

Motivations of Women's Work in Jordan⁽¹⁾

The paper tries to give a brief report about the Jordanian woman's present participation in the labor force, followed by suggestions for greater development of women's skills.

The need for woman's work becomes clear when we know that the number of potential women workers is 22% of the population, while the actual number of women workers is 6.5%.

Recent progress:

The illiteracy rate among women fell from 48% in 1974 to 34% in 1980. This was due to the following reasons:

- a. Implementation of compulsory education.
- b. Lowering the number of girl student dropouts from 11.8% in 1975 to 8% in 1980.
- c. Forbidding labor for children below 16.
- d. Creating vocational schools for girls.
- e. Increasing the number of centers for fighting illiteracy.
- f. The existence of two universities in Jordan; a third one will soon be operating.

Fields of work for women

Main fields: Teaching, social service, nursing.

Other fields: 355 women doctors, 234 women employed in information service, 72 women in police force, 42,834 women in rural work, West Bank.

Syndical Activity:

In 1980, women counted 80% in Private Teachers' Syndicate;

25% in Spinning and Weaving Syndicate.

30% in Public Health Syndicate.

Political Activity:

10% in National Advisory Council.

5% in the Cabinet.

Motivations of development:

- 1 — Woman's awareness of the country's need for her work, particularly because of the growing number of male emigrants.

1 — Abstract of a paper presented by Sahira Nabulsi (Jordanian delegate) at the Second Regional Conference for Women in the Gulf States and Arabian Peninsula, 28-31 March 1981. See *Al-Raida*, Feb. 1, 1982, vol. V, n°. 19, p. 11.

- 2 — Her desire for economic and social independence.
- 3 — Influence of international conferences, mass media, and training courses.
- 4 — Increasing number of nursery schools for children of working mothers. Here we should note that the number is much below the need, and the personnel in charge are not adequately trained.
- 5 — Recently promulgated labor laws favoring woman's work by giving her equal rights with men in the way of leaves, bonuses, promotion and so on. Laws, however, are not always put into practice.

Recommendations:

To meet the need for developing woman's skills and potentials, the following suggestions are given:

- 1 — Preparing research studies on topics related to women.
- 2 — Organizing a documentation center, containing reference works on women, such as studies, books, reports and recommendations of conferences and seminars.
- 3 — Creating projects allowing home-makers to do remunerative work at home, including crafts such as: dress-making, folkloric costumes, clay modeling, ceramics, leather work, wood work, rural crafts etc.
- 4 — Following an efficient informational policy regarding methods of developing woman's skills.
- 5 — Training leaders and specialists who will take charge of training women in the above skills.
- 6 — Organizing training sessions for the following groups:
 - Working women.
 - Women who want to go back to work after interruption.
 - Society women willing to develop certain skills and to learn new ones.
 - Leaders and program directors.
 - Home makers wishing to develop their knowledge concerning health, dietetics, family planning, family relations, domestic technology, struggle against illiteracy and so on.
- 7 — Creating a project of training in national service, which will aim to develop a spirit of self-discipline, national consciousness and responsibility.
- 8 — Organizing a coordination committee whose function will be to ensure communication and cooperation among Arab countries regarding woman's needs and demands.

In Jordan, the creation of a special board taking charge of women's affairs indicates the favorable response of this country to U.N. recommendations. It constitutes a call urging Arab countries to ensure coordination of activities of the various Arab women's organization through a representative body actively involved in carrying out the task.