Women in Bahrain in the field of Business

Economic Research Center

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Introduction:

• Women are increasingly important, running companies with a degree of autonomy that was unthinkable a generation ago. (*)

• Integrating women into our economies can yield a broad range of economic gains from increased profits, productivity gains, better corporate leadership, and more efficient utilization of all of our resources and talents. (*)

• Bahraini women today are at a more advanced stage in the process to build a sustainable society and have a greater ability to attain the highest positions in the Kingdom, whereby women in Bahrain today are Ministers, Judges and Business Women, while maintaining their natural presence as a family nurturer, which in turn is a nurturer of the nation as a whole. (*)

Empowerment of Bahraini Women:

• The Kingdom of Bahrain has taken pioneering steps in the field of women’s empowerment, developing women’s capabilities and enabling their participation in society, throughout various sectors including education, healthcare as well as economic, social and political areas. (1)

• According to the statistics released by the Labour Market Regulatory Agency as of the end of 2014, the percentage of Bahraini Women in the Workforce has reached 35.3% of the total Bahraini Workforce for both private and public sectors. Whereby, 51.3% is the percentage of Bahraini Women as part of the total private sector workforce, and 48.7% is the percentage of Bahraini Women as part of the total public sector workforce. (2)

• While the percentage of unemployment level among Bahraini women is 17.7% for the year 2013. (3)

• Bahraini Women occupies 26.9% of the total Managerial and Technical levels jobs, 30.8% of sales Jobs, and 0.1% of Industrial jobs for the period of 2000 -2013. (3)

• The Bahraini woman has filled leadership positions since the 1970’s. Appointment of women to such positions accelerated since the start of the reform era. (4)
Today, there are four women ministers, namely Minister of Social Development, Minister of Culture, Minister of Information Affairs, and Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Women. (4)

Bahraini women were 9 appointed ambassadors for the first time in 1999 to countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and China. (4)

Bahraini women have proven their competence in all leadership positions they occupy, and have recorded a new achievement with a number of women appointed as judges in 2006, including appointments in the Constitutional Court. (5)

In the Shura (Consultative) Council, four women were appointed as members of the Council for the first time in the year 2000. The number of women Shura Council members reached 11 in 2013, a percentage of 28% of total Shura Council members. (5)

Moreover, Women’s participation in the labor market is expected to increase over the coming years at an accelerated rate. This development is attributed to the higher percentage of education of women. The number of women holding university degrees at present exceeds the number of men with university degrees. (5)

**Bahraini Women in the Field of Business:**

Women entered the field of business entrepreneurship since the 1960s. Data shows increasing numbers of women in the private sector. Statistics indicate a higher participation of Bahraini women in the labor force over the period 1991-2014 from 19.4% to 51.3%. (6) , (7)

Bahraini women held 29% of commercial registrations in Bahrain in 2012. (6)

While a more recent statistics according to the BCCI local sources, more than 15% of active memberships to the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry are for Bahraini Businesswomen.

Bahraini women now occupy leadership positions in private sector companies as chief executive officers and members of the boards of directors. Four women won elections to the Board of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2014. (8)

Governmental and non-governmental national organizations concerned with the empowerment of women in the Kingdom of Bahrain have launched a series of initiatives, projects and training and rehabilitation programs aimed at the empowerment of women and providing women with the required skills and technical capabilities to become capable of establishing and managing small enterprises or to enter into the field of business entrepreneurship. (8)
Sources: (*)Women Supreme Council – Bahraini Women in Numbers 2013.


Sources: (5) Women Supreme Council – Bahraini Women in Numbers 2013


Sources: (8) Women Supreme Council – Bahraini Women in Numbers 2013