

# Empowerment of Women in Gulf States



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## Abstract

Traditionally that males in the society in developing countries suppress women. People believe that the status of women in Arab countries are very poor many rights which the other countries give to the women are not given to them. The study focus on the women rights and gender equality in Behrain, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Traditionally the male in this region suppress women, common cultural and religious features include adherence to Islam in various forms. The Gulf states has a patriarchal ethos and conservative religious social and cultural norms with limited women rights. The status of women in Gulf countries like United Arab Emirates have achieved some measures of legal protection in recent year. Empowerment means the process of challenging existing equality, power relations, and of gaining control over sources by the under - privileged. The status of women in Gulf Countries like United Arab Emirates have achieved some measures of legal protection in recent years. As according to Gender inequality Index 21% of Emirati woman were part of the labour force, where as 45% of Kuwati woman were part of the labour force. The social and political transformations sweeping the Arab region have empowered the woman population. The social transformation process of changing status of women presents a substantial improvement in certain aspects like social, economic activities.

**Keywords:** Gulf Countries, Gender inequality Index.

## Introduction

Traditionally the males in the society in developing countries suppress women. People believe that the status of women in Arab countries are very poor many rights which the other countries give to the women are not given to them. But this is a misconception because of igorence. Earliest women were dealing with such cruelty but in Arab countries due to religion, various rights are given to them relating to making decisions about family, marriage, career etc. but it is true that these efforts are limited due to some valid reasons as traditionally the women responsibilities were considered to look after family children and house hold affairs.

## Objective of The Study

The study focus on the women rights and gender equality in Behrain, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Traditionally the male in this region suppress women, common cultural and religious features include adherence to Islam in various forms. They were tribal, conservative and have traditional bound culture. The Gulf states has a patriarchal ethos and conservative religious social and cultural norms with limited women rights. Family and personal status law are guided by the Islamic Sharia, which broadly define women's status is not entitled to basic rights and having less than full participation in all social and political spheres. The status of women in Gulf countries like United Arab Emirates have achieved some measures of legal protection in recent year.

Women in Gulf states face specific constraints in terms of cultural and traditional taboos-emerging from patrilineal inheritance to patrilocal residence, lack of education, marketing and management skill, access to capital, technology and resources. They lack mobility, their work remain invisible and on account of social norms women perceived contribution to the well being of the household is often lower to their actual contribution. Women should somehow be "brought into development" and become "empowered" to participate within the political and economic structures of the society. Empowerment means the process of challenging existing equality, power relations, and of gaining control over sources by the under - privileged. Empowerment could be invoked in the context of human rights,

## Remarking An Analisation

basic needs, economic security, capacity building, skill formation, condition of dignified social existence.

The term empowerment is constituent of the most important word power. It was the power symmetries in the society by gender that gave way to the male exploitation over female and for the persistence of women's subordination.

Empowerment is multi dimensional process the came into existence in 1995, when human development report has been published. The goal of women empowerment is to challenge patriarchal ideology to transform the structure and institutions. To empower women the creation of an enabling environment, through strong policy support of NGOs, participation of women group is needed. Women should realize that they have constitutional rights to good quality health care, financial security and access to knowledge, education and equal opportunities for the girl in the society. Empowerment signifies a change from a status of failure to recognition and success.

Empowerment of women and issues linked with advocacy are now in the foreground, as development studies move toward a more integrally gendered approach. The most rooted forms of inequality built into the structure of traditional society are those based on gender. Empowering women has been the central agenda for government and NGO driven sector interventions. NGOs are playing a significant role in women empowerment. In the fields of education co-operation, labour etc., the tremendous work has been done by them.

### Role of Women Organization and Social Media in Gulf States

1. In Bahrain as is considered most liberal country, the pressure from non-governmental organization (NGOs) leads to improvement in women's situation regarding religious background.
2. In Iran women movement is limited as they were being imprisoned, tortured and killed if wants to

improve their rights. A facebookcampaign called StealthyFreedom initiated by the London based Ironion journalist, Masih Alinejed in 2014 inviting Iranian women to post uneildpictures of themselves is the example of regarding the compulsory dress code at the national and international level.

3. In Iraq the women are facing serious setbacks due to political instability and the emergency of Islamic parties. There are reports of cousing violence by Sunni militant group ISIS.
4. In Kwait they are particularly successful in creating educational opportunities. Kuwait recognise the importance of women empowerment for country's development.
5. In Omen due to Government restriction independent women's rights organization are absent. The use of Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp is being monitored and several online activist are been prosecuting and are put into prison.
6. In Qatar National Development strategy 2011-2016 includes the policy for women's economic empowerment and their participation is decision making positions. In Qatar women use social media more frequently them man.
7. In Saudi Arabia the women to free speech, press, religion and assembly are lacking. In 1999 after the authorities had developed and installed altering system to safe guard social and religious norms.The internet becomes available for public use and growth is noticed in the number of blogs discussing women's issues, but it is low compared to Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran.
8. In UAE the women's right groups were restricted. The wife of the former president Sheikha Fatima Bin Mubarak establish UAE women's federation in 1975. Twitter is popular among young and highly educated Emirati women. Although they comprise only 5% of the whole population.

Situation of Women's in Relation To

Rights of Women	Bahrain	Iran	Iraq	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
Right to vote	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Limite d
Male guardian ship	Partial (276)	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowed by Law arranged marriages girls under 18 polygyny	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	Yes	No (277)	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equal Right to divorce	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Law of violence against women	No (281)	No	Partial	Partial	Partial	No	Yes	No
Equal access to education	Yes, but limitation to certain technical studies	Yes, But limitation on certain studies	Yes in theory	yes, but higher criteria to restore gender balance in certain programs	yes, but higher criteria to restore gender balance	Yes	Yes, but serious limitations on certain studies and sex segregation	Yes

Independent NGOS active on women's right	limited by quasi government	No	Yes	No (Only) governmentled	No (Only) governmentte d	No (Only) gover nment led and quasi gover nmant al	No (Only) governmentled	Limite d
Recent Democratizati on uprisings	Yes	Yes (Green) Movement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, Small demonstration	No

277

Women can marry with parental consent at the age of 15.

276

Women have right to work but in some case needs husbands permission

281

A rapist is not punished if he agrees to marry the victim

**Functions of Women's Organization in Gulf States**

In these states women's are facing various problems and the courses to improve women's human rights in the eight gulf states by various organization and activist are-

**Bahrain**

1. Elimination of Sexual and domestic abuse against women.
2. Providing women's shelter for Bahraini.
3. Women's professional and network organization i.e. Bahrain Women Society (BBS).

**Iran**

1. Addressing compulsory dress code.
2. Advocating the elimination of gender based discriminatory law.
3. Increasing athletic opportunities for women and gaining permission to attend all sporting events.

**Iraq**

1. Raising awareness of gender discriminatory laws.
2. Economic engagement of women and youth in private sector.

**Kuwait**

1. Demanding right for women as stipulated within Islam.
2. Improving women's socio-cultured condition by lopping for women's voting right
3. Protecting right and explicatory of domestic workers

**Oman**

1. Arranging socio cultured activities for migrants.
2. Providing educational and professional training by organizing entrepreneurship workshops and providing information including scholarships.

**Qatar**

1. Raising awareness regarding women's is constitutional rights.
2. Preventing the trafficking of women and children.
3. Offering family support programmes and career training.
4. Providing legal and to women to improve women's position.

**Saudi Arabia**

1. Juridical representation of women in Sharia courts.
2. Preventing child marriage.
3. Promotion of the right to drive.
4. Elimination of domestic violence.

**UAE**

1. Suggesting new laws and amendments to existing laws, to improve women's is position in society.
2. Advancement of migrant worker's right especially female domestic workers.
3. Addressing issues of trafficking, domestic violence and descrimination.
4. UAE Women's federation now general women's Union chaired by Sheikhafatima, late Wife of Sheikha Zayed has been tasked with ruling theocracy in UAE to provide a policy and advisory role for women's empowerment.

**Conclusion**

It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.

"It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wings" Swami Vivekananda. The status of women in Gulf Countries like United Arab Emirates have achieved some measures of legal protection in recent years. As according to Gender inequality Index 21% of Emirati woman were part of the labour force, where as 45% of Kuwati woman were part of the labour force The role of woman in society in the UAE has gradually expended since the discovery of oil. For years, women in these countries have suffered from gender discrimination, and without the presence of woman, victory could not have been possible as today's concept 'No men without women' is highlighted to great extent, only when women achieve their right we can say that "Arab spring" has commenced. The social and political transformations sweeping the Arab region have empowered the woman population. The social transformation process of changing status of women presents a substantial improvement in certain aspects like social, economic activities.

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