



Saudi Women Towards a Promising Future



Thursday, 8 August 2019



special reading 45

Ghazal Alyazidi*

The wise leadership of Saudi Arabia has paid great attention to Saudi women in various fields, from education, health to work systems which is in line with the tolerant Islamic faith, and that has been the case from the time of King Abdul Aziz - may Allah have mercy on his soul - to the reign of King Salman and his faithful crown prince. The women's section in the 8th Development Plan, entitled Women and Development, is the best proof of the government's efforts in the development of Saudi women. This is a clear recognition of the status of Saudi woman in her society, for she represents half of the society and raises the other half, and any of her direct success contributes indirectly to the success of her other half in the society, her partner, the man.

As a result, many legislations and decisions have been issued which are in the interest of Saudi women and guarantee their legitimate rights in a way that does not violate the Islamic religion. The Kingdom has ratified this law internationally to increase its assertion and recognition in the international forums that Saudi women are equal to their male brothers in society. And giving them these rights are only a right of their systematic legitimate rights in a manner that does not contradict the holy Qur'aan and Sunnah.

As the current Hijri (Islamic) year is about to end, it will remain a beautiful memory in the imagination of Saudi women. It is the year in which Saudi women got other rights that the Saudi government has granted to them as the rest of their rights. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Justice has announced its desire to appoint Saudi women as justice writers in the ministry. The aim of this step is to provide legal services to a large segment of women in society. This and other decisions are a clear acknowledgment of the various achievements that women have achieved and continue to achieve within the Ministry, whether in the field of law such as lawyers or as advisors and legal and legislative researchers among others.

It should be noted that the latest statistics issued by the Ministry of Justice of Saudi Arabia stated that since allowing the expansion of the scope of women's work in the Ministry of Justice during the past year, it has been appointed more than 220 employees in different sections of the Ministry of Justice in various cities of the Kingdom. In addition, the number of lawyers who obtained the law license reached 418 lawyers, which increased the percentage of licenses granted to women lawyers to 240% over the previous three years. Also, there are 3140

legal interns in the field of law and 67 legal representatives from the private sector in the legal departments. As a result of this, the Ministry has established this year an independent women's department in the branches of the Ministry in many cities of the Kingdom, and that is after opening the way for women's work in their judicial departments.

On the other hand, and in addition to granting Saudi women their legitimate rights, the Saudi government announced a few days ago amendments to the Civil Status Law and the travel documents system, all of which are in the benefit of women. The official newspaper Umm Al Qura published the statement adopted by King Salman – may Allah protect him – which included all modifications in both the travel document system and the Civil Status Law for women.



With regard to the travel document system, the recent amendments included allowing women to travel without the prior consent of the guardian if they reached the age of 21, as well as the issuance of a travel permit for children of preschool age, minors or those with deceased parents/guardians. Also, the Article III of the Travel Regulations has been repealed, which stipulated that passports include the wife and unmarried daughters and minor children of the holder.

On the other hand, the wife is equal to the husband in the right to report cases of marriage, divorce, or death, and article 33 after the change stipulates that the mother has the right to report cases of birth after it was exclusively for male relatives of first degree. In addition to that, the amendment to the regulations allowed women to be given the title of “head of the family” and thus had the right to demand a family register from the civil services. And will be an equal partner as head of the family with her husband in the case of the existence of minor children.

With respect to the wife’s residence, the new amendment to article 30 of the Civil Status Law provided that the residence of the minor to be the residence of his father or guardian, after the provision previously stated that the residence of the married woman was her husband’s residence in the case they remain married.

Finally, it is obvious to all the preparations and disposition of the governmental institutions and bodies in order to start implementing these new amendments of both the travel documents system and the civil status law for women. It is also not surprising to note the amount of acceptance and welcoming of the new amendments by the majority of the society, especially the men, who is the other half and the permanent supporter of women, which proves the ability of the Saudi society to keep pace with the new decisions because of its intellectual maturity and cultural awareness. It has also been proven to all that not only Saudi women are qualified for such changes in systems but also deserve them because of the adequate confidence and awareness they possess. This nullifies any of the earlier speculation which doubted the amount of their awareness or ability to deal with these amendments with the required degree of awareness and responsibility; because any increase of efforts in empowering of Saudi women in various fields is in favor of creating a more suitable environment for them to play their role to the fullest. Ensuring their rights and providing them with tools that help them is a serious work that contributes to the support of the society in general, being half of the society and one of the elements of strength in it. It is a serious work that contributes to the support of society in general, as



it is half of society and one of its strengths, which will contribute to achieving the desired goals to increase the role of Saudi women in Saudi Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development.



What We Do

