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Obstacles to Girl's Education in Yemen

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to investigate obstacles to girl education in Yemen. It focuses on the major factors that stand on the way of Yemeni girls from getting their rights in teaching-learning process. In general, there are many obstacles in Yemen that prevent girls from being taught. These

obstacles can be classified into: cultural, social, economic and security obstacles.

Key Words: education, teaching, learning, factor, obstacle



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If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

– African Proverb

As a matter of fact, illiteracy is widespread in many third world countries

especially among girls. In Yemen, for example, the rate of illiteracy for girls is 76% while it is 30% for boys. According to United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF), the access to education is the biggest challenge facing Yemeni children. Almost third of girls of school age don't

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complete schools in Yemen. And if they do, the majority of them don't join undergraduate studies. The United Nations Development Program also stated that the number of females in primary schools does not exceed 52.8% of the number of males enrolled in schools, while this percentage in secondary education is low to reach 35.3%, thus the percentage of female school enrollment in Yemen becomes one of the lowest rates in the Arab world. Although the education of the girl is one of the basic factors towards progress, some do not consider girls' education to be important, as they believe that women are supposed to stay in the house and keep busy with cleaning it. Others, on the other hand, believe that teaching girls is no less important than that of boys, as there is no difference between them in this aspect. The status of female education still faces great challenges not only in general education levels, but also in the areas of literacy and adult education and technical education. Every day, the dreams of millions of Yemeni girls are shattered due to considerations related to the perception of women, customs and traditions, religious extremism and other more severe conditions that the country suffers from. "My family got me out of school when I was in the sixth elementary class due to considerations related to social customs that prohibit girls from being studying with male students in one classroom, and because there are no educational classes for girls either". A girl from Al-Jabain district in Rima governorate

said. In 2019, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) revealed, in a report on the current state of education in Yemen, that about 500,000 Yemeni children have dropped out of school since the conflict finally escalated, adding to the two million Yemeni children who have been outside the educational system since the start of the war in the country. 2015 year. According to the report, more than 2,500 schools are not working in Yemen, as about 66 percent of them were destroyed due to direct violence, while 27 percent were closed, and 7 percent are being used for military purposes or as shelters for the displaced. The "UNICEF" stated that the educational system in Yemen has been greatly affected due to several factors, including the suspension of the payment of the salaries of educational personnel working in three quarters of public schools for more than a year, which put the education of nearly 4.5 million students at risk.

Factors that Affect Girl Education

According to education experts, the obstacles that prevent Yemeni girls from continuing their education can be classified as follows:

Cultural Factors:

The Common Perception of Yemeni Society, Especially in the Countryside, of the Basic Work of Women;

There is a traditional culture in rural areas among parents that it is useless to study females, due to the interests and activities of women in rural areas, and the lack of job opportunities for girls when they

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graduate from high school or even university. Girls should be only preoccupied with raising children, housework, agriculture and livestock rising.

Lack of Awareness among Girls of the Importance of Education;

Sometimes, the problem lies in the girls themselves where they have a wrongful conviction in the weak value of the girl's access to education especially when they see their male brothers have left school and are out of school practicing some work or crafts. On the other hand, some girls are satisfied with the first stages of education and then leave school, despite no objection to continuing their learning by the family.

Social and Family Factors:

Early Marriage;

Early marriage is one of the customs widespread in Yemen. It has its disadvantages on many issues, including education, as the girl bears the responsibility for family affairs, doing housework, raising the children, and so on. This, surely, leads to depriving her from completing learning.

Getting in One Class (Male and Female Students);

Many parents feel anxious about the consequences of mixing in schools, especially in the stages of higher education. The mixed schools represent 84.2% of the total schools of the Republic for the

academic year 2015/2016, and at the high school did not exceed 16.6 girls' schools % of the total secondary schools in Yemen. This indicates the severe shortage of female schools in many Yemeni regions. Girls' enrollment ratios decreases in secondary school in mixed schools in the countryside, or in some Yemeni cities, as a result of the refusal of some parents for the idea of continuing education girls in mixed schools.

Economic Factors:

Poorness;

The majority of Yemeni society suffers from difficult economic conditions especially during the current political unrest in Yemen, which has been extended for nearly seven years. Poverty has a major impact on economic aspects; which led many Yemeni families to stop teaching their children, and pushed them towards the practice of various works to get daily living expenses. And some Yemeni families have just taught males without females due to the costs required through the educational process of school fees, school, daily expenses, transport, buying school supplies and books.

Economic Recession and High Cost of Living;

The economic recession led to the low income of Yemeni families, the high unemployment and high cost of living, and dollar rise, which exceeded 600 Yemeni

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riyals per dollar in 2021, compared to 215 riyals in 2014, resulting in stopping many private sector institutions from work. For the government sector, there is a significant shortage of government officials because of their salary cut, and this recession has a direct negative impact on girl education in undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

Security Factors:

Wars and Displacement;

Wars and conflicts have a severe impact on education in general, and on girls' education in particular. The statistics of the Ministry of Education for the 2015/2016 academic year indicates that the total number of displaced male students in the basic stage is 49,862 students, and of the females 39,466 students. For the secondary stage, there are 9,718 male students and 7471 female students, and the Ministry of Education is working to address displacement cases, and accommodate male and female students in schools near the areas to which they have been displaced, but displaced families do not have opportunities for stability. Thus, the issue of continuing education for boys and girls is postponed as a result of their displacement situations. Wars also have other effects on education, as a large number of schools have been destroyed in cities and rural areas. And thus the educational process in these schools has been completely stopped, whether male schools, female schools, or mixed schools. And parents resort in such cases to send their children to the nearest school in the geographical area, but this is

mostly limited to males without females. And cities and regions where armed conflicts are raging prevent the opening of educational institutions in general, whether schools or universities.

Harassment and Kidnapping;

The issue of harassment and kidnapping began to grow rapidly in recent times in urban areas, and had a negative impact on girls' education, especially with insecurity, political unrest, and instability of the situation. "Sarah Yahya", a high school student in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, confirms that while she was leaving school at noon at the end of the school day; I saw a car intercepting one of her schoolmates, and three people carrying a weapon got out of the car and dragged her classmate to the car, amid astonishment for a number of students and passers-by in the public street, and no one was able to rescue her. And this phenomenon led to a state of panic among the people, and in the days that followed this phenomenon; it has been observed that a large number of female students are absent from school for fear of a repetition of what happened. It is noticeable that such a phenomenon is repeated in the higher stages of general education and university stages.

Governmental Factors:

The Shortage of Schools for Girls and Their Distance from Villages And Residential Neighborhoods;

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education for the 2015/2016 academic year; the number of schools

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operating in the Republic of Yemen is 16,734 schools, including 1248 schools for girls, which is 7.5%, and the rest of the schools are either boys' schools or mixed schools. Despite the Ministry's attempt to coordinate with a number of international organizations and civil society institutions, and local participation to increase the number of female schools, this support remains limited and limited to some interventions in some rural areas but not in others.

The Shortage of Female Teachers;

The Ministry of Education does not have any powers regarding the recruitment of male and female teachers in education. Employment is controlled by the Ministry of Civil Service. Employment in Yemen is often subject to political decisions that have no connection to the actual needs of the relevant ministries. This results in a tremendous shortage in the number of teachers despite the large numbers of graduates of colleges of education in Yemeni universities applying for employment through the Ministry of Civil Service. According to the Ministry of Education reports for the year 2015/2016 The number of female teachers in basic schools is 35878, compared to the number of teachers who numbered 81,392, that is: 30.6%, and that the number of female teachers in secondary schools is 1969, compared to the number of 5,468 teachers, i.e. 26.5%, and that the number of female teachers in secondary schools is 1969. 29,809 female teachers in basic and secondary schools, compared to the number

of 61,450 teachers, or 32.7%. On the other hand, the majority of qualified women are concentrated in urban areas in city centers, where there are universities and institutes that provide in-service training for unqualified teachers, and the acceptance of appointments in the countryside by qualified teachers from urban areas is less, where customs related to mobility and conditions of isolation in the countryside and conditions are formed. Subsistence and housing guarantee; an obstacle to acceptance of appointment in the countryside, which is not uncommon for females; because the villages are not prepared for that. The process of hiring female teachers is sometimes manipulated, as some jobs are reserved for rural teachers, and since there are no qualified female teachers in rural areas; Qualified applicants are accepted for these jobs from cities, according to the condition that they perform the job in rural areas, which does not happen in reality, as an agreement is made between the teacher and the school director to search for male alternatives to carry out the teaching process in the school in exchange for a part of the salary. In recent years, a number of organizations supporting education in Yemen have begun to support the contracting process with rural teachers, and most of the secondary school graduates are contracted. In a limited number of Yemeni rural areas, with small sums that are often delayed, which leads to lack of commitment to the teaching processing addition to that; It makes it difficult for them to do the training process; to raise

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their skills due to mobility barriers, which is the main factor in this matter.

Difficulty of Getting a Job;

The personal goals of continuing education vary, whether for males or females. In addition to increasing cultural awareness, acquiring life skills, increasing knowledge and obtaining various academic qualifications; the learner aspires to obtain a job opportunity that enables him to live a decent life but recently most of the young men and women graduating from Yemeni universities felt desperate to obtain government jobs especially with the outbreak of military conflicts in the country, where the priority for recruitment has become the essential one. And the conflict fronts are supplemented with fighters at the expense of the rest of the government and administrative jobs that have been suspended for seven years in a row. This has led to the reluctance of many young men and women to pursue university education, and to search for other jobs from time to time to secure a livelihood without the need to continue education.

Recommendations and Suggested Solutions

- The government should take care of education and makes it the most urgent priority.
- Stopping war and working to create conditions for ensuring security and stability.
- Expanding the construction of girls' schools.

- Raising the awareness of the family about the importance of educating girls.
- Providing jobs for girls particularly in countryside.
- Reducing university fees and postgraduate fees for girls.
- Activating the role of security agencies and local authorities with regard to the harassment and kidnapping of girls and tightening penalties for the perpetrators.
- Supporting poor families through the school feeding project in a way that contributes to increasing girls' enrollment in education.

Summary

In conclusion, the most prominent obstacles that face Yemeni girls during the process of education in Yemen can be divided into cultural, economic, security and governmental and social and family constraints. To get rid of these obstacles, the following solutions are suggested; the government should take care of education and makes it the most urgent priority. Stopping wars and conflicts and working to create conditions for the ensuring security and stability. Expanding the construction of girls' schools. Raising the awareness of the family about the importance of educating girls. Providing jobs for girls particularly in countryside. Reducing university fees and postgraduate fees for girls. Activating the role of security agencies and local authorities with regard to the harassment

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