Economic Roles for Syrian Women After War

In-depth analytical study in Idlib governorate

(Summary)

Research production: Feb/2022
Research launch: June /2022

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Introduction

The movement in Syria in 2011 has had an impact on all the joints of life in the society in general, and especially in areas that have been outside the control of the Syrian regime, particularly in Idlib. The effects of war have increased to include all segments of society, which have played a role in changing the structure of the society and in influencing the customs and traditions of the society, in terms of the distribution of roles to women and men.

Generally, the house is considered to be a place that has been associated with women according to customs and traditions, even if they have work outside the house.

As for the man; His tasks were linked to working outside with the ensuing functions and roles that had relevance to his character as a man in line with the positions and roles imposed by society. But the reality of women in general in Arab societies may change according to the life and economic circumstances which modern life has brought, we find that women have started to work outside the home with men, but this participation is considered somewhat shy, but it is often a stereotypical participation that dedicates the family role of women, As we find that most women may prefer to do traditional jobs such as education, medicine, childcare, etc., in line with the society's view in which they are in.
As for Syrian women, the change in the social structure resulting from the war conditions that Syria witnessed as a result of the revolution, led to the occurrence of many changes that affected the structure of society in general and women in particular; In terms of their position in society and the roles they play, including their economic role, it is one of the significant social changes that occurred in the Syrian perceptions and attitudes as a result of the Syrian revolution which coincided with a change in social and cultural patterns specific to the roles of Syrian women and varied by region and military control. (Opposing forces with their different factions, the forces of the regime), Where we find there are those who carry perceptions similar to those contemporary Syrian women hold about themselves in the contemporary qualitative framework based on the complementarity between males and females, as we find at the same time who bear the conceptions of the traditional stereotyped image represented by the set of traditional features that the traditional women bear in the traditional framework.

The study’s objectives were illustrated by identifying the economic roles of Syrian women during the war, in the areas affiliated with the opposition forces in northwest Syria, and the identification and perception of changes in the economic roles of women in society.
Therefore, the case study was relied on as a tool for collecting information, where the focus is on specific cases, in order to go deeply into it to collect as much information as possible about the studied unit.

**Where the research objectives focused on the following:**

1. Identifying the economic role that Syrian women play after the war.
2. Identifying the changes that have occurred in the roles of Syrian women in the economy.
3. Identify the extent to which society accepts the economic roles of women.
4. Identifying the difficulties that Syrian women faced while performing these economic roles.

This study is also one of the exploratory studies that relied on the case study to gain in-depth information about women's economic roles. Twenty case studies were conducted on women working in two main centrepiece: women working for others and women entrepreneurs.

**The study concluded with a set of results:**

- The change in the social roles of Syrian women in general in Idlib governorate, which led to a doubling of roles for women after
The war, in addition to traditional roles that were attached to them—those related to domestic work and childcare—other roles have been added, including economic. Where the women found themselves fully responsible for it without assistance in those tasks, which made the burdens increase on them, especially in light of a discriminatory society.

"There’s nothing I don’t know to do or learn, but I’m tied to the chains of tradition, society and husband". "Quote from one of the participants"

◆ The factor of war and displacement, which often led to the loss of the breadwinner, in addition to the poor economic conditions played a prominent role in women going out to work and breaking the stereotype of women's staying at home.

◆ The participation of women in the study area (Idlib and its rural) in works related to the humanitarian aspect, where the society became more accepting of them despite the unfavorable view of them, as well as the involvement of women in civil defense and community work, in addition to new jobs that did not exist in the community, such as electronics maintenance, and meat cutting and grilling (butchers).

◆ Women in these areas are able to determine their goals, whether in search of a job or to continue their education, and this was not found before 2011, as the society is conservative with
Regard to the issues of women and girls.

Most of the jobs that women did before the war were traditional and stereotypical to a large extent, confined to education, agricultural work and packaging in factories.

"when I started work, people were surprised that there were women in civil defense. People's words were the main support for our work. The words like “God strengthen you” enter the joy to our hearts, and there were people whose words were frustrating and their looks at us as women were vague and incomprehensible ".

"Quote from one of the participants"

Changing the nature of the business that women have become working in to include: Protection and community service, women entrepreneurs (private shops, hairdressing, driving trainer, electronic maintenance, data entry, photography, sales person), Although some of these jobs may be considered typical jobs in other societies, in Idlib and its rural, they are they are considered new professions that needed to break the stereotype to practice them.

Women's involvement in working outside the home is to achieve economic independence and not needing anyone, and this is a change in the degree of women's awareness of their rights and their importance in society.
The family and husbands’ support for women plays a major role in their success in any work they do despite the view of the society and customs and traditions that restrict women, and it may be moral, social, or financial support.

Even if the decision of women to go out to work is their decision, still the decision of the type of work that they will perform is the decision of the man whether the husband, the father, or any male of authority in the family, they often the ones who determine the work environment provided that there are no males in it, and this indicates the root Customs and norms in societal thinking as a whole.

Bullying and verbal abuse are one of the most common types of violence directed at working women by society.

Despite all the restrictions and negative views on the work of women by society, the women respondents in this study insisted on working and achieving their goals, and this indicates their high awareness of the need for societal change.

The lack of assistance by family members to women in bearing the burdens of housework exacerbated the psychological and physical pressures on them, which increased their social isolation from relatives and friends, and somewhat weakened their relations with their husbands.

Society's view of the woman who separates from her husband as a result of divorce hasn’t changed in terms of her leaving the house to work.
Recommendations
Among the most important suggestions mentioned by the respondents to improving the reality of women in Idlib were as follows:

- Provide security and safety for easy movement and mobility, especially the movement of women.
- Strengthen the role of the media by highlighting the successes achieved by women in professions that were the preserve of men in order to emphasize that women have the ability to engage in any work and that there are no professions that are monopolized by one gender without the other.
- Providing capital for women who have undertaken professions of their own through integrated projects.
- Reconsider women's economic empowerment projects led by civil society organizations, especially those working with women in terms of the type of empowerment and not to limit projects to traditional roles and professions that confine women to certain occupations and exclude other ones on the pretext of the inability of women and the lack of acceptance by society.
- Raising awareness of women of their rights and empowering them in society.
- Ensure employment opportunities for women who have lost their husbands, according to the capabilities they possess while
Ensuring that they are protected from exploitation in the workplace.

- Increasing livelihood programs that give opportunities for uneducated women to work, and increasing small projects that increase women's involvement in work.

- It is very important to pursue women's economic empowerment. But, there is a greater need for social empowerment to be aligned with it to ensure the independence of the women's economy without the interference of male family members and control over the resources of women.

- The struggle to reach the desired change by making work inside and outside the home a participatory work between men and women within the family.

- Enacting laws that protect women at work from exploitation, extortion, and loss of rights.

- Raising awareness about the need to reduce the psychological pressure on women at home and the pressures of domestic work.

- Media should shed light on these aspects, as the media has a fundamental role in changing societal awareness and keeping women away from stereotypes.

- Amending the curriculum that took "My father is reading the newspaper, and my mother is cooking" approach.
Note
The research study has focused on the gender dimension of the studied phenomenon the Economic Roles for Syrian Women After War.

The research study has been prepared jointly among a group of emerging female researchers in northwest Syria who have been trained by Equity and Empowerment to write women's research, collect data under the supervision of an academic researcher who has analyzed and finalized the study.
أنت و أنا، معا نستطيع صيّما نريد

Together, We Could if We Would