

UAE's Lady Achievers And Newsmakers

Arab societies have always been patriarchal in nature. The prevalence of strict Islam makes them male dominated in all walks of life. Despite the modern face lift of their infrastructure and economies they have had, most Arab countries are still adamant when it comes to providing their women with equal opportunities as men. For example, in a country like UAE, which has a high level of female education, the ratio of female participation in the workforce is still very low. As per the officially made available data, about 65% of the UAE's university students were females, but their participation in the country's workforce was only around 15%.

This might be about to change however, if the recent trends from media and various government resources had to be believed in. With a booming economy and increased job opportunities, the UAE government was trying out its best to empower their women with higher education and job placements. This has given rise to a sudden influx of the local women applying for jobs in various professions. One could see as a result, many young and confident Arab ladies taking up responsibilities on various fronts in the UAE today. From being radiologists to TV presenters or managing online ventures, the UAE's women are moving forward in all spheres gradually.

Like any other region of the Middle East, it's deemed highly inappropriate for the UAE's women to speak up with strangers in public. All government owned universities have been made single-sex for this reason. With a bullish economy and a large expatriate workforce in their own backyard however, people are now trying to come out of their orthodox mindset. This has now allowed for the women to work with their male colleagues in places like Dubai. The local media proudly keeps on displaying the achievements of lady police officers, medicos, businesswomen and other similar working women.

Take the case of Fatma Mohamed Haj (21) for example, who had to face a stiff resistance from her family when she decided to be a radiologist. Her profession would have asked for touching male strangers and working late at nights. She won her argument by negotiating tactfully though, and is headed to get her first job very soon. Similarly, Nariman al-Rostamani (19), used to face taunting men in public, but it only grew her into confidence, and made her task as a TV presenter more interesting. There are many young women who still can't argue their cases with their families and therefore, may never get to have a public profile ever. However, the few like Fatma and Nariman are enough for creating a stir in the UAE's life and pushing forward with the empowerment agenda.

Amna Mazam is a student counselor who teaches working women about negotiating skills. It comes handy in getting family's nod for job placements. She confirms about the difficulties faced by the working women in the UAE, however feels positive about tomorrow at the same time. While many males do still not like the idea of working wives, there are some who might be willing to move ahead with time. An IT student, Fahad Qahtani (25), believes working wives can be a good idea for husbands as they won't annoy by chattering about domestic issues. Jokes apart, Fahad's opinion does indicate about the changing times in the UAE, and the future ahead for its aspiring women.

About the Author

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