Original Research Paper

Feminist Movement Obstacles in Saudi Arabia

Sarah Saleh Al khamshi and Shorook Abud-AlAziz Al Khielfe

Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman University, KSA

Corresponding author:
Sarah Saleh Al khamshi
Princess Nora Bint
Abdulrahman University, KSA
Email: dr.sara_saleh@hotmail.com

Abstract: In this article, the authors discuss the feminist movement obstacles in Saudi Arabia and the mechanism for decreasing them. Therefore, this paper attempted to achieve two objectives. First, a prospective study was conducted through a social survey of 130 women in leadership positions in government. Using a purposive sample technique, the private sector was focused on in the following ministries: Education, social affairs, health and the Shura Council. This survey was followed by two main questions: What are obstacles to the feminist movement in Saudi Arabia; and what are the mechanisms for decreasing this obstacles and activating a leadership role and effective participation in society for Saudi women to achieve the national objectives? By applying SPSS software, the questionnaires were then verified to test the indications of reliability and validity, which, in turn, will ensure the validity and reliability of the answers regarding empowering Saudi Women.

Keywords: Feminist Movement, Saudi Women, Social Planning, Leadership, Women's Exclusion, Women's Inclusion

Introduction

Saudi women are taking new steps to improve their status in the community. Regardless, for the global changes, but it does not believe in feminism movement; in addition, the society still cannot anticipate how women may react to feminist thoughts (Vidyasagar and Rea, 2004).

Social relations and bonds as marriage, divorce and inheritance are the basis of the regulation although differences in beliefs, traditions and Islamic jurisprudence (Achoui, 2014: 438).

Women's rights in KSA have improved modestly, she has political studies and a business activities practice, although the low degree of freedom on the world level (Kelly, 2009).

Saudi Arabia social structure depend on tribe and family. Additionally, the family gives for individual the help and a social network. Tribes are frequently determined by mixed factors: Personality, local community and social environments (El Mallakh and El Mallakh, 1982: 95).

The social structure depends on the family, which family is many functions; such as the primary basis of identity, status for the individual, among those who recognized a tribal connection and the social welfare safety.

Thus, this article focuses on determining the obstacles to the feminist movement in Saudi Arabia and the mechanism for decreasing it.

Feminist Movement at KSA

In regard to civil women rights, it expectations are high for women's inclusion in future elections, the past not permitted to vote in first elections for municipal councils; now, a number of women put their names forward as candidates (Doumato, 2010).

Therefore, women's exclusion issue on worldwide especially contemporary Saudi Arabia is very important. It was appeared in 1980, through discussion of the education of university women and their mixing with men (Amani, 2005: 42). In addition, women's achievements in higher education is considered a key social development indicator measuring in any country (Rezai-Rashti and James, 2004: 70).

Therefore, the government has become aware of the need to decrease the gap between the output of the education system and the requirements of the domestic labour market, that lead to improve the education system and increase women's participation to ensure economic survival.

A new feminist analysis discusses how a welfare state structure developed in the post-war period and incorporated assumptions regarding women's role in the

family. However, policies that are based on "Changes to increase family responsibility weigh more heavily on women; and full citizenship for those who do caring work is still not in sight" (Pascall, 1997: 2).

Gender and Women's Rights

In international human rights, law there is a strong commitment to equality between women and men. (Fredman and Goldblatt, 2015: 6). As well as equal treatment in economic and social life (Concern Worldwide U.S., 2014).

According to a report by the UNHRO of the high commissioner 2014, it necessity to develop appropriate strategies to eliminate such discrimination, through the focusing on attaining equality between women and men and eliminating.

Therefore, domestic violence and unequal power relations between men and women characterize the social position of women. This situation impacts women's economic position empowering women through increasing their economic independence could reduce trafficking (La Strada International, 2008: 15).

In addition, women enjoy their right to equality before the law, when their rights have been violated (Concern Worldwide U.S. Inc., 2014: 109).

The principle of equality is a central commitment in international human rights instruments. It refers to an obligation on States to ensure human rights without 'distinction', 'discrimination', 'exclusion', or 'restriction' or 'on the basis of equality' as between men and women. (Fredman and Goldblatt, 2015: 6).

Women's rights and human rights are indivisible. Therefore, States must take all necessary steps to protect women from discrimination and abuse in both the private and public spheres. However, the States' obligations under international human rights law can be summarized under three categories: Respect, protect and fulfil. (Amnesty International USA, 2015).

In Islam, interpretations and application of women's rights are affected by social and economic factors. Social practices, customary laws, poverty, war and illiteracy often subvert the status of women. These differences in rights and obligations are motivated by the Islamic conception of the role of women in the family and the Muslim community (APD, 2002: 12-18).

Women's Rights at KSA

Since the nineteenth century, women's rights have expanded considerably whenever they were denied access to higher education and the right to vote and own property (Appelrouth and Edles, 2011: 314). Now, they are study law, obtain their own identification cards, check into hotels alone and register a business without proving first that they have hired a male manager (Kelly, 2009).

Saudi Arabia's government has advocated for and imposed total sex segregation. Although the policy may not be discriminatory when assessed from its face value because it targets both women and men, in reality, it hinders Saudi women from practicing any significant public life (Rajkhan, 2014: 8).

Job` Rights

In Saudi Arabia, particularly as women continue to graduate with university degrees in greater numbers than their male counterparts and seek professional employment (Doumato, 2010).

Therefore, women in the labour force had an unemployment rate of 33.2%, which is nearly five times that of men, according to the Ministry of Labour issued four decrees that regulate women's work in clothing stores, amusement parks and food preparation and as cashiers, for which guardian permission was no longer required. In addition, the Ministry of Justice that approved granting Saudi female lawyers the right to obtain practice licenses.

Based on the economic principles in Saudi Arabia, Article 22 states that, *"Economic and social development shall be achieved in accordance with a systematic and fair plan."* Over the years, Saudi women have continued to be the victims of marginalization to a point where they are nearly being confronted with total expulsion from the workforce in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is considered to have one of the lowest female employment rates in the entire region of the Middle East. It is often purported that because of the previously stated important values, such as family modesty and honour, a woman`s involvement in paid labour is a social stigma and gainful employment is solely the responsibility of men. Although this belief is changing, particularly in the big cities in Saudi Arabia, it remains a problem. In addition, the numbers show that change slow, as we will observe in the data analysis section later (Rajkhan, 2014: 9).

Therefore, as Saudi Arabia promotes its Saudization policy, which seeks to increase the proportion of Saudi nationals in new competitive jobs, women must be supported and encouraged to contribute to their country's economy.

Human Rights and Education

Human rights education is a lifelong process that develops knowledge and skills, as well as attitudes and behaviours to promote and uphold human rights. UNESCO is and other United Nations agencies and international and regional organizations, continue to work closely to coordinate support to Member States and others in the implementation of human rights education, which it is learned should reflect human

rights values, encourage participation and foster a learning environment free from want and fear (Bokova and Pillay, 2012: iii-9).

Rights-based approaches have only recently become a focus within the education sector. Thus, this document was developed as a resource for government officials, civil society organizations, United Nations and bilateral agencies and other development partners that are strategically involved in the development of education policies and programmes (UNESCO) (Wright and Ndong-Jatta, 2007: vii).

Education is beginning to occupy an ever-larger place in people's lives as its role in the work force in modern societies. Today, education is also changing rapidly and increasing opportunities for learning out of school are occurring in all fields, whereas skills, in the traditional sense of the term, in many modern sectors of activity, are ceding to the ideas of developing competence and adaptability (Matsuura, 2000: 18).

Maybe, it is this impact of political and social events that have contributed to Saudi women's position in their society. First, the discovery and production of oil in the 1930s was a major occurrence in the country. In addition, the opening of education to both boys and girls and the economic upheaval arising from the increased income from oil led to a trend towards education abroad and a change in lifestyle (Yamani, 1996: 265).

Therefore, the educational system for girls has become a priority through; promote scientific research and technology development a great challenge for the Saudi government such as, country policy and educational strategic development, the curriculum more responsive to the needs of the local market (AlMunajjed, 2009: 3-24).

Saudi Women's Political Rights

King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, on 25th September, 2012, issued a decree that allowed Saudi women to enter the Consultative council (Majlis Ashura) furthermore, it be nominated for candidacy in municipal elections. He has pushed to pass laws in favour of women and occasionally argued with the religious establishment to provide women more rights. It was during this period that Saudi women were issued national identity cards, policy and legislation were passed in the interests of women and jobs such as in passport administration, civil defence, the state human rights commission and the Ministry of Trade and Industry opened to women. Women's inclusion in political and civic life would release a wealth of talent that could increase the domestic economic activity, empower competition, reduce the unnecessary costs of social segregation, enrich cultural and civic development and help foster democratic institutions, thereby weakening extremist influences in the country. With Saudi Arabia's significant religious and economic influence regionally and globally, empowering women in Saudi Arabia will radically increase its chances for democratic reforms (Rajkhan, 2014: 19-21).

Today, Saudi women educated as to increase the awareness of rights are taught home economics, which is not a subject that would equip them to become independent voices and demand equal rights. In addition, others rights such as by courts and government departments, not providing women with the skills and opportunities to earn a decent living and a ban against driving.

Therefore, empowering women for get her on rights is a moral imperative and a powerful path to promoting progress, tolerance and equality in the society, as well as to promoting the benefits they will add to the overall development of the country (Rajkhan, 2014: 19-24).

Feminist and Gender Theories

To begin, the women's movement is finding the voice to enable the silenced woman. The sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders (Butler, 2011: 379).

Feminism is the theory that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. In addition, it refer to excluding men or solely furthering women's causes. Most other branches of feminism do. This theory of feminism supports the notion that there are biological differences between men and women. For example, "women are kinder and more gentle then men", which leads to the mentality that, if women ruled the world, there would be no wars. Radical feminism is the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from feminism.

While, Marxism and feminism analysis depend on this level posit a different relation between thought and thing, for the social life and in terms of the participation of thought (MacKinnon, 1982: 543).

Methodology

Participants were distributed questionnaires to conduct a prospective study through the social survey of 130 women in leadership positions in government and the private sector. Using a purposive sample technique, the focus was on the following ministries: Education, social affairs, health and the Shura Council. Methods were used snowball sampling. These techniques are suitable Saudi Arabia, a conservative Muslim society, in addition, it is difficult to formulate a sampling frame because natural the target population and employed women in leadership positions as short number portion of the general population (Heckathorn, 2002).

Study targeted determination for obstacles of feminist movement in Saudi Arabia and the mechanism for decreasing them. The vast the participants mostly (35.3%), were at the Ministry of Education (The Universities); ME (The Generally), 26.2%; the Ministry of Social Affairs, 19.2%; the Shura's Council, 11.5%; and the Ministry of Health, 7.8%. For the mathematic the reliability of the analysis, the scale (alpha) value is (.8440).

Findings and Discussion

In the Fig. 1, size of the sampling, demographic data analysis and response rate are provided, which includes 130 women in leadership positions in government and the private sector. These are focused on the following ministries: Education, social affairs and health. A sample from the instruments is founded to be high, the questionnaire was reliable to be used in this study (a = 0.8440).

Table 2 illustrates the priority focus of the feminist movement in Saudi society in descending order, according to the approval averages. Apparently, Table 3 portrays the factors of the feminist movement in descending order according to the approval averages. Although Table 4 determines the administrative and organizational obstacles that confront the feminist movement by the approval averages, Table 5 provides the description of the social obstacles that confront the feminist movement, by approval averages.

The current study showed that women in leadership positions in government and were moderate in the scores they gained when they were asked if they can the private sector the feminist movement in Saudi society, next, Enable women to work, (M = 2,71, SD = 0,516). They were lower than average in their Civil rights and judicial rights practice (M = 2.69, SD = 0.573). While the lowest scores were found for Work right in the trade (M = 2.06, SD = 0.767).

The current study showed that women in leadership positions in government and the private sector the factors of the feminist movement after that, the recent government decisions, (M = 2,58, SD = 0,599). They were lower than average in their Social networks (M = 2.43, SD = 0.784). While the lowest scores were found for There are women eligible elements (M = 2.01, SD = 0.722).

The results of the current study showed that administrative and organizational of obstacles that confront the feminist movement by the approval averages, the predominance of men in leadership positions, (M = 2.31, SD = 0,762). They were lower than average in their weakness of government support (M = 2.14, SD = 0.718). While the lowest scores were found for Decision-makers believe interest in women's matters have no depth (M = 1.60, SD = 0.725).

Table 1. Questionnaire of in field studies has higher level of reliability

Cases no. = 15	Items no. = 31
Alpha = 0.8440	

Table 2. Priority focus of the feminist movement in Saudi society in descending order, according to the averages of approval

Item	Grades responses			Mean	SD	Ranking
	Yes	To a certain degree	No			
Enable women to work	106.0	43.0	4.0	2,71	0,516	1
	73.6	23.6	2.8			
Civil rights and judicial rights practice	108.0	28.0	8.0	2.69	0.573	2
	75.0	19.4	5.6			
Participation in the political field	176.0	48.0	8.0	2.56	0.603	3
	61.1	33.3	5.6			
Representation in the union and	87.0	52.0	14.0	2.44	0.669	4
Professional trade field	54.2	36.1	9.7			
Taking of leadership positions	64.0	52.0	18.0	2.39	0.703	5
	51.4	36.1	12.5			
Scholarship	60.0	44.0	40.0	2.14	0.827	6
	41.7	30.6	27.8			
Support of children and special needs rights	54.0	52.0	38.0	2.11	0.797	7
	37.5	36.1	26.4			
Media, artistic and literary appearing	62.0	26.0	46.0	2.11	0.865	8
	43.1	25.0	31.9			
Work right in the trade	46.0	60.0	38.0	2.06	0.767	9
	31.9	41.7	26.4			

Table 3. Factors of the feminist movement in descending order, according to the averages of approval

Item	Grades responses			Mean	SD	Ranking
	Yes	To a certain degree	No			
The recent government decisions	92.0	44.0	8.0	2,58	0,599	1
	63.9	30.6	5.6			
Social networks	88.0	30.0	26.0	2.43	0.784	2
	61.6	20.8	18.1			
Development plans that are motives for the participation of women	58.0	44.0	42.0	2.11	0.832	3
	40.3	30.6	29.2			
Excitability of international organizations and scientific conferences	52.0	50.0	42.0	2.07	0.811	4
	36.1	34.7	29.2			
Following with the developed societies	48.0	54.0	40.0	2.06	0.785	5
	33.3	38.9	27.8			
Society's need	48.0	52.0	44.0	2.03	0.804	6
	33.3	36.1	30.6			
There are women eligible elements	38.0	70.0	36.0	2.01	0.722	7
	26.4	48.6	25.0			

Table 4. Administrative and organizational obstacles that confront the feminist movement by approval averages

Item	Grades responses			Mean	SD	Ranking
	Yes	To a certain degree	No			
The predominance of men in leadership positions	70.0	48.0	26.0			
	48.6	33.3	18.1	2.31	0,762	1
The weakness of government support	48.0	68.0	28.0			
	33.3	47.2	19.4	2.14	0.718	2
The weakness of private sector support	20.0	78.0	44.0			
	13.9	54.2	30.6	2.11	2.464	3
The absence of clear standards for higher administrative positions	34.0	86.0	34.0			
	23.6	59.7	16.7	2.07	0.635	4
Lack of women's participation in the labour policies	40.0	60.0	44.0			
	27.8	41.7	30.6	1.97	0.769	5
There are some restrictive regulations and legislation	30.0	70.0	44.0			
	20.8	48.6	30.6	1.90	0.715	6
Generally, women's work fields is limited	30.0	40.0	54.0			
	20.8	27.8	51.4	1.69	0.799	7
Decision-makers believe interest in women's matters have no depth	20.0	46.0	78.0			
	13.9	31.9	54.2	1.60	0.725	8

Table 5. Obstacles of socially obstacles that confront the feminist movement, by approval averages

| Item	Grades responses			Mean	SD	Ranking
	Yes	To a certain degree	No			
Socialization that discriminates between men and women	67.0	41.0	26.0			
	52.8	29.2	18.1	2.35	0,772	1
Cultural traditions that pose obstacles to women for assuming leadership positions	70.0	52.0	22.0			
	48.6	36.1	15.3	2.33	0.732	2
No Saudi man will accept a woman president	56.0	50.0	38.0			
	38.9	34.7	26.4	2.12	0.804	3
Weakness in the trust of officials to take over women's leadership positions in important fields	52.0	58.0	34.0			
	63.1	40.3	23.6	2.12	0.804	3
Mixing in some fields of work	54.0	52.0	38.0			
	37.5	36.1	26.4	2.11	0.797	5
Restrictions by family to take over women leadership positions	52.0	48.0	44.0			
	36.1	33.3	30.6	2.06	0.820	6
The wrong understanding of religion	44.0	56.0	44.0			
	30.6	38.9	30.6	2.00	0.787	7
Community individuals prefer traditional women's work	26.0	48.0	68.0			
	18.1	33.3	47.2	1.85	1.431	8
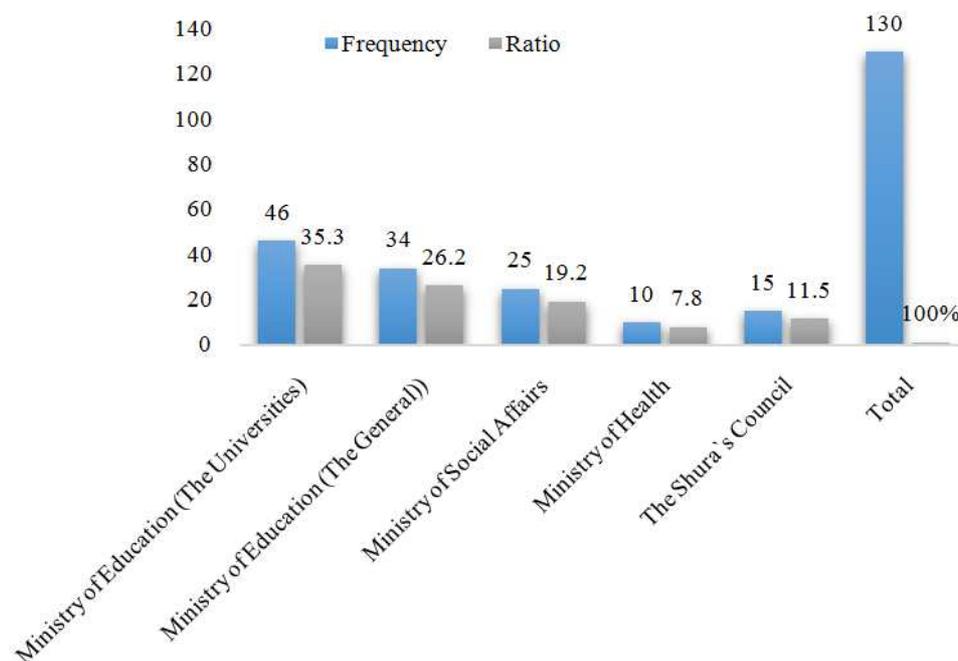
Fig. 1. Population, Sample and Response analysis

The results of the current study showed that obstacles of socially obstacles that confront the feminist movement, by approval averages, Socialization that discriminates between men and women, (M = 2.35, SD = 0,772). They were lower than average in their Cultural traditions that pose obstacles to women for assuming leadership positions (M = 2.33, SD = 0.732). While the lowest scores were found for Community individuals prefer traditional women's work (M = 1.85, SD = 1.431).

Conclusion

This study's objective was to determine feminist movement obstacles in Saudi Arabia and the mechanism for decreasing them. In addition, it attempted to address the monitoring and analysis of the most important priorities for the feminist movement, as well as the factors that lead to the feminist movement. It also sought to determine the personal, social, administrative and organizational obstacles. In addition, the mechanism for decreasing these obstacles and for activating Saudi women's leadership roles and effective participation in society to achieve national objectives was an objective.

However, there is no representation of women, but the Council of Ministers of State and one only and represented in Shura Council and Parliamentary Councils 30% (http://www.intekhab.gov.sa/Arabic/Pages/statistics.as px).

The recommendations include as mechanism for decreasing the feminist movement obstacles that faced in Saudi Arabia:

- Continuous government support of women's issues
- Change women's status in Saudi society
- Design social developmental policies that are suitable for modern women's participation
- Review of legislation, laws and regulations, which represent some of the restrictions on women in Saudi society
- Encourage Saudi women and employ outstanding capabilities in the fields of research and human rights activism
- Provide an opportunity for women to obtain leadership positions that suit their abilities to activate their role in society
- Use the results of scientific research in women's empowerment fields

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women in leadership positions in government and the private sector.

Author's Contributions

Sarah Saleh Al khamshi: Designed the research plan, organized the study, collected the data, carried out data interpretation and analysis, article drafted, final and version approval to be submitted and the revised version.

Shorook Abud-AlAziz Al Khielfe: Supervised the study as a whole. In addition to that, she revised it critically for grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Interest Conflict

There was no conflict of interest in current study because it describe of the feminist movement obstacles in Saudi Arabia and the mechanism for decreasing them.

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