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THE ROLE OF JORDANIAN WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Women, representing half of the world's population, are important members of a nation, sharing in the participation of men in the fields of social and economic development. They play various important roles in their societies by working in different sectors such as business, education, health, industry, and services, thus contributing to the various national economies. In countries characterized by liberal and secular approaches, different conventions, legislation, and systems have been adopted in the context of gender relations between females and males, and between gender societies. In general, the world is committed to adopting a selection of global gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the active participation of both women and men in different aspects of life. Local research and conferences have confirmed the importance of shared values in different cultures, such as values of partnership and peaceful conflict resolution. Women's empowerment is not only about women's experiences but also covers issues of men's roles and behaviors and achieving gender equality.

Based on these concepts, many international, regional, and local declarations have emphasized that women play a vital role in many areas such as development, conflict prevention, growth, and poverty reduction. Throughout the world, women are considered full active members of their societies, having equal legal rights and responsibilities, enjoying equality in all fields of social, economic, political rights, and freedoms side by side with men. In Jordan, women have developed a rich list of historical institutions and further institutions established by the first Hashemite family as one of the pillars to develop the country, protecting these by participating women in different national sectors. The nature of women's participation has never been viewed as a response to cultural vision, economic needs, or human rights. After finding changes in different viewpoints, women should be considered development partners so they can support the new global dignity in a sustainable manner, localizing the Millennium Development Goals.

Historical Context of Women's Participation in Development

Women's participation in development has been evolving with the status of women in society over the years in Jordan, from traditional household care towards paid jobs outside the home. Numerous historical, social, political, and economic developments have influenced the status of women in Jordan and have framed the attitudes and policies regarding women and their roles in society. The broad social and political repression in Jordan has limited the opportunities of Jordanians as a whole, including Jordanian women. Women have found work in agriculture, even in cooperatives, and some in charity and civil society organizations in the cities. Women have advanced to hold high-ranking positions and now form part of the judiciary, the auditor's board, human rights organizations, teachers, nurses, House of Representatives deputies, ambassadors, and businesswomen. Social uprisings and movements in the 1950s and

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1980s, along with the occupation of the West Bank, led to more people in politics and power influencing change for women. Since the 1990s, laws have converged between men and women. Perspectives have shifted in the 21st century towards recognizing human rights for wives, easy access to educational opportunities, and the opening of jobs. Many have ventured into the labor market in both the public and private sectors in the 21st century. Domestic work, the hospitality industry, and certain fields are open to Jordanians. Provision is made for stay-at-home women, particularly those with a baby, as well as unmarried daughters in the family. The workplace has become more child- and woman-friendly. Women are more likely to appear as directors of organizations or deputies in employers' organizations or in civil society organizations. Social protection has slightly aligned with these changes. A widow is entitled to receive a social security benefit. Women constitute mostly informal workers, making up close to a quarter of the paid workforce.

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks for Women's Empowerment

Jordan's efforts to empower women have extended to the legal statutes and policies developed and legislated since the country gained independence. Policies are increasingly recognizing the role of women in development, specifically women and their roles as custodians of the next generation as the crux of sustainable development. This has resulted in a shift from the perception of women as objects 'in need of protection' towards recognizing them as actors and agents in their own right. Yet, in spite of recent positive efforts by governmental and non-governmental bodies, women in Jordan have primarily been treated as beneficiaries of social services rather than active participants in policy making. The limitations to the Jordanian women's role in development lie in their limited access to resources such as training, production, marketing, and assets; discriminatory policies that deny women the right to own, inherit, or sign for property on an equal footing with men; unequal working conditions; the burden of economic activity in addition to domestic work; discriminatory practices, traditions, and norms; poor health and social services for women; and physical insecurity. Moreover, the advocacy, formulation, and implementation of policies for the empowerment of women with joint strategies and activities are limited to date. Further, policymakers' efforts to alleviate rural poverty and strengthen agricultural development have failed to consider the most disadvantaged rural actors, including women. As a result, efforts by development interventions to empower rural women and men fail to insist on the incorporation of the gender approach and only exert minimal effort in mainstreaming gender issues. Consequently, the mechanisms, strategies, and programs that partly address the selected critical areas of women's livelihoods are relatively new, mostly donor-initiated, and generally isolated, not linked to the broader efforts toward women's empowerment.

Challenges Faced by Jordanian Women in Development

Jordanian women face a wide range of challenges in development. These challenges may be economic, social, or political. They may be defaults toward women in employment, resources, and opportunities or discrimination on the basis of social stereotypes. Among the main components of challenges that encircle Jordanian women are:

- Culture: Cultural norms that circulate such stereotypes and limit women's roles and opportunities confine them to the home, constituting a major limitation upon women. Traditional cultural practices, such as a preference for male employment, further limit women's presence in the labor market and also signify the contribution of women's labor in the informal sector of their communities. Hence, traditional cultural limitations insist on the confinement of women within the home environment, which contradicts traditional

cultural views of women in the present-day work market that has changed.

- Level of education: The majority of literate women have attained education primarily at the level of Primary and Preparatory Certificate compared to men; their graduation rates highlight the low participation of women in basic and baccalaureate education. Female education is often viewed as irrelevant and may also be seen as a liability because educated women may place demands on the few educational and employment opportunities available. Thus, women's higher education can lead to increased levels of unemployment in the medium and long term.

Educational Attainment and Skill Development

An educated society is a free society. Women's education is, therefore, a stepping stone to their empowerment. Gender disparities in educational attainment are still prevalent, although reports show that girls' enrollment, at all levels of the education system, is very close to that of boys. "Meaningful opportunities" refer to elective and advanced courses, extracurricular and co-curricular programs that prepare students for postsecondary education and the workforce, enrichment and acceleration programs, and diploma programs. Such programs can improve the equity of experience and readiness for "all students," namely, girls. In addition, few tertiary students are enrolled in technical specialization fields: 19.6 percent in agriculture, 21.3 percent in engineering, 22.5 percent in health, and 10.1 percent in physical and biological sciences. Limited opportunities are available for girls to improve their technical and vocational skills, and graduates from technical programs usually end up with lower-skilled jobs and fewer opportunities for personal and professional growth.

International evidence shows that educated women are essential economic participants and contributors. An educated woman earns up to three times as much per hour as a woman with no education, and the probability of her children surviving past the age of five is almost three times higher than that of an uneducated woman. It is evident that education is a very important contributor to empowering women so that they are able to make life-enhancing decisions. Quality education is recognized as playing an important role in enabling women to participate fully in social, economic, and political life. The strategy for health and population sector mentions the need for an educated workforce and the need for all girls and boys to have equal opportunities for education. Educational policies, including those related to technical education, are formulated in line with this recognition and endeavor to enhance and increase girls' and women's access to education and training. For the health sector to benefit fully from this policy, it will be important to understand and address the currently recognized barriers to girls' and women's ability to participate fully in the education and training opportunities and to develop the skills they need to secure their preferred occupations.

Health and Well-being of Jordanian Women

Development, particularly for women, is very much linked with the issue of health and well-being. Health issues associated with women involve reproductive health, contraception, abortions, caesareans, and the care provided for newborns. The average statistics for prevalence rates in 2004 show that 55.3% of women seek consultation for contraceptive purposes. The age group between 15 and 30 years stands at a higher ratio to other groups, with 24.7% for an age group ranging between 15 and 19 years and the 30-34 year-old age group. 50% of women gave birth through caesareans in the age group range of 30-34. Moreover, cases of infertility have been indicated by the above child-birth group at a ratio of 11.7% of the total cases of infertility. Their low income does not allow them to obtain the necessary treatment. Almost 53% of middle to low income, and 55.6% of low-income and poor people do not go to consult the doctor due to lack of money.

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Women's Political Participation and Representation

Historically, political power has been the domain of men, and little room has ever been left for women to take over most social and administrative activities. However, women have always played a subtle role in political life, and it was necessary for change to be predominantly in the background of policy. In any circumstance, women have remained primarily kin and peacekeepers. With the establishment of the Palestinian state, Jordan has the unique feature of being the only country in the region that, until now, has not become a "majority" of Palestinian women. This is in the event of a transition in 1988 to Jordanian citizenship, taking into account that there are those who believe that the ruling regime discriminated in the issue of citizenship by not granting it according to the mother when women are married to non-Jordanian men.

In the 191 Parliamentary 10th Pro-set, 15 of which were women, and one of the 75 senators, a woman announced a large number of applicants: 676 women for the 2016 legislative elections, including two from the Central Islamic Commission list. This has reduced the possession of seats by about 2 in the 17. When we criticize, we must persuade women that the past was full of cases demanding a portal. The declaration explains that the electoral law and political plurality are key barriers. According to the report, the system has negatively influenced the provision of a fair share compatible with women's representation in the parliamentary election blocks. In the Arab region, ongoing advocacy efforts in the Levant, Palestine, Yemen, Egypt, and recently Sudan aim to improve the gender-balanced legal framework and advocate for political participation for women.

Women's Role in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

Jordanian women also play a crucial role at the grassroots level in peacebuilding and leading community efforts to overcome conflict. Despite a lack of knowledge of conflict resolution, women apply their natural role as caregivers to be first responders in times of conflict, addressing the psychosocial consequences on families and society. In addition, they serve as grassroots advocates and mobilizers by utilizing unique female networks for peace. Women tend to focus on the long-term effects of reconstruction and development in the aftermath of the conflict, acknowledging the contribution of psychological peace at the family and community level. Throughout the last seven decades, a number of women have taken part in various local and international conferences that address peacebuilding by nationality. Following the adoption of UNSCR 1325, some of these women hold membership in the different committees established by the Jordanian government to work on the implementation of the resolution.

Technological Advancements and Digital Inclusion for Jordanian Women

Women's access to technology and digital literacy has the potential to advance their economic prospects, expand their learning opportunities, and, more generally, empower them to access information, voice their opinions, advocate for their rights and interests, and access governmental, educational, and health services. Digital inclusion, particularly in education and work, leads to economic advancement, empowerment, and decreasing the inequality gap between women and men. Access to technology is therefore important for women's education, as it makes the acquisition of knowledge and skills in various fields easier, and thus increases their job opportunities. Similarly, advances in technology have made access to education easier for women, benefiting them in particular in rural areas.

In connection with digital inclusion, many international initiatives have emerged that aim to develop digital literacy and provide women with comprehensive knowledge about an increasingly electronic world. Digital literacy teaches women how to use computers,

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software, and applications, how to code to create advanced programs, and how to write transitioning software and other innovative ideas. Thus, improving digital abilities for women and girls will improve their lives in a variety of ways. Social media platforms are effective resources for sharing information, connecting with people, and establishing networks. In Jordan, women actively use various websites. These networks are used by women to establish personal connections, adhere to and engage with organizations and companies, engage with current events, and much more.

However, women around the world often encounter harm and harassment through internet-based platforms. Women and girl cyber violence, in any form, complicates efforts to achieve a level playing field for both men and women. Information privacy and web-based violence are major obstacles to girls and women on the internet. A significant percentage of men feel safe when sharing their personal information online, as do a smaller percentage of women. Both public and private sectors must cooperate to address online violence against women. Consequently, preventing violence against women via technology would necessitate cooperation between the public and private sectors. Regulations and enforcement changes may secure electronic access accompanied by and metered in light of potential threats and vulnerabilities for women's information privacy and rights violations in order to create the framework for reduction. To ensure easy access for women, ISPs and mobile operators need fair pricing policies. However, to achieve equitable access to and use of technology, all women must be involved in the process. Women whose lives revolve around ICT and embrace universal connectivity cannot be overlooked by any target included in the framework.

Cultural and Social Factors Impacting Women's Development

1) Attitudes, customs, and beliefs are the primary cultural and social factors in Jordan that affect the roles and responsibilities of women and men. The society determines and explains the roles and activities of women as it is deeply connected with culture and the social context. At the core, these factors are deeply rooted in how communities, families, and individuals themselves view women's and men's roles and responsibilities. Such beliefs and methods can also affect the choices of people in power when developing public policies and operational strategies. Many aspects can be considered when assessing the culture of various policy sectors, such as the position of women and culture, art, society, education, and the media, and the role of the family in women's development. Several Jordanian norms and values create roles for both women and men, and women and men perceive these roles differently. The division between "jobs of movement" and the "job of maintenance" has formed unique modules for men and women. In addition, cultural heritage is rich in some practices that empower women in tribal societies and higher environmental systems. Male dominance can weaken over time, and women and men are already sharing power and decision-making. Social norms and practices affect women's and men's jobs, women's access to resources, strength, and both knowledge and skills. Women are also perceived as powerless; these norms, methods, and attitudes help to strengthen and maintain an aggressive society that marginalizes women and can negatively impact the progress of women in Jordan, especially politically. However, social norms can hinder women's participation in social and political activities, especially for indigenous women. Negative attitudes can make women, especially those of indigenous and low social class, more vulnerable to violence, so the police or government are not interested when those who are weak encounter such attacks. Media play a major role in cultural production. Political and social change, regardless of the form, always takes place. Change reflects the dynamics and flows of human social realities living in a

changing environment. The role of the media becomes so great that without freedom of media and expression, it becomes very difficult to form development, prosper, and flourish.

International Partnerships and Cooperation for Women's Development

The importance of international cooperation and actors in promoting and empowering women in Jordan cannot be overstated. A great many steps have been taken on the ground in the past decades in support of local initiatives, and it is to a large extent due to support given by international cooperation as well as a number of international non-governmental organizations that a more visible role has been accorded to women. International cooperation has always included gender issues as part of its programs. The forms, however, and scopes of such activities have changed significantly over time from simply conducting seminars and training activities on empowering the Jordanian woman to diversifying and increasing areas of intervention.

Foreign aid to Jordan takes many forms, some of which can directly benefit women. However, much donor support is channeled through the government, aiming at general development objectives rather than specifically gender-related issues. Consequently, a high proportion of all financial resources would need to be spent for aid to have more than an indirect impact on the situation of women. Not only does it have a positive impact on women, but development experts argue that development cooperation with a strong focus on, and involvement of women, is more effective than projects that ignore their existence. However, both studies and recent policy orientation question this internationally agreed-upon assumption.

The actual impact that interventions or measures to enhance the situation of women can have in societies as developing and diverse as Jordan's is open to debate. There is considerable skepticism on the part of many local observers about the effectiveness of attempts to change long-standing traditions and structures of societies. Others argue that international cooperation in this instance is as much a part of any global strategy to increase human rights as it is a desirable end in itself. The impact of global gender policies on women in Jordan and on its government's policy on gender issues is significant and growing. Jordan has participated in these conferences and has, as a result, made a commitment to their common platform of action. In many concrete cases, they translate general Jordanian development policies agreed within such frameworks. There is widespread support for these international initiatives and developments from government and non-governmental organizations that are involved in these forms of international cooperation for development. They, too, would like to see these rights for Jordan's women across the country.

16. Conclusion

This paper has shown the importance of involving Jordanian women in the development of their country. The fact that the central role of women in the economy is unrecognized has been shown to represent a major obstacle to overcoming their condition. The approach that starts from economic participation has allowed a large number of problems faced by women to be tackled. In conclusion, technology and technical training alone are not able to solve the critical problems of Jordanian women. Jordan, like other countries, must instead start a real, structural revolution to change the condition of women.

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