

Opportunities for Girls' Education in Light of the Politicization of Religion



By/ Sarah Ibrahim

Edited by/ Mohamed Al Badawi

FDHRD

December 2022

Opportunities for Girls' Education in Light of the Politicization of Religion

The Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue

Non-partisan organization – No. 6337 of 2005 – Non-partisan

It is not for profit and its articles of association are governed by Law No. 149 of 2019 on civil associations and private institutions.

Website <https://www.fdhrd.org/>

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED-
2022© FDHRD**



The debate about the relationship between religion and politics is not new. It began since the emergence of monotheistic religions. This controversy is due to the quality of the role that religion came to embody on the ground, and the

type of behavior adopted by religious people based on their religious affiliation.

The world today suffers from an abhorrent phenomenon that involves the exploitation of religion to achieve purely political goals, far removed from the purposes and laws of the monotheistic religions.

This phenomenon has become a source of deep concern for all cultural, intellectual, political, and even religious elites in various societies, because of its destructive purposes under the name of religion, to advance a certain political agenda.

In fact, religion itself does not pursue any political goals for the benefit of any party, whether state, institution, political movement or individuals. However, it is these groups who work to wrap their agenda with religion through the holy books or the religious texts handed down through ancient books. In this context, exploitative parties blend religion into ideological frameworks that serve only them, based on philosophical and theological traditions and in very elaborate ways.

Radical movements are perhaps the most prominent example of the use of religion for political purposes. Radical Islamic parties and organizations terrorize others in the name of the religion. We see this in what is known as 'political Islam' prominently in the regime ruling Iran, the Houthi movement in Yemen, the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, as well as Boko Haram in Nigeria. They all enlist religion to justify its actions and policies.

We see religion playing an important role in shaping public opinion in all fields, including political, economic and scientific in most countries of the developed and developing world alike. It can be said that religion is one of the main pillars in building human civilization and human activity as a whole, in terms of its continuity and progress. However, under the slogan of religion, political systems and currents of political Islam violate many women's rights, to the point of imposing compulsory veiling on them, such as Iran and Afghanistan. They may even prevent them from education, which happened in Afghanistan, Yemen and Nigeria. They believe that they apply religious laws, with more strict restrictions. However, such actions and religious regulations are innocent. All heavenly religions have always given and preserved all women's rights, including education, because they are considered one of the main pillars of society's building and prosperity.

Through this report, we review several points related to girls' education under political Islam, as follows:

1. Girls' right to education.
2. The importance of education for girls.
3. The importance of girls' education for society.
4. Effects of girls' lack of education on the family and society:
5. Obstacles to girls' education in Yemen.
6. Girls' education and the Houthi movement in Yemen.
7. Girls' education and the Taliban movement in Afghanistan.
8. Girls' education and Iran.
9. Girls' education and the Boko Haram movement in Nigeria.
10. Recommendations.

Girls' Right to Education

Women's rights include all social, economic, political, and legal rights that women possess equally with men. The concept of women's rights has gained special importance in the 19th century. A large number of different institutions and organizations around the world are conducting studies in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination and oppression, and solve the problems faced by women. At the forefront of these problems is the denial of their right to education and learning, even though the international community has recognized equal quality education for all. They committed to achieving gender equality in all areas, including education, through their acceptance of international human rights law. Thus, states have legal obligations to remove all discriminatory barriers, whether they exist in law or in daily life, and take positive measures to achieve equality, while giving women all their rights, including access to education.

At the international level, we find that the UN has paid great attention to education, as it has applied compulsory education in its Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of 1967. It has taken all measures to ensure that women enjoy education, whether married or unmarried, equal to men at all levels, and all types of educational institutions, whether schools, universities or professional institutions, as well as equality between the sexes in curricula, examinations and access to scholarships.

In a related context, chapter III of CEDAW includes the areas of education. For example, article 10 of the Convention stipulates:

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
- b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
- c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;
- d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;
- e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;
- f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
- g) The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;
- h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.”

The Importance of Education for Girls

Education contributes to improving women's ability to think critically, enabling them to keep pace with successive developments in various areas of

life. It also increases their societal role and economic participation in the national economy of the state. Therefore, preventing women from education is equivalent to preventing women from practicing their lives properly. It will also deprive the state itself of their efforts and effective participation, in addition to increasing the burdens, whether social or economic.

Hence, the importance of education for women is highlighted, in terms of the following:

1. Early marriage is one of the most common problems to which women are exposed because of old customs and traditions. Through women's access to full educational rights, this type of marriage decreases, as well as problems related to it. Confronting and correcting such backwards thought can only be achieved through education.
2. Education is not only the curricula that are taught in the school years. It is also the acquisition of many skills that shape and develop the personality of the individual. Through education, women strengthen their personalities, as well as develop of their abilities in general. Thus, making them the basic building block of society in general, and the family in particular, where:
 - Education enhances both psychological abilities and personal skills, through enhancing physical, mental and intellectual skills, increasing the ability to sound thinking, communication and connection, constructive criticism, understanding and comprehension, thinking outside the box, as well as physical abilities in terms of proper understanding of the body and health in all respects. It also makes women more powerful, able to withstand difficulties, and deal with different life situations.
 - Education improves the awareness of girls and develops their personality. This increases their ability to deal with their children in the future, raising them in a correct and sound upbringing based on educational foundations. Thus, they produce for society a future with a conscious and educated generation capable of assuming responsibility and promoting a society free of problems and crimes.
3. A girl's education contributes to giving her a monthly income. This enables her to achieve what she aspires to and wants in her life. She becomes independent and not to be forced to rely on others, whether on her husband or a member of her family. This would guarantee her freedom of decision

in all areas of her life. Nobody would have the ability to control her or make decisions for her.

4. Education gives girls a high social status. It makes them feel that they are of great importance among people in society. These things have positive psychological effects which make them less likely to suffer from stress and depression.
5. Education gives girls the ability to defend themselves before society. By knowing their rights, they could ask for them without hesitation or fear of anyone. They are able to work in various fields available in society, such as education, medicine, engineering, commerce and politics.
6. Educated women have sufficient awareness about the process of childbirth. Women's access to basic education reduces their mortality rate during childbirth by about 70%. This is a simple example of how education raises women's health awareness.

The Importance of Girls' Education for Society

The importance of women's education is not limited to personal importance for them, but it makes them an active role in their society. The role of women in society cannot be limited to a few points, but in general it can be summarized in several important points, the most important of which are the following:

1. Women are the most important element in education. They are mothers who conceive, give birth and raise educated generations that develop society and serve the country effectively, thus contributing to the advancement and development of society and the morals of its children.
2. Eradicating poverty. When women complete their education, it makes them more qualified and can apply for any of the jobs that are available according to their field. When they get a job, they can earn money without relying on any other source of income. Therefore, this increases the percentage of income. Thus, the problem of poverty and ignorance are eliminated.
3. Educated women contribute to reducing the population explosion. Based on many studies, educated women want to have fewer children, in order to raise their children in a correct way, and provide them with full care without fail. This helps reduce the global population explosion.

4. Reducing the spread of diseases. Women's education contributes to raising their health awareness. This also raises their awareness of the prevention of some diseases, regular vaccinations appropriate for their children and reduce the rates of exposure to the causes of many diseases. This reduces the overall spread of many diseases in society. In a study conducted on developing countries over 43 years issued by the World Bank in 2010, it was noted that women's education increases the chance of their families' surviving injuries or deaths due to natural or other disasters. To add to that, education increases their resilience in dealing with bad conditions at the family and community level.
5. The effective participation of women contributes to supporting the labor market. They are able to put forward creative ideas at work and raise productivity. Gender diversity results in the presence of different experiences that develop the work.

Effects of Girls' Lack of Education on the Family and Society:

Families and societies are affected by girls' illiteracy and lack of access to education. They represent half of the society and raise the other half. Therefore, clear evidence of it's the effect of women's ignorance and illiteracy is related to the fact that they are daughters, sisters, mothers and educators. Among these effects are the following:

- **Low Cultural and Scientific Awareness of the Family:**

According to the *nemo dat* principle "no one can give what they do not have". An uneducated mother is ignorant of many of the knowledge, concepts and skills associated with age and life. Therefore, she cannot give her children or her family sufficient awareness to manage life, making it difficult for the family to properly deal with life problems. Therefore, families that do not educate girls show the features of cultural and scientific deficits. This reflects negatively on family life, exposing them to many misconceptions.

- **Indifference to the education of male and female children:**

Many illiterate parents do not realize the importance of education for their children. Their main concern is that these children practice work that quickly benefits the family, without thinking about the consequences and requirements imposed by scientific and technological development. Thus, we

find a state of unconcern to educate children and encourage them to continue education.

- **Poor Health Status in Children and Girls:**

Many diseases and epidemics have spread, such as cholera, which has infected many, and killed thousands. Children and girls are the most vulnerable to these diseases. This is a result of lack of health awareness, and failure to prevent diseases before they are transmitted and spread, due to the high rate of illiteracy and ignorance, especially in rural areas.

- **High Rate of Illiteracy and Ignorance among Society:**

The illiterate person suffers from the inability to deal with others, difficulties in social communication skills and low level of emotional intelligence. This makes him vulnerable to unemployment and the inability to comprehend dealing, for example, with modern machines, thus, he cannot find work in a factory. He cannot deal with others, so he cannot work in an environment that cares about customer service, for example. The opportunity of this individual who suffers from illiteracy and ignorance to obtain a decent life becomes small. He is exposed to many problems and then resorts to the use of violence because of his inability to solve his problems with reason and logic. This individual participates in the formation of the vicious circle of illiteracy and ignorance, where he is unable to provide livelihoods for his family. Therefore, unable to educate his children, or provide proper health care for him and his family. In this case, he becomes a burden on society, instead of being a productive capacity that contributes to the development of his country.

- **Increasing Poverty:**

The circle of poverty is expanding in uneducated societies because of its dependence on work and handicrafts that do not cover the basic requirements of a decent life. Often the unemployment rate rises due to the lack of job opportunities, which reflects negatively on family life, and increases in the circle of poverty and its spread. This includes males and females, and even those who live in urban areas such as cities. The options remain limited, whether for males or females, unlike those who possess various scientific qualifications, experiences and skills, which are related to the requirements of life in the current century.

- **Difficulty in Establishing Development and Cultural Projects in Less educated Communities:**

A number of international organizations and civil society organizations contribute to development and cultural projects in many villages and cities. However, these organizations find it difficult for male and female citizens in some villages in rural areas to understand the importance of these projects and their preservation. This is a result of the high rate of ignorance and illiteracy in these areas. Therefore, these projects are harmed and not continued, which reduces the opportunities for these communities to obtain development and cultural projects.

- **The Spread of Erroneous, Extremist and Superstitious Cultures and Thoughts:**

The uneducated mother contributes to promoting the unhealthy, unsound and extremist consciousness of children from a young age, especially with the increase in the long alienation of males in neighboring countries in search of a living, where women assume great responsibility in raising children. If knowledge is found in the family, it will be very difficult for these cultures and misconceptions to find their way to children's consciousness. We find that most of those who engage with armed and terrorist groups are children.

- **Weak Political and Cultural Participation among Communities with Low Levels of Education:**

Neighborhoods and areas that are famous for education are characterized as areas with social, political and security stability. Ideas and opinions are exchanged smoothly, and political and community participation abounds. On the other hand, in less educated societies, there is a lack of political, cultural and community participation. They are dominated by intolerance, conflict and social instability. Women - as well as men - have an important role in the state of stability or lack thereof. The influence of women is not limited to themselves only, but extends their influence to males, such as sons, brothers or husbands.

Obstacles to Girls' Education in Rural and Urban Areas in the Different Stages of Education in Yemen:

There are a number of obstacles that prevent girls from continuing their education, whether in rural or urban areas at various levels of education.

According to UNICEF reports, there are a number of crucial factors related to girls' enrollment in education. Not enrolling girls is more prominent in rural areas than in urban areas. The first enrollment of girls in education is often at a later age due to the distance between home and school which has such a negative impact on education. Considering that education curricula are designed to develop the child in the psychological and social aspects, it makes the education environment incompatible with the age stage. Late enrollment also represents another problem for girls' education, which is the reduction of time between enrollment and the beginning of puberty. This is the stage that usually leads to leaving school due to mixing between genders, unless arrangements are available to separate girls from boys. Moreover, another problem of dropping out of school before completing secondary school, due to a lack of awareness of the benefits that can be gained from investing in secondary education, and education in general.

The obstacles that prevent girls from continuing education can be classified - according to the opinions of the local community and education experts - as follows:

First: Cultural Constraints

- **The prevailing view of the basic task of females in rural areas**

There is a prevailing culture in rural areas among parents of the uselessness of studying females, due to the interests and activities carried out by women in rural areas, and the lack of work opportunities for girls when they graduate from secondary school or even university. Girls are busy raising boys, doing household chores, working in agriculture, and raising livestock, which occupies most of the residents in villages and rural areas.

- **Poor awareness among girls of the importance of education**

Sometimes the problem lies in the girl, and her lack of awareness of the importance of education. She, personally, is convinced of the weak value of the girl's access to education. Some girls are satisfied with completing the early stages of education and then dropping out school despite the lack of objection to continuing education by the family. Sometimes a negative reinforcement is generated among girls towards education, especially when

she sees her brothers who have left school, having some businesses, handicrafts, or others.

Second: Social and Family Constraints

- **Early marriage**

Early marriage is one of the widely spread customs. It has its disadvantages and risks on many issues, including:

The subject of education, where the girl bears responsibility for family affairs and the process of childbearing and raising children early. This leads to her being deprived of education as a result of preoccupations with the chores she has to do after marriage. Sometimes the girl is prevented from continuing education by the husband.

- **Mixing between genders**

Parents in some areas oppose the idea of girls continuing their education in a mixed manner. Some resort to registering their daughters with the affiliation system. This is a system that allows the student to attend only at the time of final exams. Rarely do some of them allow their daughter to continue her education in a mixed secondary school. In urban areas, it is different, where there are other opportunities.

Third: Security Obstacles

- **Wars and displacement**

Wars and conflicts have a great impact on education in general, and on girls' education in particular, such as the war between Yemen and the Houthis. The statistics of the Ministry of Education for the academic year 2015/2016 indicate that the total number of displaced male students in the basic stage is 49,862 students, and females 39,466 students. For the secondary stage, the number of displaced males reached 9,718 students, and females 7,471 students. This led to a doubling of the number of displaced students from schools, reaching 3.5 million compared to 1.5 million before the Houthi coup. The Ministry of Education is working to address cases of displacement, and accommodate male and female students in schools near the areas to which they have been displaced. However, displaced families do not have opportunities for stability. Therefore, the issue of continuing education for

boys and girls alike is postponed, as a result of the displacement conditions they suffer from.

- **Harassment and kidnapping**

Among the fears that plague parents, and cause widespread anxiety among many families, is the issue of harassment and kidnapping, a phenomenon that has recently begun to grow rapidly in urban areas. It has had a negative impact on girls' education, especially with the lawlessness, political turmoil, and instability of the situation.

Fourth: Government Obstacles

- **Lack of female teachers**

The majority of qualified women are concentrated in urban areas, where universities and institutes that provide in-service training for unqualified teachers are located. Rural appointments for qualified female teachers from urban areas are less accepted. Customs related to mobility, conditions of isolation in the countryside, living conditions and housing security are an obstacle to accepting appointments in rural areas. This is unusual for females, because villages are not prepared for such. The process of recruiting female teachers is sometimes manipulated, where the allocation of some jobs is given to rural teachers.

Due to the lack of qualified female teachers in rural areas, qualified applicants for these jobs are accepted from cities with the condition that they perform the job in rural areas. This does not happen in reality, as an agreement is made between the teacher and the school principal to search for male alternatives to carry out the teaching process in the school in exchange for part of the monthly salary. This leads to misinformation. It gives the Ministry of Civil Service the impression that the shortage of female teachers is less than what the Ministry of Education claims. This has reinforced the cessation of the introduction of new appointments of rural teachers to serve in their rural areas. Teachers are not necessarily assigned to their communities, where they are often at the level of trust that allows them to teach girls' classes. They are often distributed in remote areas, without regard to this aspect.

Girls' Education and the Houthi Movement in Yemen

Yemeni women in areas controlled by the Houthis are at the mercy of the terrorist Houthi militia. They have made it the harshest region in the world in the treatment of women. Women feel as if they are buried under the soil of Houthi violations and oppression, due to the change in their normal lifestyle as the militia is confiscating the most basic of women's rights.

Local and international voices are calling for women in Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen to achieve their rights, following the increasing violations and restrictions imposed by the Houthi rebels on women under their control.

Violations of women's rights are very common in conflict zones around the world. One reason for this is that women are often looked down upon in many cultures. This means that they are not granted the same rights as men. They are also often excluded from decision-making processes, which can make it difficult for them to protect their rights.

In addition, the eight-year conflict sparked by the Houthis has caused waves of internal displacement, with many families living in camps and dire conditions. The more the conflict grows, the more families will be displaced.

Such conditions put women and girls at greater risk of abuse, exploitation, human trafficking, forced marriage, deprivation of education, and other atrocities. Despite this, the Houthis show no interest in de-escalating or protecting and assisting displaced people, instead continuing to increase instability in their areas and restrict women.

The Houthi militia prevents girls from education for several years in its main strongholds in Saada governorate, northern Yemen. However, the coup they carried out 8 years ago made them generalize the experience of ignorance to tens of thousands of Yemeni girls in the governorates under their control, especially the capital, Sana'a.

The illiteracy rate has increased dramatically in recent years following the coup, after the rate had decreased significantly during the last decade, due to the attention of successive governments and international support.

UNICEF announced that two-thirds of Yemen's girls are out of school.

On women's education, Hussein al-Houthi said in a lecture entitled "Who We Are and Who They Are" delivered in January 2002, that 'if it were not for the fact that the Jews are confident that the education that women accept from the

curriculum, the media, general culture, and here and there, is in a way that makes the women as they want, they would not have started, and spent their money. They would not have insisted on us to teach her.'

What the Jews want, according to al-Houthi, is 'for a woman to be a learner... she learns how to finally become a woman who is far from giving birth to an Arab Muslim, far from giving birth and raising Muslim heroes, but will raise Zionist soldiers, and give birth to a society and generations who will become their servants.'

He attacked women's right to education and the facilities granted to their education, saying: 'they say: learn, women have the right to learn. They must learn. They spend a lot of money on building schools for women to learn, and for everyone to learn; because they have already become confident that we will learn, men and women, and eventually become what they want.'

Hussein al-Houthi considered calls for women's education as an effort to corrupt them, saying: "Those who call for education want women to become a means to corrupt men, in addition to being a means to corrupt their children."

President Rashad al-Alimi blamed the Houthis for destroying Yemen's education sector and ending what he described as "relative gains" made over decades to promote equal educational opportunities for both sexes in a country ravaged by a costly eight-year war.

Al-Alimi said that the education sector in Yemen suffers from intertwined challenges, especially in light of the systematic destruction of educational institutions practiced by the Houthi militias since their coup and their control over state institutions.

During his participation in the Education Summit within the Educational Transformation Summit held at the UN headquarters in New York, according to the Yemeni News Agency (Saba), he said 'the education sector was at the heart of the sectors affected by the devastating effects of the Houthi coup, especially in its basic stages, and girls' education.'

President El-Alimy stressed that achieving equal opportunities and supporting girls in educational institutions in Yemen seems today to be one of the most important humanitarian and service challenges of his government ever.

Girls' Education and the Taliban Movement in Afghanistan

Since the Taliban took control of Kabul, Afghan women have been suffering from absenteeism and the denial of their rights. The Taliban have increased legal restrictions on women's freedoms, rights and movements, in application of their extremist ideas.

The movement imposed harsh restrictions on women and girls in line with its strict interpretation, which imposed on them not to complete their secondary school education, forced female civil servants to leave their jobs and banned women from traveling alone.

The presence of the Taliban movement has prompted many parents to dispense with schools for education. If the education of boys during their rule is difficult, educating girls is impossible. Government statistics indicate that about 3.5 million children do not attend school, with girls constituting 85% and educated girls 33%, while the percentage among boys reaches 66%.

In addition, there are girls whose faces were burned in front of schools with oxide for no known reason. To add to that, the Taliban are working against the efforts of parents in educating their children by denying girls' education in the areas it controls.

Dozens of teachers, students and women's rights activists marched in Kabul against the ban on girls' enrolment in schools after the sixth grade, decided by the Taliban-led Afghan government.

Local media published video footage of a few dozen women with girls in uniforms carrying textbooks, demanding their rights to study and work in Afghanistan and calling for the reopening of girls' schools across the country.

Shakiba Haidar zadeh, a student in Kabul, said, " I am very upset. I feel that I have lost my life, my dreams and my hopes. The ban on education and human rights is difficult in this society."

After the Taliban takeover, young teacher Nazhand began teaching street children to read with informal lessons in a park. Over time, classes moved to a house where the authorities did not know where they were. It included more girls. They are now numbered about 250 students, including 50 or 60 students above sixth grade.

"I not only teach them school subjects, but I also try to teach them how to fight for and defend their rights," Nazhand says, noting their need to fight, learn and raise their voices in any way they can.

The UN has condemned the Taliban's announcement of an unlimited ban on allowing female students to return to school.

The UN has again called on Afghanistan's ruling Taliban to take "urgent action" to reopen secondary schools for girls, saying their continued deprivation of education is "shameful" and "unparalleled in the world".

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a tweet that "Girls belong in school. The Taliban must let them back in."

According to the UN, "more than one million girls" aged between 12 and 18 have been out of school over the past year, unlike boys whose schools have opened.

"The denial of education violates the most fundamental rights of girls and women. It increases the risk of the marginalization, violence, exploitation and abuse against girls" said Markus Potzel, acting head of the UN mission in Afghanistan.

"The onus is on the Taliban to create favourable conditions for peace, inclusion, security, human rights and economic recovery. The international community remains ready to support a government that is representative of all its people and respects their rights."

The position of the extremist Taliban on human rights in general, and girls' education in particular, threatens to deprive Afghanistan of international projects and aid, which its people desperately need. There are an estimated 10 million children waiting for humanitarian support.

The World Bank announced yesterday the freezing of four projects in Afghanistan worth \$600 million, which were to be financed under the reorganized Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. They were being prepared to be implemented by UN agencies to finance agriculture, education, health and family programs, according to Reuters.

The Bank announced that its role is to support all activities funded by the Trust Fund in the empowerment of women and girls in Afghanistan and equality in

services, noting its grave concern about the Taliban's ban on the return of girls to secondary schools.

The bank announced after agreeing to use funds from the fund for new projects implemented by UN agencies, that there would be a "strong focus on ensuring that girls and women participate and benefit from support."

Achim Steiner, the United Nations Development Program administrator, said the Taliban government's shifting stance on girls had sparked controversy ahead of a major donor conference.

Speaking at a news conference in Kabul, Steiner said: "In the international community and amongst those who are the key funders of the humanitarian response...(this) has created great consternation and I would say in many incomprehension"

Girls' Education and Iran

Students face many obstacles in obtaining a quality education in Iran. These obstacles are doubled or tripled when it comes to girls and young women.

75% of students deprived of education in Iran are girls.

In a speech at the meeting of the Planning Council in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President of Iran for Women and Family Affairs, said that the number of girls deprived of education in Iran is three times more than the number of boys. What we mean by being deprived of education is any girl or boy between the ages of 6 and 18 who are not in the education cycle of the country.

Iran has one of the shortest compulsory education requirements in the world. Children are only obliged to go to school for five years. Even such a short period of compulsory education is not fully imposed by the state, especially for girls. The state does not intervene in cases where girls are married off or boys are forced to work instead of going to school. The difference is that the state allows girls to marry at the age of nine.

For education to be acceptable, the subject and teaching methods must be non-discriminatory. In Iran, schools are segregated by gender, making gender discrimination easily enforceable. Girls are only taught the arts and humanities to reinforce the belief that they are physically and cognitively weaker than boys.

Boys, in turn, are taught science, technology, math and sports to foster a sense that they are stronger, smarter and that they are the heads of their families. This division in the school creates a legal path to deprive them of education.

Girls' Education and Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Boko Haram means "Western education is forbidden," in the Hausa language. It is an Islamist militia operating in northern Nigeria. After the massacres it committed there against moderate Christians and Muslims, the United States designated it as a terrorist organization.

Boko Haram is also called the Nigerian Taliban. The group has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, the terrorist organization ISIS. It largely consists of a group of students who have dropped out of school and want to introduce Sharia law across Nigeria, even though the south of the country is predominantly Christian.

The movement is not known globally despite its bloodshed because it is located in a forgotten part of the world. However, it gained widespread fame in April 2014 after it kidnapped 276 newly educated schoolgirls from a school in Borno state. It said they would be treated as slaves and spoils of war.

According to UNICEF estimates, Boko Haram caused the closure of more than a thousand schools until 2015. They forced one million people to drop out of school. Its armed insurgency caused the deaths of about 17,000 and the displacement of two million people.

The Boko Haram terrorist group also launched an attack on a girls' boarding secondary school in northeastern Nigeria. The schoolgirls and teachers managed to evade them and take refuge in a place of safety, resulting in no casualties.

Sharif Issami, an eyewitness, said that "a convoy of pickup trucks carrying fighters arrived in the village of Dapchi in the Bursari district of Yobe state and then headed to the school. When they entered the village, they started shooting and detonating bombs, which attracted the attention of the students at the Girls' Science and Technical College, allowing them to escape with their teachers before the attackers arrived at the school."

Boko Haram fighters stole the contents of the school after failing to kidnap the schoolgirls.

A member of the civilian militia supporting the army in its fight against terrorists said: "It is clear that the intention behind the attack was to kidnap the schoolgirls. Luckily they couldn't find them because the professors managed to get them out before they arrived."

Conclusion

Women pay the tax of wars, which are mostly civil wars that take place in developing countries. Studies confirm that 90% of the victims of those wars are civilians, especially women and children.

We need to free religion from the grip of politics, more than we need to prevent the exploitation of religion in politics. No one in history has been able to claim the absolute right to speak in the name of religion. No scientist or intellectual thought has been able unite all people through their interpretation.

The Global South and the Global North are really different when it comes to girls' right to education. In the developed world, it is socially unacceptable and illegal for a child to stay at home during school hours for no reason, while in many developing countries, the opposite is true.

Stopping girls' education can affect several generations, leaving behind a vital gap in their society, their country and the world at large.

Recommendations

- 1- Working relentlessly, in all possible forms, to end wars, as well as, internal and external conflicts.
- 2- Seeking to prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes against women all over the world.
- 3- Respecting peoples' right to self-determination, and implementing international resolutions.
- 4- Monitoring governmental institutions and international institutions to highlight their responsibilities regarding the commitment to guarantee and advance women's rights in accordance with the signed international agreements.
- 5- Raising awareness about the importance of women's education.
- 6- Making sure there is free education available for women.
- 7- Solving the problems that stand in the way of women's education.
- 8- Removing wrong cultural norms and practices.
- 9- Eliminating all forms of violence and conflict.