They also contribute to encouraging women to resort to the judiciary to claim their rights or remove injustice that is practiced against them.

A former employee in the field of justice believes that one of the opportunities that encourage women to join the field of justice is the society's acceptance of the idea that judges should be women rather than men, especially since working women have proven their high capabilities in this field. She explained that after graduating from the Faculty of Sharia and Law, any graduate is eligible to enroll in this institute, where studies last for three years. The law on the Higher Judicial Institute stipulates that graduates of the Judicial Institute obtain the degree of judge. Addi-

tionally, the Minister of Justice is required to appoint them, and they are distributed to the judicial authority, whether in the prosecution or the courts, so that women can obtain the position once they graduate from the institute.

Ali Abdo Hizam Al-Razhi, a lawyer and legal advisor, believes that legal legislation must be introduced to help women, and give them a percentage (or quota) in the Higher Judicial Institute for a period of time. This should be done to empower Yemeni women and increase their involvement in the judiciary, in addition to providing women special privileges and grants in order to encourage them and help them overcoming obstacles they may face.

"There are numerous opportunities for women to increase their participation in the judiciary, and it can be achieved by supporting them in law faculties, training them, and involving them in the judiciary," he continued.

Despite the discrimination and racism faced by Yemeni women working in the judiciary, many female models have emerged in this field, achieving tangible success in resolving many cases. Moreover, they were present in many facilities affiliated with the judiciary in an impressive manner, which indicates their competence and ability to assume leadership positions in the judiciary.

Despite Numerous Obstacles, Um Omar Shapes her Future

By: Ahmed Omar

In light of the difficult economic condition the country is going through, a nurse called Najat or Um Omar, as she prefers to be called by people around her recounts her inspiring story with these words "Where there's life, there's hope."

Um Omar is 45 years old, and she lives in the city of Mukalla in Hadramout Governorate, in the south of the country. She quit her education in 1994 after finishing the seventh grade of primary school and after the death of her mother immediately. Accordingly, she devoted her life to taking care of her father and brothers.

"After I got married, I never thought about studying anymore, because I had a household, a husband, and kids to take care of and due to the challenging conditions in my family. Soon after that, my husband got a chronic disease, which forced him to stay at home. As a result, I became the only breadwinner for my family of 9 children. In 2012, I heard about a hospital in Mukalla requesting female volunteers in the field of nursing, so I felt optimistic and hopeful. Therefore, I did not hesitate to volunteer, even though my family needed me to work more hours to earn more money. Therefore, I used to go to the hospital in the morning. Then, in the afternoon, I go to an institution to work as a service worker. After that, I go home in the evening," Um Omar said.



Um Omar stopped working for a short period due to the societal views in her area towards working women. She nevertheless returned in 2017 with determination and defiance. "Hopes gradually began to return to me, and I returned to fulfill my dream of completing my educational path after being inspired by one of my friends who, after being out of school for nearly 15 years, also com-

pleted her education at the Literacy and Adult Education Center. She used to tell me, "A person is nothing without a degree," and she gave me encouragement to finish my education," Um Omar added. Additionally, she got a job opportunity as a service worker for a private institution. After working for several months, she asked the institution's director for support so that she may finish

her education and pursue her dream.

Back to the Dream

The director of the institution supported and encouraged Um Omar to continue her education, so she joined the Literacy and Adult Education Center in 2017. This is after a 23-year hiatus from school. She said "I began to realize my dream, which I have always considered

unattainable, in light of the circumstances that my family and I live in. I tried to manage the time between my studying, working, and home. In addition, I coordinated with the management of the institution where I work to send my daughter to work instead of me. Accordingly, I completed my basic education. In 2020, I started the first secondary level, and the director supported me by paying all the tuition fees as well as my salary, though I failed to work sometimes. Fortunately, in 2022, a two-year nursing department was opened in an institute affiliated to a private university. As soon as I heard the news, I decided to register in that department. I was encouraged by my husband, my children, and the director at my work. Fortunately, the director allowed my daughter, who completed her university education in 2021, to work instead of me. Therefore, she took turns rotating with her brother in their free time to do my work in the institution."

Only a few months are left for Um Omar to complete her high school studies and fulfill her dream of becoming a nurse. She will then receive her nursing institute diploma. She has now completed half of the stage in the nursing institute. Then, she will write the most inspiring stories of success over obstacles, fulfilling the dream that has always stood before her and seemed unattainable. As a result, her dream is now within reach owing to her persistence and capacity to overcome all her difficult circumstances.

Working Women Endure Misery of Living due to Conflict

The country's conflict has left many economic and social repercussions. Women have been the first groups in society to face this, and have played a major role in improving the living situation of the family. The war caused the displacement of many people and the loss of breadwinners. This prompted Yemeni women to enter the labor market working side by side with men and helping them overcome the economic crisis.

By: Afrah Ahmed

The Repercussions of Displacement

The conflict has pushed one in eight Yemenis into displacement. In 2020 alone, 172,000 people were displaced in Yemen, according to a report issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

At the beginning of 2022, the United Nations announced that the number of displaced people in Yemen had increased to 42,000,000 people.

Yemeni cities are suffering from the repercussions of the conflict in the country, and Hodeidah is no exception. Since the conflict intensified in 2018, many citizens have been displaced to save their lives. Resultantly, they have lost their jobs, which has pushed women to search for work to support their families.

According to the same report, "the number of displaced people from Hodeidah has reached about 550,000 people, i.e., approximately 80,000 families. Some of them live in rented apartments, others live in hotels or stay with some of their relatives, while the poor were forced to live in displacement camps.

Saleh Muhsin, 45 years old, worked in a factory in Hodeidah. As the conflict intensified and some areas and food factories were damaged by bombing, he along with a number of people were greatly affected, losing their source of income. He said to Sawt Al-Amal, "my psychological condition initially deteriorated as our living conditions got worse. My wife could not tolerate the condition at home and remain still. She searched for a job with her high school diploma. She found a job in a private school as a primary school teacher."

Samiha Abdulaziz, 39, a worker at a private school in Hodeidah, said, "when my husband lost his job, and our living conditions became hard, I had to work to help my husband provide for the family's needs. She added, "working in private schools in Hodeidah is not better than public ones. Salaries paid to us are too low, but they are better than nothing. We need to meet our essential needs at home."

Teaching was not the only source of income for Somia and her family, as she



is skilled at sewing and embroidery. In the morning she works as a teacher, and in the evening, she takes the sewing machine and begins with embroidery and sewing. She said, "destitution and want forced us to endure a lot of pain and soreness."

Forced Displacement and an Unknown Future

Ahmed Abdulrahman, a resident of the city of Hodeidah, used to work as an accountant in the private sector. He retired in 2012. In 2018 Ahmed was displaced with his family from the city of Hodeidah to the governorate of Sana'a in 2018. He said, "my wife, my two daughters, and I left our house taking nothing with us, because of artillery shrapnel and shell fragments. We came to the city of Sana'a weighed down by our worries and concerns of starting a new life." He added, "I experienced a lot of bitterness and pain because of the current circumstances. I rented a house, and after seven months the monthly rent was raised, so my family and I had to move to another house at a price commensurate with our limited income." He continued, "I have two daughters. The eldest, 26, studied English language in the College of Education. She did not find a job opportunity in Hodeidah Governorate due to the lack of job opportunities there. When we arrived in Sana'a, my daughter searched for work

to improve our living situation and pay the house rent."

In a related context, Fatima, Ahmed's daughter, confirmed that the working woman has an important role in improving the family's living condition considering the poor economic conditions. In addition, the working woman is able to face life's challenges and hardships.

Women's Ability to Cope with Difficult Living Conditions

Tawakul Ali, 23, took on many family responsibilities after losing her father, the only breadwinner for the family. She told Sawt Al-Amal, "after losing my father and our only source of income, I decided to look for an opportunity to work." She added, "I faced many challenges, the most prominent of which was the refusal to accept my going out to work at this age. However, I fought for me and my family. I am currently working in a health center as a secretary in an area near our house."

Tahani Al-Jabali, 38, also represented a model for the struggling woman. She overcame the difficulties and obstacles she faced after her divorce and became financially independent. Tahani said, "after my divorce, I had to work to meet and provide for my child's needs. I started implementing my own project, which is making bracelets with beads and threads. I presented my work through groups that I created on WhatsApp, and

I succeeded in that. She adds, "due to the deterioration of the economic conditions in the country, not only did I sell bracelets, but I also invested my talent in cooking. I make pastries and sweets as a source of income and sell them to neighboring groceries."

A human rights and legal activist, who declined to be named, believes that women are partners with men in all aspects of life. We find many women supporting men in their hardships and crises, especially considering the current circumstances. He added, "the ongoing conflict in our country and the political situation have pushed women to work. This in itself is considered a challenge to customs and a departure from the norm, especially since our country is still conservative in these matters and considers women's going out to work as a departure from customs and traditions. For this, she is subject to verbal harassment and bullying. She emphasized that many women and girls who were forced by the current circumstances to go out to work to support their families had been subjected to violations and harassment. This prompted many of them to leave work or move to other areas of work, while some of them continued to work, suffering bitterness and psychological abuse day after day. She stated, "there are many societal and legal challenges that stand behind these women's silence on the violations they are subjected to."

Women in our country resort to silence fearing that people's endless gossips, words, and criticisms will cause them great harm. They are caught between customs and traditions and society's view of them."

She indicated that as a human rights activist, she had witnessed the suffering of many working women, and closely observed their conditions. She said, "I have witnessed many experiences of these women and many violations they are subjected to. Some of them refuse to complain about their suffering to their families or to the competent authorities. They justify this, "what will people say about me? Who will protect me if I speak?" All of this, as mentioned earlier, is due to societal challenges, the absence of legal oversight, and the dominance of the authority of reality over the authority of law. She concluded, "the violations committed against Yemeni working women contradict all local and international laws, legislations, and human rights laws, as well as our Islamic law and its teachings, which glorify the status of women, guarantee their rights and freedoms, and make them partners with men in all rights and duties. The misfortunes that fall on her shoulders are nothing but the product of outdated customs and clumsy traditions, and the result of legal absence that has pushed women aside and made them second and possibly third-class citizens."

Yemeni Women: Running Small Businesses in the Shadow of Conflict

By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez

As many families have been pushed into poverty as a result of the conflict that has been going on in the country for more than seven years, many small businesses run by Yemeni women have emerged. These efforts were made to overcome the difficult conditions faced by their families. These businesses vary between popular food and various meals preparation, craft industries, such as making incense, perfume, palm frond products, wool products, and other fields, such as hairdressing, make-up, hand tattoo, making jasmine flowers, in addition to running other trade businesses.

Small Businesses: Free Space for Women's Work

"Tahami Meal for the Most Delicious Food" is the name chosen by Um Mohammed for her own project. After they were afflicted by the scourge of conflict with other families who searched for alternative sources, this project has become a source of income for her family. After Um Mohammed has become famous throughout the city for her skills in preparing popular home-cooked dishes and delicious meals and for her delivery services, her project has become very popular in Hodeidah and other governorates.

Um Mohammed started her project in early 2020 and she and her daughters shared the idea. "We went through difficult circumstances that made us think of establishing a project of our own, and we found our passion in preparing popular and traditional foods," Um Mohammed told Sawt Al-Amal. "We decided to open the project with our simple capabilities, according to the available materials we have," she added. Her project has grown with the passage of time, and the customers' demand to buy her Tihami, Yemeni, and Arabic dishes and other various meals. Among the most popular meals she has offered are potatoes of all kinds, and makhlouta (one of the famous popular meals in Hodeidah). Sina Ahmed, a young woman in her twenties in the same governorate, said, "I did not know Um Mohammed before, but I heard about her project and her meals from women's meetings and gatherings which I used to attend. Many describe her home project as successful and that she was able to win the hearts of her customers. They also praise her elegant style and her way of dealing with them."

Um Mohammed has faced many



challenges, the most prominent of which was the high prices. She was also subjected to societal criticism and underestimation of her ability to implement her project. However, she found many who had a different view of women's work and were the first to support her. At the conclusion of her speech, Um Mohammed called on women to work and implement their own projects and not to surrender to reality and difficult circumstances. She stressed that strength does not lie in being supported by others, but in self-confidence and determination.

Um Ali is also a model for the working Yemeni woman. Um Ali said, "we moved to our home in a rural area of Taiz governorate, and there we started a new life, looking for job opportunities." She added, "I was trained to sew women's clothing and developed my skills that I acquired from my mother. I was able to work from home with my husband's help. I made the designs, and he sold them in the city's stores. I started sending some of my work to remote areas according to demand. With this project I was able to save my family from poverty and destitution."

Um Rawan, the owner of a project for making pickles, indicat-

ed that in every neighborhood of the city, and indeed in all areas of the country, there are many struggling women who have achieved great successes to improve their families' standard of living. She was able to support her children in opening small businesses, and she suggested to Saeed, 24, to open a fried potato business in his neighborhood. As for Mahyoub, he works in his stall selling vegetables in a market.

Challenges and Difficulties

According to a report by Sana'a Center for Studies entitled "The Repercussions of War on Women in the Yemeni Workforce," many women who own small businesses have been subjected to many difficulties because of the conflict, in addition to the fact that these companies have been more negatively impacted than those owned by men. The report, which was published on July 23, 2019, states that many women's projects were closed due to the ongoing conflict in the country. Despite this, the report proved that the collapsing economic situation, which affected many families, forced women into the labor market to face the challenges.

The report indicated that most of the works of women in the labor market represented by small home projects, such as selling traditional food, and working remotely through social media, like selling accessories and other women's needs.

Nabil Al-Sharabi, an economic researcher and a journalist, con-

firmed that many sectors were negatively impacted by the crisis, particularly the private ones, and the Yemeni businesswomen's sector had the largest share of the damage. He explained that before the conflict, many Yemeni role models of businesswomen emerged, and the Yemeni Businesswomen Council was established. The General Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the governorates, contributed to contain businesswomen and providing them with the necessary support. Al-Sharabi emphasized in his speech that the official authorities, banks, and agencies financing projects were also supportive of Yemeni businesswomen, providing privileges commensurate with the nature of women, and this contributed to a qualitative leap in the field of projects for businesswomen. The ongoing conflict, however, caused all of that to disappear, including businesswomen.

Similarly, Al-Sharabi explained the reasons that led to the closure of some feminist projects and prevented them from continuing. "Some small projects have failed as a result of the lack of organization in feasibility studies, in addition to the lack of sufficient experience in the methods of managing private projects and how to deal with the market," he said. Al-Sharabi believes that the failure of Yemeni women to run their own projects was the result of the absence of women's economic empowerment programs and depriving them of their right to obtain soft loans to run their own projects.

Extent of Awareness of Labor

Market Laws

In relation to our inquiry, how much are people aware of the rules governing the market? Jamal Muhammad Al-Ja'abi, a head of the Hemaya Center for Human Rights, believes that there is a great societal awareness towards the labor law in various sectors, in addition to the laws and regulations related to some work sectors, such as international and local organizations, educational or health and others. This high level of societal awareness is represented by the ability of women to access civil and labor courts just like men, and by their ability to use arbitration committees in the governorates without encountering any social or legal obstacles with the justification of a defect in or derogation of their rights. "Decisive judicial rulings were issued based on the provisions of the law, especially Labor Law No. 5 of 1995 and its amendments, which includes women's rights in the event of maternity leave, working hours, and other details related to custody and the rest of the provisions of the law relating to women," he continued.

Al-Ja'abi stressed that the activation of these laws is because working women in Yemen enjoy constitutional rights and legal texts that are compatible with international standards approved by the International Labor Organization. Besides, there are no legal or societal barriers such as the political empowerment. Thus, the open labor market includes guarantees for women, and women working in the private and commercial sectors enjoy sufficient and appropriate education to express, defend and claim their rights.

Rural Working Women Imposed to Underpaid Heavy Duties and Burdens

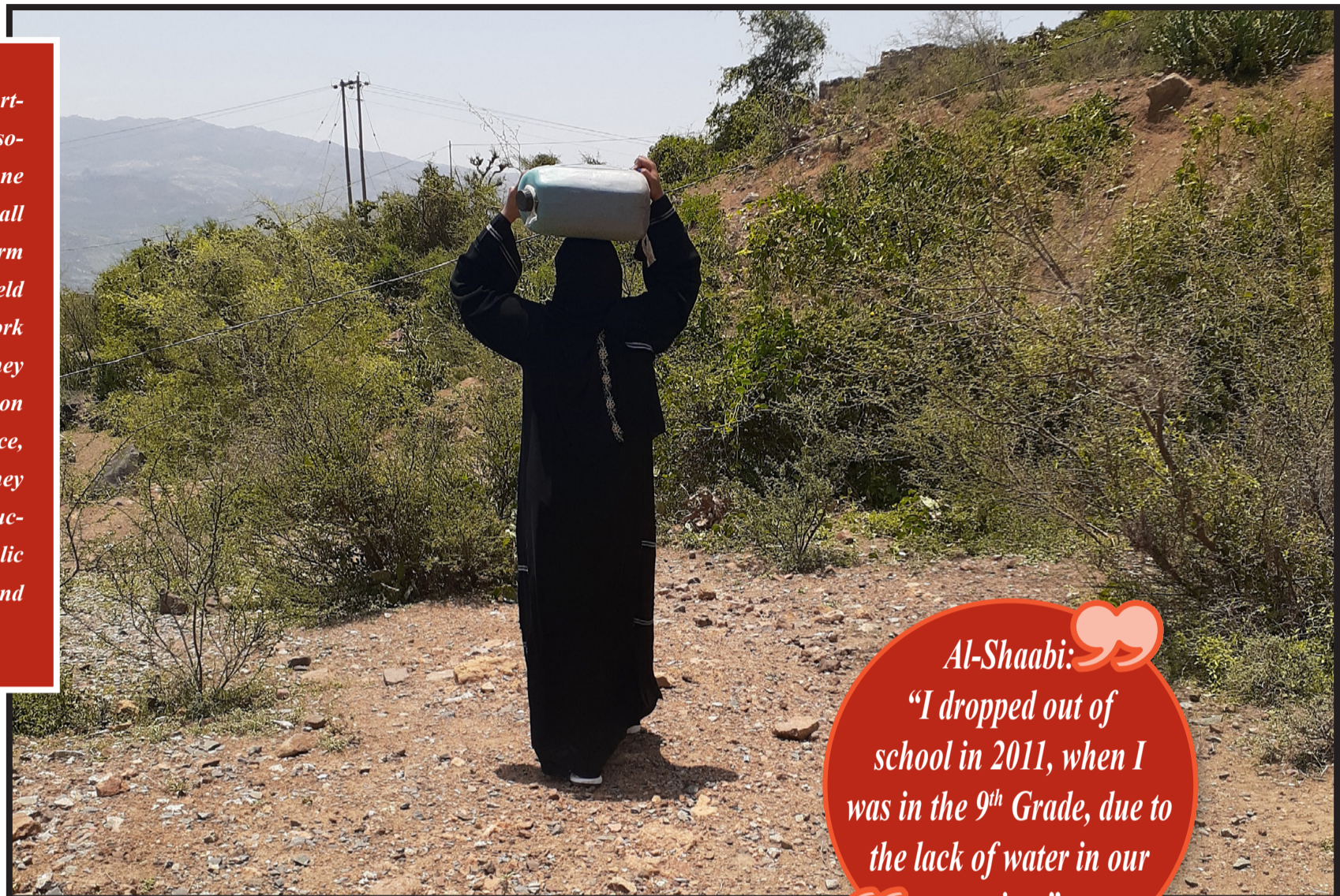
Rural women play an important role in building Yemeni society. They are considered one of the most active groups in all fields. Moreover, they perform multiple tasks, ranging from field and farm work to housework and daily duties. Although they represent the highest proportion of the agricultural labor force, including unofficial work, they still lack equal access to productive resources, assets and public services, such as education and health care.

By: Hebah Mohammed

Many girls and women live in a remote village in Ibb Governorate, Al-Odain district, specifically "Bani Abdullah" area. They know nothing of life except its bitterness and constant fatigue.

Fatima Hassan, one of the women working in the countryside, said, "we live here and work in the agricultural areas constantly. I begin working in the field when dawn breaks. I then return to finish off my morning housework, and I graze the cows and sheep till lunchtime. After that, I go home to make lunch. Then, I search for firewood in the high mountains that are far from the area. After that, I fetch water, and I return home in the late hours of the day, physically exhausted. However, I endure this hardship for the sake of my family and my dependents, especially since my husband has lost his job as a result of his difficult health conditions." She sadly continued, "rural women working in agricultural fields suffer from extreme marginalization by the Rural General Administration and the competent authorities. This is because we provide them with agricultural crops, which are sold in the markets, without any compensation. While our husbands get paid, we work extremely hard day and night for nothing. We only need to alleviate this suffering, at least by building dams and barriers to provide clean drinking water and deliver it to the homes, and guarantee the rights of working rural women," Fatima concluded.

Grave Concerns of Rural



Al-Shaabi:
"I dropped out of school in 2011, when I was in the 9th Grade, due to the lack of water in our region."

Women

Noura Al-Saqqaf, the Director General of the General Administration for Women in Ibb Governorate, believes that working women in rural areas face many challenges both at the family and community levels. Additionally, these challenges are also rooted in society culture, customs, and traditions, because many rural women face rejection and denial of access to education or work outside the agricultural fields.

She added that the ongoing conflict in Yemen has forced many family heads to emigrate in search of work, placing heavy burdens on working rural women. Furthermore, rural women bear full responsibility for raising children, working in agricultural fields, and caring for animals such as cows and sheep, in addition to searching for and providing firewood in remote areas due to their inability to purchase gas cylinders, whose price has increased and are no longer appropriate for their financial situation. Al-Saqqaf stated that working rural women work without pay in numerous rural areas in Ibb governorate. They raise livestock and work in agriculture day and night without having the authority to sell any of the animals or agricultural crops to increase their income. This is because, in the views of men and the rural community, they are merely housewives, who must care for

the farm and the animals as one of their main responsibilities.

On the other hand, Abdulrahman Al-Zabaibi, a legal advisor, referred to the wrong societal culture adopted by some residents of rural areas. They all agree that women should be shepherds in the high mountains, but they strongly refuse that women work in other fields.

Empowering Rural Women

The National Women's Committee supports projects for women who are breadwinners, displaced or who are with special needs, by empowering them socially, politically, and economically to implement projects that contribute to improving the economic level of women who are breadwinners in rural areas. "We put forward proposals for income-generating projects, under the name of economic recovery for rural women. The projects varied between working in home gardens and reserves, and making cheese as well as dairy products," Khawla Al-Sharafi said.

Somaya Abdu Al-Shaabi, one of the successful role models in transforming rural women's circumstances from deprivation to empowerment, described how one of the projects in that area was successful and how it helped to lessen some of her suffering in rural life. She said, "I was prohibited from going to school while I was in the ninth grade in 2011.

The reason for that was the scarcity of water in our area, so I quit school to assist my mother and go back and forth for about five kilometers from the village to fetch water. When I learned that I would be taking part in the training course for a project on social cohesion, I was delighted because I used to spend most of my time carrying water on my head with my friends. The project included several female trainers who broke down barriers created by habits and made a significant contribution to my ability to overcome obstacles and my inner strife," She added. Sumaya returned to school after her father's attitude on women's education and work changed because of seeing the significant role played by the female trainers for the Social Cohesion Project.

Challenges and Solutions

"The government has not made any effort to combat poverty, particularly for rural women. Furthermore, the assistance was restricted to raising awareness of the aspects of self-reliance in agriculture and raising livestock," Al-Sharafi said. For some families, this simply represented self-sufficiency, because they could not produce a lot of crops to sell and generate income. In addition, no facilities or plans were given to working rural

women. She emphasized that there is a lack of the role that should be played by international bodies and organizations towards rural women, since none of them has attempted to bring about true change in the lives of rural women. She added that the only project that benefits rural women is the livelihoods project, which is implemented by the Safe Space of the Yemeni Women's Union. However, it is implemented in cities, and the support for these projects has been reduced to more than 50%, resulting in a major shortcoming in the project.

Regarding the strategies for the development of working rural women, Noura Al-Saqqaf emphasized on the importance of developing policies and programs to enhance the role of rural women economically. She also recommended training and qualifying them in productive fields, such as food processing and livestock breeding. There should be a kind of community and family awareness raising of the importance of the role of rural working women in Society. She indicated that since schools and workplaces are the major obstacle for rural women, which lead to family and community's rejection of their work, it is necessary to create projects in which women work within the framework of their villages and districts.

Civil Society Organizations Promote Women's Work

Despite the restrictions imposed on Yemeni women, which prevent them from achieving their goals in the labor market, local and international organizations and humanitarian partners in Yemen support and encourage women to work. They hold rehabilitation courses and training workshops in the field of work and areas of sustainable development among others.

By: Afrah Ahmed

Seham Abbas Ahmed, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at Abs Development Organization for Woman and Child (ADO), believes that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a key role in the development and rehabilitation of women. CSOs make great efforts to train, empower, and build women's capacities to be ready to enter the labor market. This would result in economic growth in Yemen through raising productivity.

Similarly, Dalia Qasim, Director of the Social Development Hodeidah Girls Foundation, stressed the importance of the role played by local and international CSOs to advance and support Yemeni women to join the labor force. She added, "CSOs target many working and non-working women, and provide them with training and development programs." In her interview with Sawt Al-Amal, Qasim pointed out that the continuous training and rehabilitation programs by CSOs have improved the capabilities of women and accelerated their economic empowerment. She explained that one of the goals of CSOs is to empower women to run their own small businesses and projects to increase their daily income and improve their standard of living, which has been achieved in recent years. Qasim also talked about the most important conditions that enable women to obtain training and financial support for their businesses. She said, "the entrepreneur must have a great deal of confidence, determination, and will, to achieve the goals of her project and benefit from it."

Mechanisms for Women's Empowerment in the Labor Market

On the mechanisms and procedures for women's empowerment in the labor market, Seham Abbas stated that some CSOs develop mechanisms that depend on gender indicators and target needy women who have no breadwinners to depend on. She added, "the Abs Development Organization provides services and aid for women and children and provides awareness-raising programs on the importance of women's work and their crucial role in the economic and social advancement of Yemen."

Dalia Qasim believes that following up and evaluating women trainees during training and implementation is one of the most important steps to ensure the continuity of empowerment projects and programs. She added, "when small businesses and projects are funded, there should be mechanisms for evaluating and following up plans provided and knowing the extent of their ability to manage and control financial matters during the actual management of the project."

Several Services are offered to women working in organizations, including program and project management, follow-up, evaluation, advocaacy, etc.

Difficulties and Challenges Facing CSOs

"CSOs face difficulties and challenges in supporting women's work, the most important of which are customs and traditions and the lack of a highly qualified and experienced female staff," Seham Abbas confirmed.

Dalia Qasim explained that there are no purchasing powers in Hodeidah Governorate due to the difficult living conditions. Women entrepreneurs are having a hard time finding customers and the difficulty in finding a good marketing service, which requires large sums of money.

She continued, "the rise in prices is one impeding factor that hinders women's projects, given the purchase of raw materials at ex-

orbitant prices and then selling them at low prices due to the decrease in purchasing power."

Services Provided by CSOs to Women

Seham Abbas explains, "there are services provided to women working in CSOs, such as employment opportunities in project management, follow-up, evaluation, advocacy, vocational training in economic empowerment, life and professional skills, program management, protection, principles of humanitarian action, and community accountability. These trainings, which are provided to working women, help them get better job opportunities and become entrepreneurs." The number of beneficiaries, who were trained and qualified by the projects of Abs Development Organization for Women and Child, reached 15,000 from 2014 to 2021.

In the same context, Dalia Qasim believes that the support provided by CSOs for women includes funding and awareness-raising programs of certain issues, such as gender-based violence and blackmail and extortion, to which women are greatly exposed. CSOs provide women with other protection services that target women in general, both working and non-working women, such as psychological, social, and humanitarian support.

CSOs operating in Yemen play a highly important role in supporting Yemeni women to overcome the challenges posed by the conflict that has been going on for more than seven years. Through the generous support of CSOs, women have been able to start their own small businesses, support their families, develop their abilities and skills, and obtain protection, support, food, health, and education.



Yemeni Women Break into the World of Small Businesses

Yemeni society has always had misconceptions about women's work and business activities. Until recently, society has viewed women's work as shameful. In addition, women have always been confined to a specific type of specialization, such as education and medicine. Recently, they have broken this barrier and managed to break into the labor market. They have achieved great success and exceeded expectations.

By: Hebah Mohammed

Maha Al-Mawaz, one of the girls who were able to enter the labor market in Ibb Governorate and started her own business, told Sawt Al-Amal, "my business was a dream I never thought would come true one day, let alone be successful. Society's view has made me hesitate to start implementing it." She added, "Yemeni women face great challenges that stand in the way of owning and managing private investment businesses, the most prominent of which is the societal view of working women as inferior."

Maha lives in Al-Odain District in Ibb. According to her, illiteracy and ignorance are widespread in her area. It is believed that only men are entitled to engage in business activities, and that women cannot handle the problems of working in the market, not realizing that market and competition among others are what control the success or failure of any business.

Al-Mawaz mentioned that she hesitated a lot before she started implementing her own project. However, she finally made her decision and took the first step opening a shop selling women's clothing in the city center of Al-Odain. She conducted a lot of community activities to advance her own business. She has become the largest clothing trader in Al-Odain. It took her a few years to expand her business and open a very large shopping mall with a special section for wedding dresses

and accessories. She continued that the project included a large number of women who were looking for job opportunities as a result of the difficult conditions caused by the conflict. Together they started step by step. As women-led businesses do not receive any support from the society, government, or civil society organizations, women are still struggling to achieve their goals in the business environment. Regardless of the gender of the entrepreneurs, "quality and the lowest cost" are what matters to the market, and Yemeni women provide services to society with the best and finest commodities.

Businesses Owned by Women in a Public Market

Society's view of women's work varies depending on the area in which they are conducted. There are areas that encourage women to perform certain jobs that were previously confined to men, while other regions reject such jobs.

Khawla Al-Eryani, the director of businesswomen's work in Ibb Governorate, pointed out that society's view of women's work has changed. Women are now allowed to work in jobs which were previously reserved for men. Women have broken into different businesses and participated in the sale of real estate, cars, clothes, and other products. The Yemeni market is witnessing many experiences of girls who have overcome restrictions, challenged reality, and proved their worth



as successful business entrepreneurs in the public markets.

Maria Saeed, one of three girls who run an accessories store in the market, told Sawt Al-Amal, "my family and I were forced to flee to Ibb governorate due to the ongoing conflict in Aden. We all were forced to search for work to overcome our hard living conditions resulting from displacement." She added, "we left everything behind to save our lives. For me, I did not give in, I looked for many opportunities. One day, I met girls like me who were suffering from displacement and deteriorating economic conditions. We planned to open a small business of our own. We thought a lot of a business idea, studied it carefully, borrowed money, chose the right place, and implemented it." Maria pointed out the difficulties she has faced in her work in the market, the most important of which are society's inferior view of women's work and verbal harassment, i.e., offensive, or obscene words. She asserted that she and her colleagues overcame these challenges by com-

plete disregard. They focused on the success of their project, which was well received by everyone.

Yemeni Women in the Labor Market

Women are frequently proving that they are capable of building social and national achievement. Whereas, in the past, the participation of Yemeni women in the labor market was limited, many women currently have become leaders of change. They also have become involved in the labor market to improve their living conditions and secure food for themselves and their families in times of conflict.

Mrs. Faiza Al-Badani, the Director of the Human Rights Office in Ibb Governorate, reports that when some husbands stopped working, because of the conflict, Yemeni women started doing some businesses and professions, including trade, clothing marketing and the sweets industry. During the years of conflict in Yemen, Yemeni women have been able to resist the harsh conflict conditions and stood by their husbands. So, they worked in the handicraft trade, making the finest types of Yemeni incense and working in Yemeni restrooms and restaurants. Al-Badani stated that Yemeni women stormed the labor markets through new projects that achieved great success and contributed to securing food for many Yemeni families. They also proved their presence by establishing investment projects that varied between women's clothing and cosmetics and opening shops for bread and pastries. All these challenges made women tougher, stronger, and more responsible as they continue to face life in a firm and steadfast resilience.

Dr. Amin Al-Khayyat, a social researcher, believes that the Yemeni society still completely rejects women's participation in the money market and free business due to male dominance over these businesses. However, Yemeni women were able to enter the fields of commerce and the commercial business market. Many businesswomen who were active in several

giant commercial projects appeared in an honorable manner, but they still need a council for Yemeni businesswomen to have its own entity, so that it organizes and considers all the investment activities of businesswomen.

Difficult Challenges for Businesswomen

The situation of Yemeni women working in the commercial markets is not simple. They face many difficulties and challenges that made them stronger and more resilient than the pre-conflict situation. The merchant woman bore and still bears the burdens, because of the high prices of commodities and primary products, in exchange for a severe decrease in the purchasing power of the environment to which her products are offered. Khawla Al-Eryani said, "my advice to every ambitious Yemeni woman is to ignore the society's negative view and work." Al-Eryani explained the existence of these difficulties by the lack of institutions that support their projects, or the failure to put in place a mechanism that limits the repeated losses that make Yemeni women unable to continue developing their projects, or rather to stop altogether.

Regarding the most important commercial activities in Ibb governorate, Al-Eryani stated, "businesswomen engage in several activities in different sectors in Ibb governorate, including the education sector and the health sector. There are many businesswomen who do various activities such as trade in various commodities, including food, clothing, accessories and cosmetics, and other activities such as translation offices, travel, food and sweets."

The fact remains that the Yemeni women have the ability to succeed and compete and to support the man. Thus, they contribute to building society and bringing about a qualitative shift in the race of thinking, and another shift at the economic level and the advancement and development of the country.



WDP

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59% of the Respondents Believe that the Role of Women in the Labor Market is Curtailed

By: Yomna Ahmed

In the second half of December 2022, the Information and Survey Unit at Yemen Information Center conducted a survey on the work of Yemeni women. The respondents were 69.6% females and 30.4% males.

59% of the respondents confirm that there is a curtailment of the role of women in the labor market, while 24% believe that women do not suffer from any curtailment in the labor market. Only 17% said that they have no idea about it.

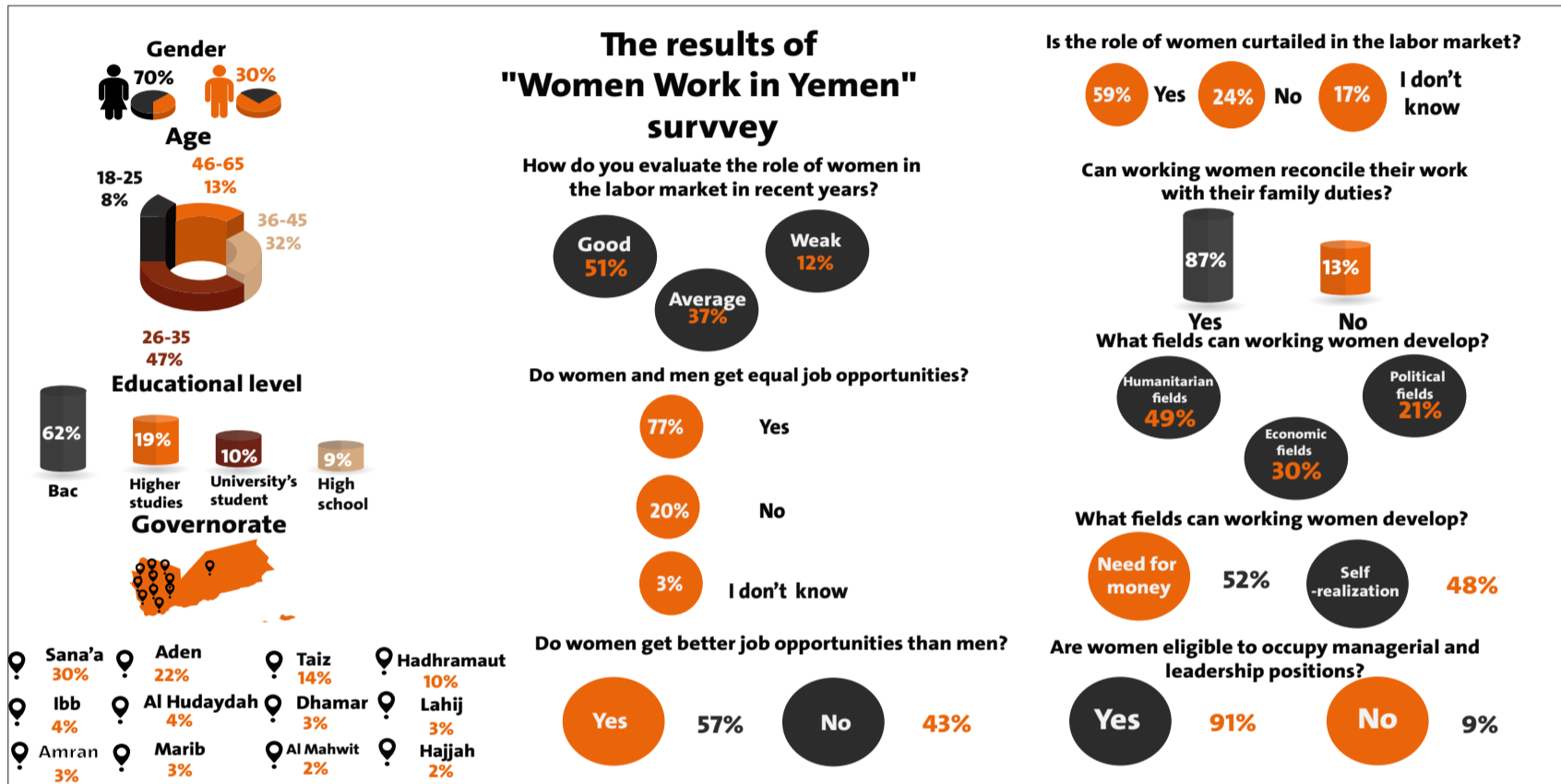
51% of the respondents rated the role of women in the labor market as good, while 37% rated it as medium, and 12% rated it as weak.

Regarding the equal opportunities between men and women in the labor market in Yemen, 77% of the respondents believe that there are no equal opportunities for work in Yemen, 20% think otherwise, and only 3% have no idea about it.

When asked about who gets better job opportunities, 57% of respondents replied that women get better job opportunities, while 43% think the opposite.

With regard to working women's ability to reconcile her work and her family duties, 87% replied that women achieve a balance between their work and family duties, and only 13% think otherwise.

When the respondents were asked about the fields in which working women can participate in their development more, their answers were as follows:



49% in the fields of humanitarian and social work, 30% in the economic fields, and 21% in the political fields.

52% replied that the need for money is one of the most important reasons that push women to the labor market, while 48% re-

plied that what pushes women to work is self-realization and financial independence. Finally, 91% believe that women are

highly suited to occupy managerial and leadership positions and only 9% think otherwise.

Summary of Issue 11 of "Women in Development and Peace" on Women's Work in Yemen

Today, women play a pivotal role in development. There is no doubt that women are essential partners in building society and major contributors to various activities. Women's independence leads to more sustainable economic growth.

By: Alia Muhammed

Consequently, we have witnessed many prominent shifts in recent years between supporters and opponents of women's work, which is one of the most prominent thorny issues in the Yemeni society. In our 46th issue of Sawt Al-Amal newspaper, we tried to review different opinions and multiple theories. It included 20 pages of reports and investigations, in which we reviewed the reality of women's work today and the society's view towards working women. In addition, we shed light on the laws and legislation related to women's work and the mechanism of their enforcement. We also discussed women's work and its importance in achieving development, in addition to women's economic empowerment and its contribution to ensuring continuity in the labor market.



In the issue, we devoted space for rural women and their suffering in unpaid work. We also reviewed stories of working rural women and presented a number of successful female models.

In addition, we discussed the effects of the conflict on women, and how poverty, displacement, difficult economic conditions and living standards have pushed many women into the labor market. It also focused on the role that international organizations, civil

society organizations and the private sector should play in supporting and encouraging working women and qualifying and training them for the labor market.

We referred in the issue the most important challenges and difficulties facing working women. We concluded that working women are not equal to men in wages and do not get any equal opportunities. However, the chances of empowering them in leadership posi-

tions are reduced. Additionally, many working women are exposed to different types of violence, which negatively affect their psychological and health conditions. We also reviewed the work of the media in presenting women's issues and the shortcomings in presenting the image of working women properly.

On the other hand, we shed light on the most important requirements and needs that encourage working women

and ensure their continuation. We focused on the most important requirements for working women to achieve a balance between their professional and family roles by conducting several interviews with experts, specialists, and workers. We also suggested a number of recommendations and solutions. Thus, the newspaper has included 20 specialized pages of reports, investigations and interviews with specialists who enriched the issue.