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Women's political activity in Saudi Arabia (2000-2015)

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Abstract

In recent years, the issue of women in Saudi Arabia has received considerable attention from the state and its various agencies, in order to give it a prominent role to contribute to all affairs of society. Women's participation in all activities and aspects of society is not only a women's interest. During the reign of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, who witnessed a remarkable interest in women and their political rights, the research dealt with two topics: The first topic was to monitor the obstacles facing Saudi women in their political work. The second section was devoted to dealing with images of Saudi women in leadership positions and forms of political participation.

Keywords: Political rights, Saudi Arabia, Women's participation, Leadership positions.

Actividad política de las mujeres en Arabia Saudita (2000-2015)

Resumen

En los últimos años, el tema de las mujeres en Arabia Saudita ha recibido una atención considerable del estado y sus diversas agencias, a fin de darle un papel destacado para contribuir a todos los asuntos de la sociedad. La participación de las mujeres en todas las actividades y aspectos de la sociedad no es solo un interés de las mujeres. Durante el reinado del rey Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, quien presenció un notable interés en las mujeres y sus derechos políticos, la investigación abordó dos temas: el primer tema fue monitorear los obstáculos que enfrentan las mujeres sauditas en su trabajo político. La segunda sección se dedicó a tratar con imágenes de mujeres sauditas en puestos de liderazgo y formas de participación política.

Palabras clave: Derechos políticos, Arabia Saudita, Participación de las mujeres, Posiciones de liderazgo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women are considered one of the cornerstones of development and dealing with this issue vary from country to country depending on the religious, intellectual and cultural system of the country. However, the issue of women has become an important topic, and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia women are less fortunate among those in the Arab Gulf countries. These are the activities whereby women participate in the selection of rulers and in the choice of the general policy of the state directly or indirectly, ie, it means the participation of women at different levels of the political system without discrimination, such as the right of women to hold office. General political, and membership of civil and voluntary organizations and political parties and their right to nominate in elections and vote and discuss public matters (SADEGHI ET AL, 2017).

2. THE FIRST TOPIC

2.1. Obstacles facing the participation of Saudi women in political work

It is known that the most important thing that hinders the process of political reform and achieves development and development

is the nature of the prevailing culture. Saudi society has dominated the traditional thought based on the exclusion of women from political participation and that their role is limited to marital and family duties, and Saudi women have somewhat failed to eliminate this thought, despite attempts by some Saudi women activists to prove their ability to assume leadership positions, is still a long way to go, especially in light of the existence of several obstacles in its way, including the influence of religious institutions as well as women themselves.

Saudi society dominates the religious. Tribal structures and their impact on civil society are among the most important obstacles facing Saudi women in political participation, especially in light of the lack of projects for the development of culture and the absence of a national cultural and political project as well as the role of the religious establishment in deepening this.

The tendency to ban them from the political participation of women in leadership positions, especially since the regime in the Kingdom is not only a religious institution, but also a political partner, tribalism and religious tendency combined with government support to be the strongest obstacles to the achievement of Saudi women equality with men in the Kingdom. It means that the conflict is long for Saudi women. In addition to the obstacles, Saudi women themselves, as the political participation of Saudi women depends on the growth of women's political awareness of the importance of the exercise of their political rights (Najla bint Saleh Al Awad, Obstacles to the

Empowerment of Women: 190) This certainly depends on the increasing number of educated and changing the methods of upbringing and education, which helps to develop the extent of women's ability to organize themselves in the state institutions to defend their rights and exercise their role, In engaging herself in political participation because she suffers from negativity and lack of self-confidence, she holds values that the first goal of women is concentrated in her marital life and the care of her children (Democratic Forum, Political Empowerment: 142). Political and in front of their ability to reach their rights

2.2. Saudi Arabia's position on CEDAW

Holding many conferences and promulgating many conventions and covenants that concern women and defending their rights, the most important of these conventions is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is a universal declaration of women's rights and international legislation for legal standards of their rights. The Convention includes 30 articles calling on the world, as legally binding, to oblige ratifying states to grant women the right to self-determination. Equality with men in public, political, cultural and economic life, especially Article 7, which stipulates the right of women to participate in political life and to have the right to vote in all elections and participate in the formulation of government policy and that they have the right to hold public office at

all levels of the state. Haifa Abu-Ghazaleh, quantitative and qualitative indicators: 79) Many Arab countries have acceded to the Convention (20) countries, including Saudi Arabia, which ratified and acceded to the Convention in September 7, 2000, but the Kingdom expressed reservations on some articles of the Convention based on Islamic law and ones Article 29, which concerns arbitration between States in the event of the application of this Convention by referring to the International Court of Justice, as the Kingdom considered it to oppose Islamic Sharia (Haifa Abu-Ghazaleh). Quantitative and qualitative indicators: 61)

2.3. Women's Movement in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom witnessed attempts by Saudi women activists to obtain their rights. On November 26, 1999, the Kingdom witnessed a women's march in Riyadh. The 46 women who were demanding to be allowed to drive were chanted "Freedom" (Fatima Hafez, *Women's Empowerment*: 19). However, the religious establishment stood up against their demands and issued fatwa's that prohibit their driving (*Islamic Magazine, Women Driving*: 75). External after the revolution Information and modern means of communication, which gave impetus to women's work, which coincided with the emergence of a number of organizations and NGOs, especially after the issuance of the seventh five-year plan (2005-2010) in the Kingdom, which stipulated the importance of activating the role of women to play their role and

contribution. It is accompanied by the access of Saudi women to their rights such as the enjoyment of their civil and political rights, including the right to drive a car and travel without supervision, which indicates that there is still a long way to go for Saudi women to achieve all their rights (United Nations, women's movements in the Arab world Tmaih for Western Asia, New York, 2005: 103: ALWAHDANI, 2019).

3. THE SECOND TOPIC

3.1. Saudi women hold senior positions in the country

Saudi women joined the Chamber of Commerce and Industry through their participation in the election of the Chamber's Board of Directors in 2005. The Chamber witnessed a large turnout by women to vote for the 17 candidates for the Board of Directors. In the same year, Eng. Nadia Bakhraji, a member of the board of directors of the Commission, was appointed in this regard and in a speech by Princess Rima bint Turki bin Abdulaziz. In the forum in 2007, 56% of university graduates were women and 31% of directors and heads of boards in the Kingdom were women. She joined the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Engineers and Lawyers' Syndicates, in addition to being a consultant in the Shura Council. Al-Mu'tasim Billah Daoud Alawi, Political Reform: 128). These developments culminated in the nomination of a number of Saudi women for

leadership positions, including the appointment of (Soraya Ahmed Obaid) in one of the bodies of the United Nations, where she was appointed Executive Director of the Fund in 2000 to be the first Saudi woman in this high-level position, in the Saudi Foreign Ministry, including jobs at the level of ambassador. SINCE 2005 (26: 2005), a post has been allocated to the Department of Women in the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AL-MU'TASIM BILLAH DAWOOD Alawi, Political Reform: 130), which indicates that the role of Saudi women in the Kingdom has come a long way, especially after the government measures of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz In particular, after the appointment of (2005-2015) NOURA AL-FAYEZ. Deputy Minister of Education for Girls' Affairs, making it the first woman to enter the ministerial formation in the Kingdom (IMAN HUSSEIN RAHMA AL-ZAABI, Women's Political Participation: 85)

3.2. Forms of Political Participation of Saudi Women (Shura Council)

The Basic Law of Government (Constitution) was adopted in Saudi Arabia in 1992 by KING FAHD BIN ABDUL AZIZ (1982-2005). The Basic Law shall be amended by Royal Order. On the formation of the Shura Council (established since 1924) in accordance with the (Shura Council Law) issued in 1992 and amended in 2003, the Council was formed of 150 members and appointed by royal order provided that the Council enjoys the views of public policy in an

advisory state that does not have The Council has supervisory powers, as well as membership of the Council She was confined to men only, but the Saudi government changed its position on the political participation of Saudi women, allowing them to participate in the sessions of the Shura Council and to express an opinion on matters concerning Saudi women. Indeed, (20) Saudi women attended the Shura Council sessions and followed the proceedings from a balcony overlooking the meeting room, with the President of the Council stressing the need to attend researchers and activists open sessions and provide advice on social issues related to women (Al-Mu'tasim Billah Daoud Alawi, political reform: 113). Posted by Saudi women in 2003 at a meeting of the Council to discuss issues related to women and human rights (Sulaiman Sulaiman, political participation: 71) also called the organization (National Society for Human Rights), which was established in 2004, the first non-governmental organization concerned with human rights, called for the need to address practices The Saudi National Dialogue (Reform National Dialogue Conferences) was held in 2005 and was attended by many university professors, intellectuals and activists, both men and women. This initiative has had an impact on the Kingdom's reform of the Shura Council (AL-MUTASIM BILLAH DAOUD ALAWI, Political Reform: 120). . These attempts culminated in the issuance of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz two royal orders No. 1/45 on January 11, 2013, the first of which was to amend each of the third article of the Shura system to limit the participation of women by at least 20% of the members of the Council (150) members Article 22 stipulates that the participation of women in

the committees shall be taken into consideration that the member woman shall abide by the Islamic Shari'a rules in its membership, to represent the Kingdom at the Arab and international levels and to meet with female figures in the delegations of Arab and international parliaments. Azavith in various scientific and literary disciplines have expressed members of the Shura Council welcomed the element of women who joined the Council (Najla girl Saleh Al Awad, the obstacles women's empowerment: 71). Although the Shura Council has undergone several changes, including the recent decisions to amend its system, such as approving the entry of women into parliament as stated in the royal decree of King Abdullah and discussing some of the laws mentioned above, the level of effectiveness and powers of the legislative and supervisory council remains. First a Albedo, not elected by the people, and the mechanism of recruitment is often not through which trading positions, as the process we find that some members of the Council are present for several consecutive sessions as the council is free from the presence of political parties (Yusuf Khalifa Al-Youssef, Cooperation Council: 87)

3.3. Attempt of Saudi women to contribute to the state institutions (municipal model)

In 1993, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia witnessed an upgrade of the municipalities system by introducing a revised decree governing the provincial government, which included the appointment of

municipal councils throughout the Kingdom to follow up on local developments. Participation in the nomination and voting (Al-Mu'tasim Billah Dawood Alawi, Political Reform: 113), which provoked a condemnation from a number of women who initiated their readiness to stand as candidates. International human rights organizations, particularly Amnesty International, denounced the exclusion of Saudi women from participation as a setback for women's rights (Fatima Hafez, Women's Empowerment: 29).

4. CONCLUSION

There is a development in the status and status of women in Saudi Arabia thanks to the factors of development and renewal, which achieved advanced steps as a result of progress of society and the system, especially after the passage of Saudi society political, social and economic changes, which increased attention to the subject of women and political participation, and it became clear that there are signs of change in the proportion The participation of Saudi women in political life and their attempt to involve herself in the competition of men in a completely different from the accumulations and reality experienced in previous times, Saudi women have been able to imitate some of the leadership positions, but nevertheless did not reach Z limit is required because of the restrictions imposed on Saudi women, whether due to social traditions or government or because of the influence of religious institutions as well as the limitations of the

women themselves, requiring them struggle continues to gain full rights, especially their right to political participation.

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