# Existance of Bahraini Women in Government

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Introduction-

Being a woman in my society is a very frustrating situation. My parents were disappointed that their first-born child was a girl. I felt blamed, as if I had the option of choosing my own sex. Since birth, emphasis has been placed on the differences between the sexes. Women in my society are constantly being reminded of these differences in every situation. I have nothing against anyone; however, I do pity myself and all women who suffer in the same situation.

Specifically, the major problem I am presenting is the existence of some barriers which destroy the chances of women being promoted to different levels within Bahrain's government. I based this theory on the following questions and discussions:

Question #1: What is a woman's right in Islam? Al-Quazzaz's said in his book The Arab World:

> There is not basis in Islam for the subjugation of women or their relegation to a secondary role. All Muslims, male or female, were advised by the Prophet Mohammed to "seek knowledge, even in chains." Modern Muslims interpret this to mean equal opportunities for both sexes to participate in all the learning experiences the Twentieth Century offers.[1]

Nonetheless, very few families will give their daughters their rights to learn, because they feel that women were to be wives and good housekeepers.

Question #2: Did tradition exist, and if so, who practiced it?

In his book Arab Today, Carmichael asked this question and answered:

> The family remains the center of traditionalism, making its own framework and the freedom of the big World outside, in which a woman can, indeed, rise to prominence--in medicine, the law, government, or business--a natural source of inner turmoil.[2]

I agree with the author in that the rigid family structure is the main root for this traditionalism.

Question # 3: How do women respond in this situation?

I was able to observe the first movement of Bahraini women in September, 1972, when the first national nomination and election process began, shortly after Bahrain became independent from England. The first article passed by the Constitutional Assembly (Law # 13/1972, which restricted voting eligibility to males only) created quite a furor among the women's elite groups.[3]

In November 1972, some women representatives applied to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for a permit allowing women's societies to collect signatures on a petition that would be presented to the Government of Bahrain. When the Ministry refused, the representatives then collected some signatures on their own--from women's societies, some

clubs, associations, and individuals. This petition was presented to the Ruler at his office at the Government House in Manaman. He expressed sympathy for their cause, but nothing actually came of it. So this was the only evidence that the women of Bahrain had attempted to be an outspoken segment of the population, so that they might participate in the march toward progress; however, they were ignored.

Hypothesis-

"As the level of grade increases, existence of women decreases."

Measurements-

I. Income (salary and wages)

II. Education

III. Job Levels

I. The Income-

Bahraini make very low wages according to the non-Bahraini who work in Government. So if we divide these data into three groups, we see that:

1- Arab's earnings = 247 B.D. as an average monthly income

2- Asian's earnings = 176 B.D. " " " " "

3- American's earnings = 903 B.D. as an " " "

From this data Bahrainis earn only 171 B.D., which is only 19% of total government earnings. According to the women of the Government, we see that although women make up only 29% of the employees, their monthly earnings tend to be higher than men's because most of them are professionals.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Men | 11,1189 | ---average of monthly income = 169 B.D. |
| Women | 4,553 | --- " " " " = 178 B.D. |
| All Bahrainis | 15,742 | -- " " " " = 171 B.D. |

II. Education-

I was unable to get any data for education from the Directorate of Statistics about Government employees. The only data I have was about the primary school through the secondary school in 1978. Interestingly, I found this data to have an impact on my hypothesis, because children begin primary school when they are seven years old. Also there are more total numbers in school for boys than for girls. I found out that the enrollment for boys at the primary level is 56% compared to 44% for girls. However, at the end of the formal educational process which is twelve years from primary through graduation from secondary or high school, the level is 46% for boys versus 54% for girls.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 56% boys | 12 years of learning process | 46% boys |
| 44% girls | | 54% girls |
| input | | output |

I'll assume that most of the fourteen- or fifteen-year-old boys drop out of school looking for jobs. On the other hand, girls in this age bracket will still be in school. It must be emphasized that in this situation, most of their

families won't allow their young girls to drop out of school to seek employment.

III. The Job Levels-

I will classify the data into three groups:

The first group is for all Bahraini men and women in the government; I found out that there are 71% men to 29% women in different levels in the nineteen government agencies. This roughly breaks down to seven men and three women in each group of ten Bahraini. (Table I)

The second group represents the Professional level in the Government's grades. For Grade Six and above, there are 63% men to 37% women. The number of women in this level has increased to more than one third of the total of the group. (Table II)

The third group is the managerial level, in which we find that there are 9% women to 91% men. Although Bahrain has fourteen grades in the Government, there is only one woman in Grade Twelve and three in Grade Eleven! That simply means that in every ten people in the managerial level there is only one woman. The actual number for Bahraini men is 239 to 23 women. (Table III)

I obtained this data form the Annual Report of "The Working Force in Bahrain Government". This data was collected by the Directorate of Statistics, under the requisite from

the Manpower Section in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Sampling of this data was according to the existence of each set and grade levels in the Bahrain Government. (Again I must emphasize that no data was allowed from two major ministries, the Interior and the Bahraini Military Force. Also, non-Bahraini were eliminated from my sample.)

In trying to analyze the data I found that there is one Ministry where employees are equal in numbers according to sex. That was the Ministry of Education, where the ratio was 50%-50%. This is because educational jobs are considered "traditional" for women. Another reason is that Bahraini men prefer working in the private sector where they can earn much more than in the public sector. Also, they have much more freedom in terms of being full time teachers stuck with very outdated curriculum. However, according to the women, being a teacher is beneficial to her. First, her culture has taught her to prefer this kind of job. Second, she has around three months holiday in the summer which gives her time to take care of her husband or children, who are in the same holiday because of the school system.

Third, there is a motivation to teach, because two years ago many Bahraini teachers left their jobs due to unusually low wages for efforts requiring thirty hours a week.

Furthermore, the average classroom in Bahraini schools are overcrowded because of lack of room. This is the major problem in the Bahraini educational system. There are always more students than the school can accommodate, because the Ministry of Ecucation can't afford to build new schools.

Therefore teachers felt very discriminated against, and in 1978 more than two hundred teachers quit their jobs. The Government was alarmed to the point of providing teaching incentives in order to save the system.

In looking at the figures for the Ministry of Health, we see that 45% of all workers are women. This again describes a kind of the "traditional women's job". A more precise figure is a total of 1180 women to 1457 men in this group.

The other group is the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, an agency comprised of social workers dealing with the social and labor problems of the country. There women make up 44% of the total.

These are the main ministries where we can find that there are 44% or more of Bahrain's women working in the Government (and I'm still not including non-Bahraini in my data).

There are three Ministries where women hold 5% or less of the positions. The first Ministry is Power and Water, which has only 156 women (5%) to 2930 men employees. The only reason I have to offer for the low percentage of female employees is that this Ministry deals with a lot of construction, such as building roads and distributing power and water. The few women in this Ministry are employed as clerical workers.

The other Agency is Jafferya and Sunnia WAQF*, where the employees are Bahraini men. There are no women or non-Bahraini, which is very unusual for any Bahraini Government Agency. However, there are seventeen women in the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, which amount to 4% of the total employees. (Fifteen women are in Grade One and two are in Grade Three, but they do exist!)

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*WAQF refers to an agency that handles the estate of a Moslem who, if he should die, may choose to leave his property for the poor. In this case, the property cannot be bought or sold, and the money from its rental must go to the poor Moslems.

Conclusion-

1. Clearly there is 50% difference between men and women in the jobs occupied in the Government of Bahrain, because the lowest rate for men (which was in the Ministry of Education-50%) equals the highest rate for women in occupying these jobs.

2. There is some kind of discrimination for women in the Bahraini Government. I feel that until now a woman has been unable to get any explanation as to why she was kept at this level.

3. From analyzing the data, I believe that there are fewer chances for women than men. It is a kind of closed system in all circumstances. It appears that the women of Bahrain have a task cut out for them if they are to achieve a higher position in government.

## Bahrain Government Agencies

1. Prime Ministry Office
2. Ministry of Development and Industry
3. Ministry of Education
4. Ministry of Finance and National Economy
5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. Ministry of Health
7. Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
8. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
9. Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture
10. Ministry of Information
11. Ministry of State for Legal Affairs
12. Ministry of State for Cabinet Affairs
13. Ministry of Transportation
14. Ministry of Works, Power and Water
15. Ministry of Housing
16. Civil Service Bureau
17. High Council of Youth and Sports
18. Jafferya and Sunnia WAQF
20. Other Agencies

THE SERIAL NUMBERS REFER TO THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND ARE RELATES TO THE COMING TABLES.

TABLE I

Existence of Bahraini Men and Women in Each Ministry and Their Percentages

| | Men | Women | Total | Men% | Women% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 11 | 1 | 12 | 92% | 8% |
| 2 | 462 | 45 | 507 | 91 | 9 |
| 3 | 2550 | 2507 | 5057 | 50 | 50 |
| 4 | 1452 | 115 | 1567 | 93 | 7 |
| 5 | 128 | 26 | 157 | 83 | 17 |
| 6 | 1457 | 1180 | 2637 | 55 | 45 |
| 7 | 383 | 17 | 400 | 96 | 4 |
| 8 | 150 | 134 | 284 | 53 | 44 |
| 9 | 409 | 54 | 463 | 88 | 12 |
| 10 | 281 | 133 | 414 | 68 | 32 |
| 11 | 15 | 8 | 23 | 65 | 35 |
| 12 | 80 | 21 | 101 | 73 | 21 |
| 13 | 674 | 48 | 722 | 93 | 7 |
| 14 | 2774 | 156 | 2930 | 95 | 5 |
| 15 | 165 | 73 | 238 | 69 | 31 |
| 16 | 102 | 13 | 115 | 89 | 11 |
| 17 | 38 | 9 | 47 | 81 | 19 |
| 18 | 35 | 0 | 35 | 100 | - |
| 19 | 23 | 13 | 36 | 64 | 36 |
| | 11189 | 4553 | 15742 | 71% | 29% |

TABLE X

Distribution of Respondents Who Have Joined 10-Item Statistical and Time-Motivation Scales

| | Low | Medium | Total | Low | Medium | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 11 | 1 | 12 | 24 | 2 | 26 |
| 2 | 145 | 25 | 170 | 61 | 8 | 69 |
| 3 | 1020 | 1207 | 2227 | 19 | 32 | 51 |
| 4 | 1442 | 112 | 1547 | 31 | 4 | 35 |
| 5 | 124 | 48 | 172 | 23 | 27 | 50 |
| 6 | 1427 | 1180 | 2607 | 14 | 43 | 57 |
| 7 | 167 | 47 | 214 | 84 | 4 | 88 |
| 8 | 120 | 124 | 244 | 31 | 64 | 95 |
| 9 | 108 | 54 | 162 | 66 | 23 | 89 |
| 10 | 247 | 112 | 359 | 59 | 12 | 71 |
| 11 | 17 | 4 | 21 | 65 | 4 | 69 |
| 12 | 80 | 21 | 101 | 75 | 37 | 112 |
| 13 | 174 | 18 | 192 | 27 | 7 | 34 |
| 14 | 1734 | 184 | 1918 | 45 | 5 | 50 |
| 15 | 45 | 25 | 270 | 13 | 4 | 17 |
| 16 | 103 | 12 | 115 | 40 | — | 40 |
| 17 | 14 | 4 | 18 | 32 | 13 | 45 |
| 18 | 38 | 0 | 38 | 3 | — | 3 |
| 19 | 2 | 13 | 15 | 40 | — | 40 |
| Total | 7,1128 | 4227 | 11,355 | 1,734 | 305 | 2,039 |

TABLE II

Number of Grade Six and Above in Each Ministry

| | Men | Women | Total | Men% | Women% | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | - | 1 | 100 | - | 100 |
| 2 | 106 | 18 | 124 | 85 | 15 | |
| 3 | 1514 | 1677 | 3191 | 47 | 53 | |
| 4 | 372 | 21 | 393 | 95 | 5 | |
| 5 | 85 | 8 | 93 | 91 | 9 | |
| 6 | 260 | 168 | 428 | 61 | 39 | |
| 7 | 119 | - | 119 | 100 | - | |
| 8 | 75 | 55 | 130 | 58 | 42 | |
| 9 | 76 | 20 | 96 | 79 | 21 | |
| 10 | 92 | 18 | 110 | 84 | 16 | |
| 11 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 67 | 33 | |
| 12 | 35 | 6 | 41 | 85 | 15 | |
| 13 | 144 | 4 | 148 | 78 | 22 | |
| 14 | 421 | 29 | 450 | 94 | 6 | |
| 15 | 61 | 37 | 98 | 62 | 38 | |
| 16 | 42 | 5 | 47 | 89 | 11 | |
| 17 | 17 | 2 | 19 | 89 | 11 | |
| 18 | 18 | - | 18 | 100 | - | |
| 19 | 11 | 2 | 13 | 85 | 15 | 100 |
| | 3455 | 2073 | 5528 | 63% | 37% | 100% |

TABLE III

Number of Grade Ten and Above

| | Men | Women | Total | Men% | Women% | Total% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 100 | - | 100 |
| 2 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 100 | - | |
| 3 | 37 | 10 | 47 | 79 | 21 | |
| 4 | 19 | - | 19 | 100 | - | |
| 5 | 25 | - | 25 | 100 | | |
| 6 | 60 | 11 | 71 | 85 | 15 | |
| 7 | 20 | - | 20 | 100 | - | |
| 8 | 6 | - | 6 | 100 | - | |
| 9 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 88 | 12 | |
| 10 | 5 | - | 5 | 100 | - | |
| 11 | 1 | - | 1 | 100 | - | |
| 12 | 3 | - | 3 | 100 | - | |
| 13 | 4 | - | 4 | 100 | - | |
| 14 | 34 | 1 | 35 | 97 | 3 | |
| 15 | 5 | - | 5 | 100 | - | |
| 16 | 3 | - | 3 | 100 | - | |
| 17 | 2 | - | 2 | 100 | - | |
| 18 | 2 | - | 2 | 100 | - | |
| 19 | 1 | - | 1 | 100 | - | |
| | 239 | 23 | 262 | 91% | 9 % | 100% |

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