

Economic Roles for Syrian Women after War

In-depth analytical study in Idlib governorate

Focus research study

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Empowerment Organization

Main researcher: Mrs. Eva Atfa

Field researchers:

- Salwa Jaban
- Sondos Talawy
- Yaman Al-Yousef
- Lobna Aswad
- Rama Dyab

Research gender auditing: Walaa Aloush

Research design: Zaid Hadla



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Acknowledgment and Dedication

“It’s your turn, doctor”

From there we started, when we did not own the land, but we wrote the story and preserved the narration, because our struggle is linked to our memory and our ability to tell the story as it is, as a narrative of truth and rights, as a narrative of man and dignity. And our narrative, we women, who are unique in a lot of stories, resembles us alone. It tells future generations about our struggle and our success despite all the superimposed structures in our oppression, our scold, our stereotyping and stifling of our voices. And to become part of history, we had to archive our lives ourselves so that subjective experience would be part of the feminist inventory.

Here, I must highlight oral history, which was considered a different epistemological method in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century by socialist historians, who only recorded the lives of people from the working classes. Then, in the seventies, the journey of archiving oral narratives as a tool to correct historical knowledge about socially marginalized groups related to race, social class or gender began. In that process, the roles of feminist movements that tried to answer about the role and position of women historically started to emerge as their experiences and voices have always been neglected and were considered as daily lived things that don’t go up to the level of history. Thus, the feminists’ demands continued till our present time in order to consider the prospective of women and the gender framework of their experiences as a unit of history analysis.

In the Syrian context, a reduced concept about the experiences of women was presented as it revolved around the lack of basic requirements of life until all lives

appeared as revolving around the primitive concept of living that is already their basic right. It neglected any speech about the roles of women in political life and the professions they worked after the Syrian revolution as well as the effect of lack of knowledge about properties on them and the hidden crimes they get exposed to electronically. Through these researches we, in Equity and Empowerment Organization, try to humanize our lives as women from a different perspective in order to reevaluate the tilted societal balance to become on a similar scale and regain the right in all of our roles.

I repeatedly tried to hide my affection while reading the four researches which are the products of twenty-five researchers that underwent this experience for the first time. I felt proud, joy, pain and belonging to them. I had only one sentence repeated in my mind: “Today you write history to be the future for you and the day will come when we write the names of all Syrian women on the sun “that never sets”.

Hiba Ezzideen Alhaji

“CEO of Equity & Empowerment Organization”

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Study Summary

The Syrian movement in 2011 generally had a big impact on all the aspects of life in the society especially in areas out of the control of the Syrian regime, Idlib governorate in specific. The effects of war increased to include all segments of the society to play a role in making changes in the structure of the society as well as affecting customs and traditions that exist in the society regarding distribution of roles among individuals from men and women.

This study came as a response to the importance of examining the changes that happened to the economic roles of women and the changes caused by war conditions and affected the roles of Syrian women in Idlib's governorate in the northwest of Syria.

This study is also considered one of the exploratory studies that relied on the case study to reach in-depth information about women's economic roles as twenty case studies were conducted on working women in two main areas which are employed women and women entrepreneurs.

The study reached a group of results including:

- Occurrence of changes in the social roles of Syrian women in general in Idlib governorate as women's roles have been doubled after war to include, beside the traditional roles which have been associated with them and are related to housework and taking care of children, other roles like economic role. The women found themselves completely responsible for this role without receiving any help in the works they already do. This increased the burden on the women especially during living a discriminatory society.
- The factor of war, displacement and eviction that led, in most of cases, to the loss of the breadwinner, as well as the bad economic conditions had a distinctive role in making women go out searching for work and break the routine of making women stay at home.
- Participation of women in the area of the study (Idlib and its countryside) in the works related to the humanitarian side as the society accepted this participation despite the existence of criticizing look for them. In addition to that, we noted the engagement of women in the Civil Defense works as well as societal work and new works that didn't exist before in the society like electronics fixing and cutting and grilling meat (female butchers).
- Women in these areas became able to specify their goals whether regarding searching for a job opportunity or continuing their education, this didn't exist before 2011 as the society was very conservative regarding the cases of women and girls.
- Most of the works made by women before war were stereotyped traditional ones that were mostly limited to education, agricultural and packaging.
- The nature of works which women currently do has changed to include:

Protection and societal service, projects' owners (private shops, women's hair styling, teaching car driving, electronics fixing, data entry, photographing, sales representative). Although some of these works might be typical in other societies, but in the society of Idlib

and its countryside they are regarded new professions that needed to break the stereotyping to be practiced.

- The women's engagement in work outside the house had the purpose of achieving economic independence and living without the need for another person, and this is regarded a change in the women's level of awareness regarding their rights and their importance in the society.
- The support of family and husband for women play a big role in their success in any work they do despite the look of the society as well as the customs and traditions that bond women and this support can be moral or social or even financial.
- Even if the call of going out for work is decided by women, the type of work they will do will be a man's decision whether the father or the husband or any other male with a power in the family. Males mostly decide the environment of the work as it shouldn't include males in it and this indicates the deep-rooted concept of customs and traditions in the societal thinking.
- Bullying and verbal abuse were of the most common types of violence that working women faced in the society.
- Despite all bonds and negative looks of the society for the working woman, the women included in this study insisted on working and achieving their goals and this indicates the increase of their awareness regarding the importance of societal change.
- Refusing to help women by the family members in the burdens of house works increased the level of psychological and physical pressure on them and this increased their social isolation from relatives and friends and weakened their relationships with their husbands.
- The society's point of view regarding woman that get separated from her husband as a result of divorce hasn't changed when it comes to leaving home and searching for work.

First chapter: Study problem

Firstly: Study Problem and its Importance:

Generally, the house is considered the place that women are connected to based on social customs and traditions even if they have works outside the house. As for the man, his tasks are connected to work outside house including doing tasks and roles related to his nature as a man and in correspondence with the positions and roles imposed by the society. This is expressed in the sociology as attributed or inherited positions which means: "Positions that an individual inherits from his/her parents or those that got born with him/her or imposed by social systems. They are considered involuntary positions if the individual had no role in obtaining them" ¹

However, the reality of women in general in the Arab societies might change based on the life and economic conditions brought by modern life and what accompanies it from technological

¹ Al-Azhar Al-Uqabi, Local social and cultural values and their impact on the organizational behavior of workers (a field study at the Cable Industries Corporation of Biskra) PhD thesis in the sociology of development, University of Brothers Mentouri, Constantine, 2008-2009, p. 108.

development in all aspects of economic, social, and cultural life as we find women share men in work outside house. Although this participation is somewhat shy as it is often a stereotypical participation that dedicates the family role to women, as we find that most women may prefer to work in traditional jobs such as education, medicine, childcare...etc., in order to avoid the look of the society in which they are located.

For Syrian women, the change in social structure resulted from the revolution conditions in Syria led to the occurrence of a lot of changes that affected the structure of the society in general and the women in specific regarding their positions in the society and the roles they take including economic role. As this is considered one of the important social changes that happened to the Syrian perceptions and trends after the Syrian revolution as these changes were accompanied with a change in the social and cultural types related to the roles of the Syrian women and this differed based on the region and on the military domination (opposition forces with all its factions, regime's forces). We might find changes that carry perceptions like the ones of the contemporary Syrian women within the modern gender framework that depends on integrity between males and females. At the same time we find others who have stereotyped traditional perceptions about women represented in a group of treats the Syrian traditional women woven around them within the traditional framework.

Here comes the importance of this study which means the importance of examining the changes that happened to the economic roles of women and the changes caused by war conditions and affected the roles of Syrian women in Idlib's governorate in the northwest of Syria.

Secondly: Research Objectives:

The objectives of the study revolved around identifying the economic roles of Syrian women during war in the areas related to the opposition forces in the northwest of Syria as well as the changes that happened to the economic roles of women in the society and its look to these changes.

The research objectives focused on the following:

1. Identifying the economic roles that Syrian women play after war.
2. Identifying changes that happened to the roles of the Syrian women from the economic side.
3. Identifying the level of society's acceptance for the economic roles of women.
4. Identifying the challenges that faced Syrian women during practicing these economic roles.

Based on the objectives of the study the following questions will be answers:

1. What is the reason of changes that happened to the economic roles of women during war?
2. What are the new economic roles that were never practiced before by women, and they started to practice them currently?

3. Did the change of women's economic roles lead to the occurrence of a change in the social values?
4. What is the look of the society for the new economic roles practiced by women?

Thirdly: Concepts and Terminology of the Study:

Linguistically: The word "role" can be understood as any movement in a specific environment, or a dimension and it comes from the verb "spin" which means "moving around something".² In the encyclopedia of sociology the word "role" was defined as the position or the title owned by the individual and it specifies his social duties and rights.³

In this study, the concept of "role" represents a group of works done by women whether outside or inside house.

Economic Roles:

Terminologically, they are defined as the social roles and standards that regulate the production, organization and distribution of goods and services.⁴ And procedurally, it is defined in this study as the group of paid works that women perform outside or inside the home.

Working Woman:

There are various definitions for woman that works outside home by the socialists as each socialist defined it from the prospective of their study, for example Kamelia Abdelfatah defined working woman in her book "Psychology of working woman" as: Woman who works outside house and gains a wage in return for her work. This woman has two jobs in life, one is the role of housewife and the other one is the role of an employee".⁵

Although the feminist concept that sees that woman who practices reproductive and family roles as a working woman that doesn't receive a wage, this study defines the working woman as: The woman that exerts paid mental or intellectual activity outside house in any economic field or a social or service organization and receive a financial wage in return for that with the purpose of increasing the economic and social level of her family. Moreover, this woman is allowed by the society to live independently from her husband and family economically as well as being a mother and housewife who takes care of her own family.

Syrian Women:

Syrian women addressed in this study are those who work outside house and their ages range between 18 and 50 years old and live in the northwest area of Syria.

² Ibrahim Mustafa, and others, The intermediate dictionary, the Islamic Library for Printing and Publishing, Cairo, 1972, p. 302

³ Ihsan Muhammad Hassan, Encyclopedia of Sociology, Arab House of Encyclopedias, 1, Beirut, 1999, p. 289.

⁴ Ahmed Zaki Badawi, Dictionary of Social Terms, Library of Lebanon, Beirut, 1982, p. 126.

⁵ Camelia Abdel-Fattah, The Psychology of Working Women, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, Beirut, Lebanon, 0221, p. 022.

Gender Stereotyping (stereotypical image):

Terminologically, it is a general look or a preconceived idea about the characteristics or traits owned or should be owned by men and women or about the roles they do or should be doing. The gender stereotyped pattern becomes harmful when it limits the ability of men and women to develop their personal abilities and continue their professional lives as well as taking decisions about their lives and plans in life.⁶

In the current study, the gender stereotyping or the stereotypical image is defined as the role expected to be taken by a woman and a man in the society according to customs and traditions.

Fourthly: Fields of the Study:

Spatial Field:

The spatial field of the study is specified in the areas outside the control of the Syrian regime in the city and countryside of Idlib's governorate in the northwest of Syria.

Temporal Field:

The temporal field of the study is specified in the period between 1st of February 2022 and the end of March from the same year.

Human Field:

Syrian women who work in the chosen areas of the study.

Fifth: Previous Studies:

1. **Ammar Maneh's study entitled: Social Factors and Algerian Working Women: A field study at the El Tafsel Institution in Bordj Bou Arreridj** · memorandum for obtaining a master's degree in the sociology of development, University of Constantine, 2001-2002.

The problem of the study revolved around how the work market deals with the female labor force compared to the male labor force, and the reasons behind this. The study question focuses on what is the role of social factors in the lives of Algerian women working in the Industrial Organization? The descriptive analytical approach was adopted in this study as the researcher conducted a comprehensive survey on 90 female workers in the target institution and used the interview form as a tool for collecting information.

One of the most important findings of the researcher is the total absence of the social supportive structure for working women who are limited to working in kindergartens and nurseries, maternity health services...etc. This is in addition to the absence of transportation related to the institution, the traffic jam and the inability to wait for the general transportation. Moreover,

⁶ [OHCHR | Gender Stereotypes/Gender Stereotyping \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2017/04/17-04-2017)

women in general do all house works after returning from the institution as well as the absence of electronic means that might help working women to do house works (about 60,06% of women don't own a washing machine). Also, there was a decrease in the wages of women that work in the industrial institution as well as the lack of any chance to get promoted, the weakness of vocational rehabilitation and the bad treatment of the supervisors, all these conditions hinder the integration and continuation of women's work in the institution.⁷

2. **A study by Janet Arouq, The Implications of the Crisis-War on the Reality of Syrian Women,** Damascus Center for Research and Studies, Damascus, 2017.

In this study the researcher talked about the reality of the women in general from the social, educational, economic and health sides as she relied on analyzing information she acquired from the reports of local and international organizations. According to the researcher, she relied on observation and impression in collecting and analyzing her information, and this may not give realistic implications and results due to the lack of reliance on official statistics and the absence of a well-studied research sample.

The researcher asserted in her study of the economic reality of women during war the increase of the percentage of women who search for work in Syria and attributed the reason to the loss of breadwinners, displacement conditions, loss of property and savings, and their inability to obtain their financial rights. In addition to that, some of them were forced to work in immoral jobs. The researcher also reported that the percentage of working women in opposition-controlled areas is almost non-existent.⁸

3. **A study by Talal Al-Mustafa and Hussam Al-Saad entitled: Changes in the roles of women in the Syrian war** “an in-depth qualitative study”, Harmon Center for Contemporary Studies, Doha/Istanbul, 2019.

The study aimed to identify the changes in the roles of women in order to know the new familial, social, economic and political roles for them during the war in the areas outside the regime's control, as case studies and focus groups were used as tools for obtaining information.

The study reached the following results: “No change happened to the method of marriage among girls and it seems that the war conditions enhanced the traditional marriage. On the other hand, the war conditions affected the Syrian woman regarding their familial and social roles as it led to giving different roles to women and formed a heavy burden on their shoulders. The continuing war conditions kept these roles going for the Syrian woman and made them the decision makers regarding the raising up of the children and following their affairs. Moreover, the responsibilities of Syrian women within the family before the war also continued after war beside having new familial and social roles that are new to them and this was represented in women whose husbands became unemployed because of a sickness or as a result for an accident during war, in

⁷ Ammar Manea, Social Factors and Algerian Working Women, a field study at the Tassel Institution in Bordj Bou Arreridj, a memorandum for obtaining a master's degree in the sociology of development, University of Constantine, 2001-2002.

⁸ Janet Arouq, The Implications of the Crisis-War on the Reality of Syrian Women, Damascus Center for Research and Studies, Damascus, 2017.

addition to the conditions of women who got divorced and those who got forced to get married in early age”.

The study also concluded the recovery of labor market for women during war (if we exclude women who were under the rule of ISIS). But this work faced many challenges including nepotism, mediations and difficulties of movement because of security conditions and in some areas, there was dominations for thoughts related to separation between genders. In addition to that, there were effective participations among a lot of women in the field of volunteering in all its forms based on what is permitted by the local society from one side and the implications of war conditions from another.

Women participated in demonstrations and in some events related to the movement in the studied areas. However, the women of the sample stated two things: The difficulty of women's participation in demonstrations without taking the consent of their families or accepting the participation by their families. Also, a lot of women stopped going out in demonstrations after the increase of the violence by the regime.⁹

Sixth: Method and Tool of the Research:

The analytical descriptive approach was adopted. This approach is based on describing the phenomenon as it is in its natural context, trying to obtain as much information as possible about the studied phenomenon in order to identify its causes and the factors affecting it and to reach results that may contribute to making proposals to improve the reality of the studied unit.

Therefore, the research relied on case study as a tool for collecting information. In the case study the focus gets placed on specific cases in order to collect as much information as possible about the unit studied as deep understanding of the case study is useful in covering all its dimensions in an accurate and detailed manner.

The in-depth study of the case is useful in identifying some special phenomena that have general social and psychological dimensions through free interviews that investigate all the current and past circumstances surrounding the individual as well as persona, social and value factors around him/her.

Second Chapter: Theoretical Framework of The Study

Firstly: Women's Rights to Work in International Conventions:

International conventions establish the right of women to work, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulated in Article 23/1 that: **“Everyone has the right to work and has the freedom to choose this work under just and satisfactory conditions, and also has the right**

⁹ Tallal Mostafa, Hossam Alsaad, Changes in the roles of women in the Syrian war “an in-depth qualitative study”, Harmon Center for Contemporary Studies, Doha/Istanbul, 2019.

of protection against unemployment.”¹⁰ Likewise, Articles 6 and 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stipulate: “States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to get the opportunity to gain his/her living by work which s/he freely chooses or accepts, and they shall take appropriate measures to safeguard this right including equal remuneration for all persons as well as a safe environment and conditions Safety for all. Moreover, Article No. 10 of the same declaration stipulates the equal right to an impartial and independent trial without discrimination.”¹¹ In all international laws we find that women were not explicitly mentioned, and they were not specified in particular at work in terms of maternity, pregnancy and breast-feeding. Rather, they were included with men under one name which is Persons. Then came the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, known as CEDAW, which was authorized by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. As article 11 of the Convention obligates states parties to the Convention to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of work in order to guarantee their rights, including the right to choose the profession they want, equal pay and job promotion. It also establishes measures to prevent discrimination against women because of marriage or maternity to guarantee their actual rights to work.¹²

Despite Syria’s ratification on this agreement, its reservation on the basic articles in it, which represent the essence of this agreement, eliminates the agreement, its content and its purposes. The pretext for this is that these reservations are due to specific articles because of their conflict with cultural heritage and traditions. Syria made a reservation to Article (4), Paragraphs No. (2-9-15), and Article 16, Paragraphs 1, Clause C / D / F / G, and Paragraph 2). From these reservations, it is clear to us that most of them focus on equality in front of the law and relate to women’s private lives, independence and the roles entrusted to them in their familial lives starting from playing the role of guardianship over them as if they were legally or intellectually minors. Regarding the economic and labor rights associated with our current study in particular, Syria has made reservations about paragraph A of Article (11) which states:

“The right to work as an inalienable right for all human beings.” Here work is a right for both parties, while in the Syrian Personal Status Law, a woman’s work is a right of the husband who decides for his wife whether he wants her to work or not, and if she disagrees with his opinion, she is considered a disobedient woman.

Moreover, Syria had reservations about Article (13) that called for the elimination of discrimination against women in the economic and social fields, especially paragraph (a) of the Article that emphasized the right of familial eligibilities.

These reservations make the Syrian law and Syrian society neither required nor obligated to implement what is stated in some of the provisions of this agreement although what has been reserved is the most important part of the agreement or it is the significance and purpose of its

¹⁰ [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(oic-iphrc.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-treaties/instruments-treaties-item-31-Universal-Declaration-of-Human-Rights)

¹¹ [OHCHR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-treaties/instruments-treaties-item-31-International-Covenant-on-Economic-Social-and-Cultural-Rights)

¹² [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against woman. https://bit.ly/20Eajg9](https://bit.ly/20Eajg9)

issuance by the United Nations. Moreover, these reservations are considered the same demands that Syrian women have always called for and struggled to obtain. As for the conventions of the International Labor Organization, they focus on the rights of working women and gaining equal wages with men, as well as equal value of work and equal opportunities and treatment for workers of both genders who have family burdens.

While the Decent Work Convention for Domestic Workers 2011 issued by the International Labor Organization states in its articles:

"Providing the basic rights of domestic workers on an equal basis with all other workers. Moreover, the convention requires procedures and controls that regulate the employer's relationship with domestic workers, given that many Syrian women may resort to such work on the grounds that it is a traditional stereotyped work for them but in most cases, there is no signed employment contract, no limitation of working hours, no set wages, or no agreement on the type of work that women will do in general."

On the Arab level, the first Arab agreement on working women ratified by Syria was Convention No. 6 of 1976 and that was in 1982. The agreement stipulates in Article 1 of it:

"Equality of women with men must be guaranteed in all labor legislations, and these legislations must also include the provisions that regulate women's work in all sectors in general and in the agricultural sector in particular."

Also, article no.2 of the same agreement stated that: "Equal opportunities for employment of men and women must be guaranteed in all fields of work when qualifications and eligibilities are equal, and there must be no discrimination between them in career promotion"¹³.

Secondly: In Constitution:

Syrian constitutions, including the latest constitution that is currently in force and was issued in 2012, emphasizes in its articles and speech the importance of addressing citizens without any discrimination based on gender. This includes the right of work for all citizens equally and taking special procedures that can contribute to the engagement of women in various fields of work. For example, article 23 from the constitution called for removing the limitations that might hinder the participation of women in building the society and that the state shall provide all opportunities for women to be able to participate in different fields of life including economic field.¹⁴ And here it should be indicated that there is no explicit constitutional text that prevents discrimination against women or supports equality in wages between men and women.

As for the Labor Law, the law No. 17 issued in 2010 regulates the right of women to work in Syria. It is also the same law that regulates special labor relations (in the private sector) and the Basic Law for female workers in the state, which regulates the rights of female workers in the

¹³ Arab Convention No. (6) of 1976 regarding working women, which was approved by the Arab Labor Conference at its fifth session, held in Alexandria, Arab Republic of Egypt, in the year 1976 AD. <http://bit.ly/3beBxS2>

¹⁴ [Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic \(wipo.int\)](http://wipo.int)

public sector (government bodies and institutions). The latter law equated female workers in the state without discrimination based on gender and granted working women their rights during the stages of maternity and breastfeeding, and the associated roles that support and encourage women's work and support them in seeking custody. We also find in Labor Law No. 17 texts about carrying out their family roles and their professional and vocational activities. This law emphasized the right of women in the labor sector and in various economic activities, including industry, commerce, agriculture, craftsmanship, and professions. Moreover, this law included a special chapter under the name of women's employment.

Article 119 of this law established the principle of equal pay for equal work. This principle prevents discrimination in wages on the basis of gender.¹⁵ As for Article No. 120, working women were given special treatment that could be called protection articles based on their physical or physiological natures and in order to preserve their health, such as preventing women from working at night, and preventing them from working in works harmful to their health, provided that the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor determines the work decision and the cases and occasions in which it is permissible exception to this article.

About maternity leave, Article 121 specified its duration as follows: From (1-120) days for the first birth giving, from (2-90) days for the second birth giving, and only from (3-75) days for the third birth giving with the possibility of extending it for one month without pay.

- Article no.122 "prohibited the employer from dismissing or terminating the service of a working woman if she was within the maternity period described in the previous article".
- Article no. 123 states that: "a breastfeeding female worker is granted, in addition to the rest period prescribed by law, two rest periods of no less than half an hour per day and she has the right to combine these two periods and count them from the working hours, during the twenty-four months following the date of delivery".
- Article 126: "obliged the bodies in which working mothers work to establish kindergartens at the work site and stated that (if the employer is hiring one hundred female workers in one place, s/he shall provide a kindergarten or assign a kindergarten to take care of the children of the workers, provided that the number of children is not less than 25 or over five years of age).
- And article no. 127: "it stated that "In the absence of the conditions set forth in the previous article, the employer who employs at least twenty married workers must prepare a suitable place in the custody of a nanny to take care of the children of female workers who are less than five years old, if their number is not less than ten children".
- Here it should be noted that Legislative Decree No. 4 issued in 1972 guarantees giving a working woman family compensation for her children if she is a widow or separated from her husband as a result of divorce and her husband does not receive family compensation for these children.

¹⁵ Syrian Labor Law <https://bit.ly/2NzWmiE>

Law No. 56 issued in 2004 regulating agricultural relations also included legal texts related to the protection of women working in the agricultural sector in several articles, for example articles no. (20-21-22-23). This law is criticized for reducing maternity leaves for women working in the agricultural sector for only 75 days. In addition to that, it excluded agricultural family investments from being considered before the ordinary court in paragraph C of Article No. 164.

Based on the foregoing, it becomes clear to us that the discrimination against women working in Syria in different sectors and fields of work is due to the culture of society in the actual practice of labor relations and the discrimination practiced against women, and this is clear, for example, in their unequal pay with men using their social weakness, also due to the ineffectiveness of existing laws, whether international or local laws, resulting from the failure to activate and apply them.

Thirdly: Syrian Living Reality:

The study of the age-sex composition is of great importance in any society because it shows the demographic features of the male and female society, or what is known as the gender ratio. The age structure determines the productive group in society which bears the burden of providing for the rest of its members. However, in Syria the situation is different, and we find ourselves unable to obtain the age and gender structure in general, due to the multiplicity of authorities that impose their influence on Syrian regions. Therefore, we do not find accurate statistical reports on the population situation in Syrian regions.

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on January 1, 2022, the population of Syria was estimated at 16,513,372 people. This represents a decrease of -2.26% (382-177 people) compared to the population in the previous year which was 16,895,549. In general, the number of males in Syria reached 50.6% of the total population compared to 49.4% of females as of February 24, 2022. The total dependency ratio of the population in Syria is 63.9%.¹⁶ The dependency ratio of the population expresses the ratio of people who do not work in general (the dependents) to the labor force in a country (the productive part of the population). It includes the proportion of the population whose age is less than 15 years and people whose age is 65 years and over, and the productive part of the population consists accordingly of the population ranging between 15 and 64 years. In Syria, this percentage is very high, meaning that the dependent part of the population is more than half of the working part. This means that the working population (the labor force) in Syria must provide goods for themselves and cover spending on children and the elderly.

This is a result of what the people in Syria have suffered and are still suffering from the violence practiced on its land since 2011 until the present day. This violence has been reflected on the population in general in terms of a safe life and receiving all services. According to the Global Peace Index, **Syria ranked last as the least peaceful country during the past six years, and**

¹⁶ [Syria's population living \(2022\) - country meter \(countrymeters.info\)](https://countrymeters.info/en/Syria)

in 2019, the situation improved slightly, as it ranked penultimate globally due to the low intensity of the conflict¹⁷. In 2021, Syria came in third place, after the Assad regime tightened its control over the country, turning it into an intertwined war, which led to the flight of more than 5 million people and caused the largest refugee crisis in the world for many years.¹⁸ As the conflict in Syria severely affected the economy, the matter that led to decreasing livelihoods, destroying infrastructure and impeding the ability to provide all services since 2011.

In 2019, around 11.7 million Syrians were deemed to need humanitarian assistance in the second worst humanitarian crisis in the world after Yemen.¹⁹ According to the latest data issued by the United Nations on humanitarian needs, more than 90% of Syrians live below the poverty line, with estimates indicating that 60-65% live in extreme poverty, where the percentage ranged between 50 and 60% in 2019, compared to 28% in 2010, and this indicates a looming humanitarian catastrophe. Moreover, the multidimensional poverty index - which includes indicators related to health, education, and basic needs - indicates that the national poverty rate is 38.9% in Syria as four out of every five people live in poverty. This was considering the high prices of basic foodstuffs in addition to losses of an estimated \$16 billion American dollars in the agricultural sector. Accordingly, it is estimated that 6.5 million people suffer from problems affecting their food security in Syria, while another 2.5 million people face an increase in threats to their food security.²⁰ All these losses, the high level of poverty, and the individual's lack of access to health and educational services led to a change in lifestyles, and this led to the change of some of customs and traditions that were prevalent.

This is regarding Syria in general but for the northwest area of Syria, according the report of the response coordinators, this area suffers from a continuous displacement wave that is resulted from the continuing Syrian-Russian bombing on the region and the neighboring regions in addition to the closure of schools because of the bad living and weather conditions during winter as well as the big increase in the unemployment rate in this region as it exceeded 85% including day-to-day labor. This is reflected on the reality of the family in this region and leads to the increase of poverty and need for basic services. Women and children constitute approximately 80% of the displaced people who live in IDP sites in northwest Syria and in camps located in northwest Syria, where it has been reported that seven percent of families are headed by females.²¹ As a result for that, there is a severe need for education and nutrition as well as the need for the services of maternal and child health. The lack of livelihood and employment opportunities, insufficient access to basic services and increased food insecurity on a large scale have become major drivers of need, creating additional challenges for many displaced people,

¹⁷ Institute for Economics and Peace 2019. *Global Peace Index: Measuring peace in a complex world*. <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/07/GPI-2019web.pdf>

¹⁸ Global Peace Index Report 2021

[GPI-2019-web.pdf](http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/07/GPI-2019web.pdf) (economicsandpeace.org)

¹⁹ Basic Needs Overview, Humanitarian Program Cycle, OCHA, March 2021 [_syria 2021 humanitarian needs overview ar.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019_Syr_HNO_Full.pdf) (reliefweb.int)

²⁰ All-Syria Strategic Steering Group (SSG). March 2019 *Humanitarian Response Plan 2019* Syrian Arab Republic https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019_Syr_HNO_Full.pdf

²¹ An overview of basic needs (Syrian Arab Republic), Humanitarian Programs Cycle, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA, March 2021 [_syria 2021 humanitarian needs overview ar.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019_Syr_HNO_Full.pdf) (reliefweb.int)

especially women and children, in their quest to meet their basic needs internally in a dignified and self-sustaining manner.

All of this led to a change of roles and social positions in society, according to the repercussions and effects of the war and the groups participating in it. Before the war and the armed conflict, in Syria in general and northwest Syria in particular, for example, the gender stereotype in the governorate was that men play the economic roles by working outside the home and they were required to provide the necessities of living, while women are obligated to domestic tasks, taking care of children in addition to participating in work outside the home, such as working as a teacher or a nurse and other typical jobs. In the countryside, the situation remains similar to women leaving to work in agriculture and then give their wages to the men. However, the stereotypical image differs according to the region to which the woman belongs. This is the prevailing image in Syrian society, and this position of women and men has been supported by cultural customs and norms.

But after the start of the popular movement in Syria, things started to change, and this stereotyped image of women and men was broken as we found women in many practical fields that we had not seen before. The best evidence for this is the participation of women in political work and this started when they went out together with men in the demonstrations that took place in a number of regions. With the development of the movement, there was an increase in the expansion of military operations, and the Syrian regime's adoption of detention as a method of repression, and the number of arrested men who are often the main breadwinners for their families. All this pushed women to go out to work and bring home necessities, and their roles shifted to work outside the home contrary to what was prevalent previously.

This study will attempt to reveal the reality of change in the economic roles of women as they are currently and as seen by the women of Idlib governorate. Moreover, this study will try to identify the relationship between war and gender and the change that affected the distribution of roles in the governorate.

Third Chapter: Analyzing Study Results

First: Methodological Framework:

This study is one of the exploratory studies that seeks to know the changes that occurred in the roles of Syrian women, especially the economic roles after the war. After collecting theoretical information on the subject of the study and reviewing previous studies, the in-depth case study tool (in-depth individual interviews) for the targeted respondents was relied upon. This one-on-one interview helped to dig deeper into the details of the roles that women play in society in general.

The in-depth case study is not meant to reach statistical or quantitative data about the size of cases or phenomena, but its reasons and results are defined as a method to identify everything that surrounds the case accurately regarding the details of each case respectively. The in-depth

case study examines these details accurately and diagnosis all elements and components based on a comprehensive compound vision that is not limited only to the margins of the cases or the current or stage factors, but it dives into the backgrounds and dimensions of the cases and its previous history and development. It also sheds the light on the backgrounds to reveal the internal causal or functional relationships of the components of the studied phenomenon and the surrounding conditions and the values, attitudes, cultural and social legacies they include.

A simplified guide was prepared about the case study form in order to achieve greater success in data collection and drawing conclusions based on known and specific scientific criteria within the scope of the methodological method of the case study. The questionnaire items and directions of collecting information were characterized by a logical sequence and the questionnaire questions were organized into multiple axes, namely: (Determining the specifications of the case in terms of age, marital status, place of residence and education. The axis of work and violence, including self-employed women and women who work for others, the main supporter of women. The axis of women's attitudes and opinions about women's work).

Moving to the characteristics of the target sample, these characteristics of the sample, that is meant to be studied, might not be useful in deducing any statistical indications regarding age, place of residence, social status, and education. Rather, it is a matter of defining the reality of the exclusively studied cases that were chosen to describe them.

Therefore, the research team, who are trained researchers in collecting information in various ways, turned to women who work in different professions and their jobs and conditions match the research objective. After taking their permission, in-depth interviews were held with them, and these interviews took about one to two hours as a maximum.

Second: General Characteristics of Study Sample:

The total number of interviewed cases reached twenty cases, and this is due to the lack of time allocated for data collection. The researchers started implementing the case study on February 17, 2022, and ended on the 22nd of the same month. Each case represented an excellent humanitarian issue through their courage in facing the harshest conditions, whether the conditions of war or the surrounding community and through overcoming all difficulties in the way of proving themselves through a series of actions to earn livelihoods that became impossible after the worsening economic, living and security conditions. The cases were distributed according to marital status into 6 single cases, 11 married cases, 2 separated from their husbands as a result of divorce, and one widow. They were also distributed according to age groups between 19 and 48 years, and this indicates that working women are in the beginning of youth and are on the verge of life and this may be the reason for their insistence on continuing to work, ensuring economic independence, and helping their families.

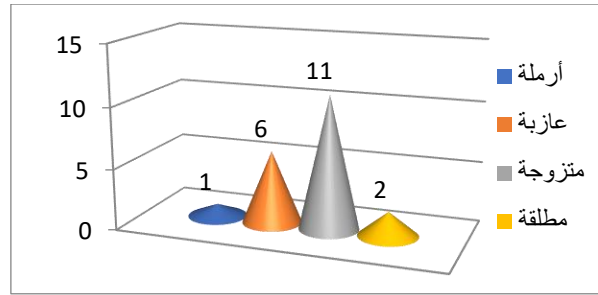


Figure (1) marital status of the respondents

As for the status of the studied cases from the educational situation, it was found that the largest number of them studied at an intermediate institute and university or were in university studies, and this is something that calls for optimism in light of a society such as Idlib governorate, in which the war affected women’s accompaniment to post-secondary education due to the conditions of movement and lack of safety and the deteriorating economic situation. Out of the twenty studied cases we have 13 women who have completed the university level and the intermediate institute or are in the university study stage, while we find that there are four women who have completed the primary stage only, two have completed the middle stage, and one has completed the secondary stage.

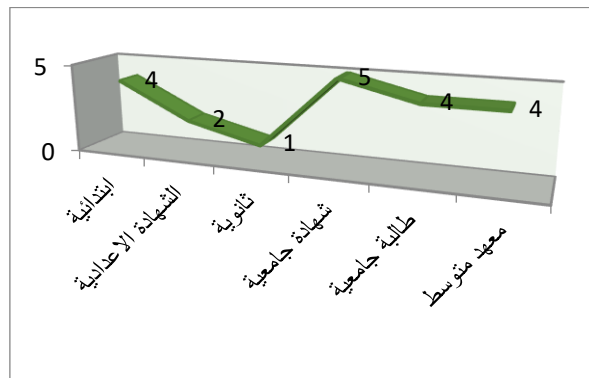


Figure (2) Educational status

Moving to the housing situation in which the respondents reside, Figure (3) indicates that 12 out of twenty respondents live in a separate house with members of their family consisting of the mother, father and children/girls only. While 4 respondents indicated that they live in a common house, meaning that they live with a larger number of members of the extended family, which may be the home of the father-in-law (husband or wife's family) and some relatives. On the other hand, two respondents said that they live in an unfinished house (on the bricks) and the other two live in a tent with generally poor existing services.

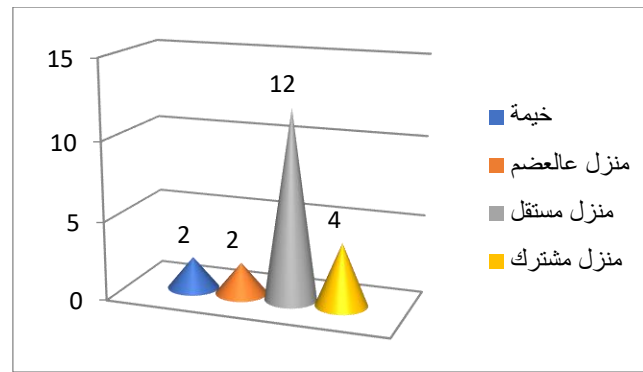


Figure (3) Nature of residence

Regarding the services provided in the place of residence for the women living in the tents, there was a clear lack of services due to the lack of health conditions, the presence of insects, water wheels, the lack of sanitation, and the lack of safety as the camp gets bombed all the time. The situation is not very different from those who reside in unfinished houses (On the bricks), as health services, sanitation and safety are not available. They confirmed that they resided in such places because of the poor economic conditions.

As for those who live in independent houses, they said that some of them need repair and modifications due to the bombing and the effect of the war on homes such as losing windows.

Third: The Working Woman in General:

Professional status	Number
Working for the other- paid work	14
Owner of a private project	6
Total	20

As for the professional status of the respondents, the target sample of the study included working women in general, as shown in the above table. We had 14 women who work for others for a full-time wage, **while we had six cases who set up their own projects, we find a woman working in training women to drive cars, another who opened a vegetable store and another who opened a women's barbershop, a woman who works in "resin" works and employs several women with her, another one opened a clothing store and another woman worked in the field of party photography, and others worked in the field of electronics maintenance. These women succeeded in opening their own projects, although some of these businesses may be considered traditional businesses in other societies, but the privacy of the studied society, Idlib governorate, which in some areas was and still restricts the movement of women in general, these steps by these women are brave ones toward making a change in the structure of society in general. Regarding**

the women who work for others, the majority of them work in the humanitarian field, data entry, education and marketing.

Regarding the work history of women before the war, we find that the mentality of the patriarchal society has overshadowed the position of women in society, as it has established the idea that women should stay at home, take care of their family, and meet the needs of the house in general. This mentality asserted that leaving the house not only for work but for anything else such as visits and others is not necessary without the presence of a husband, father, or an older member in the family, and this in itself is a restriction of women's freedom of movement and prevents them from their social and economic activity.

Previous work	Number
Packaging	1
Baking and selling bread	1
Typist in a stationary office	1
Never worked	5
A tailor shop	1
Party photographer	1
Teacher	7
Laborer in agricultural works	2
Activities moderator	1
Total	20

The majority of the respondents stated that they worked in very traditional jobs such as working in agricultural lands alongside the family or the husband. As for those who worked in education, where we had seven respondents who worked in the field of education, whether voluntarily or formally, they said that **“this is the only job that women can work within our closed societies, and it is considered a luxury and liberation within the society in which we live”**. They asserted that they did not choose this profession out of love, but rather it was the choice of the father or husband, and in some cases the choice of this job was based on economic necessity to meet the family's needs due to the father's death and that they are the only breadwinners for the family. This reflects the extent of restrictions and how they impose themselves on women and their practical choices. As for the rest of the mentioned jobs, they are more than stereotypical, such as making bread.

“I started working because of financial need, and the salary that my father used to take was not enough to educate my brothers and sisters as well as the family expenses.”

While we find that there is a quarter of the respondents who have never worked before and that they stayed at home to meet the needs of the house, husband and family, and there was

resentment by one of them, as she said that she can do all the work and that she has the ability and desire to learn whether it is a craft or anything else, but the nature of the existing society prevented her, in addition to the husband's "ossified" mentality, which she said prevented her from working before the war.

"There is nothing difficult for me to do or learn but I am bound by the chains of tradition, society and husband"

Thus, customs and traditions play a major role in society's acceptance of the idea of women being active and accomplished members in working life and in the economic cycle. We even find that women who were allowed to complete their education chose branches of a traditional nature that allow them to work in the field of education such as the classroom teacher or institute preparing teachers in order to serve the nature of society imposing its control over women before the war. However, and due to displacement and war, we may find that there are changes, albeit slight, that have affected women's economic conditions.

Fourth: Women Who Owns Private Projects:

As we explained previously, the situation of women after the war has changed, especially in Idlib governorate, due to the displacement movement that affected the region, receiving displaced people from all regions, the mixing of cultures, in addition to the necessities of life and the loss of the breadwinner if the husband or the father was in the war. All of this led to a change in society's view of women's work somewhat. From the studied sample of the research, we find that we have six women who chose to do their own jobs and open private projects, although some of these jobs express the stereotypical image of women's work, such as working in cooking and grilling, but the aforementioned society didn't previously accept the idea of their work in the first place or allowed them to mix with men in specific.

All the respondents stated that the quality of work should fit the customs and traditions spread in society, and therefore the decision to go out for work or the type of work in general is up to the husband, father or brother, and they decide whether the work is suitable or not, and some of them attributed this to the bad security situation in the region in general and to the customs, traditions and people's words. Even those who chose their professions, they chose them in accordance with the taste of society and the extent of its acceptance and the extent to which these profession deal with women only.

"While choosing the type of profession in which I work, it should not be a profession that is inappropriate or opposed by society and should not constitute a kind of imbalance and negative effects on the family".

As for the difficulties that women faced in getting out to work, society didn't accept the idea of women working in general, especially women separated from their husbands as a result of divorce. One of the respondents faced pressure from the community and some difficulties while going out for work and this pressure reached the point of avoiding her, but the support of her

parents made her defend her work, this in addition to the bad words of her male brothers which formed another type of pressure.

"Society uses by the concept that you have become (divorced) you are supposed to be dedicated for your children and raise them up. And my young sisters told me that they aren't obliged to raise my children, go out for work and get your own needs. So, I became so confused and I chose to work and defend my job".

These words affected the psychology of the respondent a lot, according to her, and pushed her more to work in order to raise her children, especially females, so that they could complete their education and not be subject to the authority of customs and traditions. For another respondent, not only the society formed a factor of pressure on her, but also the husband who did not want her to work, even though she was the one who opened the project. However, if her husband wasn't in a bad health condition, he would not have accepted her work. She also said that she does not introduce herself as the owner of the project but says that **"she works with her husband to help him"**, and this in itself is a restriction for her goals and dreams in managing her project.

"He only sits with me in the shop because of the fear of society, its bad look and words this is in addition to my husband's strict mentality".

From among the six respondents, we had only one respondent who chose her profession according to her hobby and personal desire, and she was supported by her family, especially her mother, for what she saw of success in this profession by her daughter. She encouraged and supported her to continue with the work even though the community saw it as a new and strange profession, which is Photography profession but she and her family worked to break stereotyped thinking.

Fifth: Women who Work for Others:

Type of work for others	Number
Media	1
Humanitarian work	6
Electronics maintenance	1
Cooking food in a public place	1
Data entry	1
Sales representative	4
Total	14

Regarding the respondents who work for others in return for a wage, the situation was not different from the society's view and the environment around them, in addition to the role of the parents and the husband in choosing the profession or job in which the woman will work. We have 14 women who work for others, 6 of whom work in the humanitarian field and the field of

protection or community service, and the society didn't accept the idea of women working in some fields, but the society's view was an incentive for them to work and succeed. As one of them working in the Civil Defense stated that everyone was surprised by her work, but some supported her, and others abused her and this was a reason to continue her work.

"The first time I started to work, the people were surprised that there were women in the civil defense. People's words were the main support for our work. I mean the word "Thank you" or "May God strengthen you" makes our heart rejoice. However, there were people whose words were frustrating, and their look at us as women were vague and incomprehensible".

Most of the respondents stated that they had to work to support their families or to raise their standard of living. Because of that, they incurred additional burdens of psychological and moral pressure on them. Some of the female respondents who were displaced from the countryside of Damascus indicated that the society's pressure and persecution of women was one of the harshest experiences they had experienced as the restriction of movement along with the poor financial situation increased the pressure on women more and more.

Regardless the bad living conditions either because of the war or because of the bad economic situation, women who received support from the husband and the family were able to overcome these mistreatments through the encouragement of the mother or the husband or the family in general. However, some women who lost their husbands or those who have sick husbands who can't work, were obliged to face the society all on their own just using their insistence and wish to prove themselves.

They all reported that they are forced to choose jobs that do not make them mix with men because of the prevailing social norm that women should not mix with men or be with them in the same place. Even the studied society in general does not accept the idea of working in the humanitarian action as they consider it undesirable work that is linked to western society. They think so because they fear of the transmission of some western ideas to society as a result of ignorance of humanitarian work and its principles.

"Society does not accept women's work in this field because they consider it a western thought, and the society does not like women's work in general, because in its view women are created for their own home only".

Sixth: Violence Against Working Women:

It is known that violence directed against women in general and against working women in particular may have many forms. It may be directed by society in general through bullying and moral and symbolic abuse. It may be violence directed by the family and the husband and includes many forms of physical, psychological, and moral violence. And it may be directed by the employer, such as psychological violence, to sexual harassment, and may even amount to rape.

In our study, society played a major role in verbal abuse, bullying, and even boycotting women who work in certain fields. Most of the women working for others reported being pursued by people either by looks or by words.

“I faced a lot of bullying by people, verbal abuse and received bad looks from them. I was constantly hearing words like: “How come a girl work in the media, don't we have any men to work?” Imagine! Also, they were bullying me by saying the photographing stand is a weapon”.

A humanitarian worker also reported that: "Many of the people to whom we provide services don't receive us in a good way and we usually face symbolic violence and verbal abuse by society, and the abuse always targets the reputation and morals of women".

“Sometimes they refuse to meet us and say that we use their need just to receive salaries. They also say that we are girls moving by ourselves from one camp to another and meet with a lot of men”.

Regarding female workers that worked as sales representatives, they were subjected to bullying, verbal abuse and psychological violence both from the society that was persecuting them with their looks and through verbal abuse from customers, whether they were men or women. This was accompanied with the woman's fear of entering someone's house due to insecurity and the large number of cases of harassment.

One of the respondents who is the breadwinner of her family stated that because of the financial need, she was forced to confront society with work, although the work she does is considered a stereotypical work for women, which is cooking and grilling, but the mere fact that women go out to work outside their homes can become a cause for their abuse.

“People think that I go out to sell myself and they don't see that I go out for work just to be able live with dignity and wait for nobody to help us. I worked to be able to provide life substances for my mother and siblings and wait no help from anybody”.

This is with regard to the abuse that working women can be exposed to from the community, and as for the mistreatment that women can face in the family in general, they mentioned the increase of pressure on working women because of working outside and inside the home. In addition, when they were asked about the work they do before leaving the house, they said that they clean the house, prepare food, follow the children in school, and then go out to work. This means that women play all roles without being assisted by any of their family members, and this is considered mistreatment and disrespect for human rights. The long working hours, as reported by most of the respondents, makes them feel socially isolated due to the lack of

sufficient time to engage in social activities and meet with family and friends, which means the increased psychological pressure that working women may feel.

“If I ask my husband to help me at home, he will say that I'm trying to control him because I work and spend on the house while he can't find any work”.

However, there are four cases from the mentioned cases where their husbands take their responsibilities in the house work which made them feel participatory and relieve them of psychological and physical pressure, such as helping to take care of children and preparing food, while the rest of the respondents do all the work on their own.

While at work, most of the respondents didn't face mistreatment at work because their work is generally with women, especially owners of private projects. As for the women respondents who work for others, several women were subjected to abuse at work because they are only women, and some were exploited to attract customers using their “female” skills. One of them was subjected to verbal harassment by a customer, and when she was asked to whom she had resorted to in order to face this violence directed against her, the respondent stated that she had not resorted to anyone.

“He used my condition and my need for work in order to attract customers”.

Seventh: Women's Opinion in Work:

All respondents stated that women's work is very important and necessary considering that women are an integral part of this society. Work is also important for women in order to obtain their financial and moral independence and develop themselves, just as work is one of their legitimate rights.

Woman's work is a necessity. Nobody can imagine the humiliation and despair woman feels when she asks others to help her no matter how close this person was to her”.

All the respondents indicated that the tasks of women changed after the war as they were obliged to take other tasks other than those that were imposed on them by society like taking care of house works and raising children. For example, they took leadership works and roles in the society as women engaged in a lot of fields after just working in limited fields like (a teacher, a doctor, a nurse or a hairdresser). Today women work in a lot of sectors like organizations, shops, media and many other works.

The respondents stated that the most important challenges that face women in the society are the look of the society for working women which is connected to customs and traditions that say (girl is only for kitchen). This is in addition the security condition in the region because of the war and also because the workplaces are very far with the absence of any means of transportation.

Regarding the facilitations that encourage women to work, the most important of which, according to the respondents, were the husband's support for women and the cooperation between women and men in work outside and inside the home, in addition to the family's understanding of women's work.

And regarding the role of Syrian women after the war, the respondents reported that women have gained a large and effective role by opening training centers and conducting awareness sessions that made women more open to society. They worked more and the majority of women became the breadwinners for their families after the war, as they had lost one of their family members and this led to a change in the status and role of women in society. Few respondents reported that the status of women in the studied society has deteriorated due to the lack of education of girls and the resort to marrying off girls under the pretext of protecting them.

“Honestly, I see the situation of women after the war much worse. We witnessed a setback in matters of early marriage, female education, and preventing girls from going out and expressing their opinion, with a sense that we went back a hundred years, while in neighboring areas women go out, learn, work and enjoy”.

Recommendations:

The most important suggestions that the respondents mentioned to improve the reality of women in Idlib governorate were as follows:

- Providing security and safety in order to ease movement especially the movement of women.
- Enhancing the role of the media by highlighting the successes achieved by women in professions that were only practice by men in order to confirm that women have the ability to practice any work and that there are no professions that are limited to one gender without the other.
- Providing capital for women who have undertaken professions of their own through integrated projects.
- Reconsidering the economic empowerment projects for women led by civil society organizations, especially the organizations that work with women in terms of the type of empowerment and not limiting the projects to traditional roles and professions that restrict women to certain professions and exclude other professions under the pretext of women's inability and lack of community acceptance.
- Raising awareness of women's rights and empowering them in society.
- Securing job opportunities for women who lost their husbands according to the capabilities they possess while ensuring their protection from exploitation in the workplace.
- Increasing livelihood programs that give opportunities for uneducated women to work and increasing small projects that maximize women's involvement in work.

- It is very important to continue with the economic empowerment of women, but there is a greater need for social empowerment to go along 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.
- Struggling to achieve 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 psychological pressure on women at home and the pressures of domestic work.
- The media should shed light on these aspects, as the media has a fundamental role in changing societal awareness and keeping women away from stereotypes.
- Modifying the curricula that took an approach from "Daddy reads the newspaper, and Mama cooks".

General Results of The Study

1. The change in the social roles of women in general in Idlib governorate led to a doubling of roles after the war. In addition to the roles that were imposed on women related to domestic work and childcare, we find them leading the economic roles by going out to work or establishing their own businesses, which increases the burden on them while bearing both roles.
2. The factor of war, displacement and eviction led, in most of cases, to the loss of the breadwinner, as well as the bad economic conditions had a distinctive role in making women go out searching for work and break the routine of making women stay at home.
3. Participation of women, in the area of the study, in the works related to the humanitarian side as the society accepted this participation despite the existence of criticizing look for them. In addition to that, we noted the engagement of women in the Civil Defense works as well as societal work and new works that didn't exist before in the society like electronics fixing and cutting and grilling meat.
4. Women in these areas became able on specifying their goals whether regarding searching for a job opportunity or continuing their education, this didn't exist before 2011 as the society was very conservative regarding the cases of women.
5. Most of the works made by women before war were stereotyped traditional works that were mostly limited to education, agricultural works, and packaging.
6. The nature of works that woman currently do has changed to include: Protection and societal service, projects' owners (private shops, women's hair styling, teaching car driving, electronics fixing, data entry, and photographing, sales representative). Although some of these works might be typical in other societies, but in the society of Idlib and its countryside they are regarded new professions that needed to break the stereotyping to be practiced.
7. The women's engagement in work outside the house had the purpose of achieving economic independence and living without the need for another person, and this is

regarded a change in the women's level of awareness regarding their rights and their importance in the society.

8. The support of family and husband for women plays a big role in their success in any work they do despite the look of the society as well as the customs and traditions that bond women.
9. Even if the call of going out for work is decided by women, the type of work they will do will be a man's decision whether the father or the husband or any other male with a power in the family. Males mostly decide the environment of the work as it shouldn't include males in it and this indicates the deep-rooted concept of customs and traditions in the societal thinking.
10. Bullying and verbal abuse were of the most common types of violence that working women faced in the society.
11. Despite all bonds and negative looks of the society for the working woman, the women included in this study insisted on working and achieving their goals and this indicates the increase of their awareness regarding the importance of compacting the societal change.
12. Refusing to help women by the family members in the burdens of house works increased the level of psychological and physical pressure on the women and this increased their social isolation from relatives and friends and weakened their relationships with their husbands.
13. The society's point of view regarding woman that get separated from her husband as a result of divorce hasn't changed when it comes to leaving home and searching for work.

Annex guide of Case study form

Case Study Form

Economic role for women in the northwest of Syria after war

Dear,

Equity and Empowerment Organization is conducting a study about the economic role of women after war in the area of northwest of Syria. Considering you one of the targeted segments of the research, we wish that you will be able to help us answer the questions of the form in order to reach information that will benefit working women in the future in overcoming challenges and developing themselves.

Information you will share with us will remain confidential and will be only used for the purposes of the research. I want you to feel in answering all the questions. Taking into account that the period available for filling the form is between 60 and 90 minutes.

Thank you very much for your time.

General information

Questions	Instructions for data collector	
Name		
Age		
Place of origin		
Place of residence		
Educational level (last completed educational level)		
Marital status	Single Engaged Married Divorced Widow Wife of a missing or a detained man	In case of being a wife of a missing or a detainee man, please ask since when and the side that detained him as well as the reason of detention.
Number of family members (subject of the research)		
Previous work	Never worked before- mention the reason In case of working, mention the reason for choosing this type of work and who chose the type of work for her and why.	
Nature of residence	An independent house	

	<p>A house shared with the family.</p> <p>A tent or incomplete house.</p> <p>Other, mention.....</p>	<p>Ask about the persons that live with her, the available services in the residence and the extent of health conditions presence in it.</p>
Work (professional field)		
1. Work condition and its relation to the work burden	<p>employer</p> <p>I work full time for other in return for a wage.</p> <p>I work part time for other in return for a wage.</p> <p>I work full time for the family in return for a wage.</p> <p>I work part time for the family in return for a wage.</p> <p>Other, mention.....</p>	
2. Essential profession currently practiced	<p>After asking about the profession, he works currently, ask her about the reason for choosing this profession and how the society dealt with it.</p>	
3. Who took the decision of your work outside house?	<p>Mention the reason.</p>	
4. Who took the decision about the type of your work outside house?	<p>Mention the reason.</p>	
5. What are the routine works that you do for your family or your husband and children before leaving house to your work?	<p>(For example: Cleaning up the kids and preparing their meals. I leave the house fast having no time to tidy the house. Doing the laundry. Taking the kids to the kindergarten. Discussing some points related to house with the husband, other, mention.....).</p>	
6. Do you sometimes feel that you are socially isolated? Why?	<p>(Probe: do any of your relatives visit you? Can you form friendships? etc.)</p>	<p>In addition to details about whether the work contributed to the increase in isolation due to the lack of acceptance by society and friends.</p>
7. Has your frequent tasks weakened your relationship with your husband or family in general?	<p>(Please provide details about how her relationship with her family or her husband weakened, or if their relationship increased, then mention the details)</p>	
8. Has your work (whatever its nature) improved the economic situation of the family? (Please explain your experience)		
9. Did your work or going out to work lead to male family	<p>If no, please talk in details about that.</p> <p>If yes, What tasks did they participate in</p>	

members (husband, brother) sharing some of the household tasks you used to do?	(please talk in detail through your daily experiences)	
10. Did you feel a sense of appreciation (from family members and the surrounding community) for your contribution to economic responsibilities to improve the economic situation of you or the family?		
If working for others, ask these questions		
11. In general, how does the employer treat you?	(Is there discrimination in treatment between males and females, in terms of wages, dealings, working hours, etc.)	
12. Do you happen to be absent from work (number of absences) and what are the reasons for that?		
13. How does the manager or supervisor deal with you if you get absent from work?		
14. Have you experienced any kind of abuse at work by the manager or one of the employees? If yes, what is its type and how did this happen?	Mention the person who committed the abuse, and the details of the type of abuse (including the harassment, whether from the employer or others) and explain the situation, why it happened and how it happened.	
15. If you were abused by the manager or one of the employees, what did you do and to whom did you go?	To know the extent to which women are aware of their rights at work and who can support them and the woman's reaction to violence and abuse, is it just because she is a woman who has been abused...etc.	
If she was the employer, ask these questions		
16. How did you start your own project?	Who supported you (family, husband, friends...) How did you take the decision of this work? Is it within your interests?	
17. What are the obstacles you faced in the beginning of the project and what are the current obstacles you face?	Acceptance of the surrounding society, acceptance of the labor market for the presence of women in it, the presence of competition in the labor market, the absence of employees who are satisfied with working under the management of a woman...etc.	

18. How did you face these challenges?	Persistence and self-affirmation, family support, legal support...etc.	
19. If you were not a woman, do you think you would face the same difficulties and why?		
	Women's opinion of women's work in general	
20. Do you think that it is necessary for women to work outside the home? Why?		
21. Did the tasks assigned to you in particular and to women in general changed after the war. Please explain and why?		
22. What are the obstacles or facilities for your choice to work after the war?	(Probe to customs and mores in general, laws and political conditions, the role of the family and the husband).	
23. During and after the war, did you work in the following activities (combat, demonstrations, volunteer work, relief work,...etc.) please explain?		
24. How do you see the condition of women in your area? Has it changed from what it was before the war, in terms of status and role in the family and society? Please explain.	And mention the causes and contributing factors.	
25. In your opinion... What are the suggestions to improve the reality of working women in general in society?		

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أَنْتِ وَأَنَا، فَعَا نَسْتَطِيعُ حِينَمَا نَرِيدُ