

# Obstacles facing Syrian women in Political Participation in the Northeastern Countryside of Aleppo



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Countryside of Aleppo**

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The increased participation of women in all aspects of economic, social, cultural, and educational life is one of the most important transformations in Syrian society. Women played a clear role in political and social activity from 1920 until the beginning of the Baath Party's usurpation of power, and framed the role of Syrian women within the General Women's Union,

With the start of the revolutionary movement in 2011 in Syria against the ruling authority, Syrian women returned to participate effectively in this movement, to emerge from the circle of the General Women's Union and engage more in the community and political sphere, participating in demonstrations, sit-ins and tansiqiyat#, as well as humanitarian, relief, and medical work required by the protest movement at that time.

However, the participation of Syrian women in the political sphere is still limited in all political and administrative bodies, so this study attempts to identify the most important obstacles to the political participation of Syrian women in general. The objectives of the research can be summarized as follows:

- To identify the most important economic constraints that limit the political participation of Syrian women.
- To identify the most important legal obstacles that limit the political participation of Syrian women.

This study attempts to answer the following main question: **What are the most important economic and legal constraints limiting the political participation of Syrian women?** The main question leads to several sub-questions:

- What is the relationship between the living standards and the political participation of Syrian women?
- What is the relationship between women's financial independence and political participation?
- To what extent does women's preoccupation with family and children issues affect political participation?
- What is the impact of job security on the political participation of Syrian women?

- What is the impact of Local Administration Act 107 on the political participation of Syrian women?
- What is the relationship between making the constitution gender sensitive and the political participation of Syrian women?
- What is the impact of legal empowerment on the political participation of Syrian women?

#### **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH SAMPLE:**

The descriptive analytical method was adopted, using a questionnaire as a data collection tool, with a sample of 97 women randomly selected from the indigenous community of women in the northern and eastern Aleppo countryside. The study was applied to women who have the right to vote, working women, members of local councils, and female members of the Syrian interim government and trade unions. The interviews were conducted during October and November 2020.

The research included a theoretical framework that outlined the concepts and characteristics of political participation, its types, stages, and forms. The reality of political participation of women in Arab countries in general, Syrian women's participation in particular, and the legal and economic constraints that limit their participation were also addressed.

#### **RESEARCH FINDINGS:**

- The most important economic constraints that limit the political participation of women involved in the research are: customs and traditions, poverty, displacement and war, poor coverage of the expenses of women's political participation, lack of material independence of women, lack of investment laws that encourage women to engage in economic work, and lack of employment opportunities.
- The proportion of women who believed that the good economic situation of the family had a positive impact on women's political participation was almost 60%.

- 60% of women do not have knowledge about the laws in Syria, and approximately 81% of women do not have knowledge about the local administration law in Syria.
- Regarding the most important obstacles to the application of the quota system in local councils, the subjects reported the following: customs and traditions, weak female power demanding the introduction of the quota system, the fact that a large segment of the population is not convinced of the usefulness of the quota system, the lack of codifying the quota system, the lack of a safe environment for women's participation.
- Approximately 72% of the surveyed women believe that the non-discrimination between men and women by law has a positive impact on women's political participation.
- Nearly 26% of women believe that the most important challenge to the process of making the constitution gender sensitive is the weakness of the groups that demand the this process, due to the fragmentation and weakness of women's forces pushing for the process. In addition, 21% of the surveyed women believed that the most important obstacle to making the constitution gender sensitive is the lack of women when drafting the constitution.
- On the most important obstacles to making the constitution gender sensitive, the subjects reported that the most important obstacles as follows: international interventions, customs and traditions, the weakness of the groups that demand to make constitution gender sensitive, the weakness and fragmentation of women's power, the lack of implementation of international treaties protecting women, the absence of women involved in the drafting of the constitution, the main sources of legislation for the Constitution.

