



Policy Name

Women's Empowerment Unit at Al-Mamoun University

Policy Information

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Policy Statement

Women's Empowerment: Overview

Definition of Women's Empowerment:

Women's empowerment is defined as the process that enables women to make strategic decisions that give them power to control their own lives. It also refers to women's possession of resources and their ability to utilize and manage them to achieve various accomplishments. This concept relies on three interconnected elements: **resources, agency, and achievements**. Resources refer to material, social, and human allocations; agency refers to women's ability or at least their perceived ability to set strategic goals and make decisions accordingly; achievements refer to outcomes ranging from improved living standards to political representation.

Experts' Definitions of Women's Empowerment:

- **Naila Kabeer:** Empowerment involves changing the relationships between men and women so that men have less control over women's lives, and women gain more control. Empowerment should be applied practically and not remain theoretical slogans.
- **John Friedman:** Empowerment arises from the interaction of local cultural, political, and social factors. He identifies three types of power: political, social, and psychological. Political power is exercised through collective action, social power through community knowledge and skills, and psychological power as a personal feeling of strength, manifested in confidence and self-esteem.
- **Kate Young:** Empowerment is a comprehensive process that raises women's status with the support of the state and society, emphasizing politics and collective action to enable women to set their own agendas and increase control over their lives.

Elements of Women's Empowerment:

- The right to make choices independently.
- The ability to control life inside and outside the home.
- A sense of self-worth and identity.
- Access to resources and opportunities.
- The right to influence social and economic systems at national and international levels.

Principles of Women's Empowerment:

1. Focus on training and professional development for women.
2. Establish high-level institutional leadership promoting gender equality.
3. Achieve fairness, non-discrimination, and respect for all genders and their rights.
4. Ensure health, safety, and well-being for all workers.
5. Promote community initiatives to enhance gender equality.

Areas of Women's Empowerment:

- **Economic Empowerment:** Enables women to control family resources and income, access markets and job opportunities equally, participate in economic decision-making, and achieve financial independence.
- **Political Empowerment:** Grants women the right to vote, engage in politics, and represent governments locally and internationally.
- **Socio-Cultural Empowerment:** Promotes social participation beyond family settings, expands educational opportunities, reduces discrimination, and facilitates freedom of movement.
- **Legal Empowerment:** Provides awareness of legal rights, community support, effective enforcement, and encourages laws that protect women's rights.
- **Psychological Empowerment:** Enhances self-respect, efficacy, social awareness, inclusion, and societal acceptance.

Levels of Women's Empowerment:

1. **Individual Level:** Women's ability to control their lives, awareness of their value, and goal-setting.
2. **Collective Level:** Women's organization and sense of power in groups.
3. **Political and Social Climate:** The societal norms and political frameworks determining what women can or cannot do.

The Beijing Conference (1995) called for reserving at least 30% of parliamentary seats for women.

Indicators for Measuring Women's Empowerment Globally:

- Women's participation in general committees and leadership roles.
- Access to non-traditional training opportunities.
- Changing women's and men's perceptions about women's roles outside home.
- Women holding non-female-specific leadership positions.
- Proportion of women in parliament, ministries, and higher decision-making.
- Women's ownership of businesses.
- Female enrollment in higher education.
- Number of women with bank accounts.
- Women's economic independence.
- Women's labor market participation.

Goals of Women's Empowerment Unit at Al-Mamoun University:

- The primary goal is empowering women in their struggle alongside men, challenging traditional gender roles within the family.
- The focus is on women as individuals, especially working women, rather than solely as family caregivers.
- Achieving empowerment requires widespread acceptance of gender equality concepts, overcoming religious and cultural barriers.

Note: The United Nations identified religious adherence as a major obstacle to full implementation of women's empowerment. The Beijing+10 conference (2005) recommended using Islamic organizations as a culturally appropriate platform to promote empowerment within an Islamic framework.

Strategy of the Women's Empowerment Unit at Al-Mamoun University:

- To enable women to be empowered, proactive leaders participating in all sustainable development fields, enhancing their quality of life.
- To build women's capacities and remove obstacles to their full participation.
- To maintain social cohesion by complementing roles of men and women.
- To foster skills and inclinations among women.
- To promote leadership and responsibility for women at local, regional, and international levels.
- To establish supportive institutional frameworks aligned with best practices, increasing women's quantitative and qualitative participation in decision-making roles.

Future Vision of the Women's Empowerment Unit at Al-Mamoun University:

1. Organize programs, workshops, and seminars related to women's empowerment.
2. Conduct field visits to address women's issues in orphanages, correctional facilities, and rehabilitation centers, including support for abused women.
3. Collect and distribute aid to low-income women.
4. Prepare and run skill development courses (sewing, hairdressing, computer skills, cooking).
5. Establish strong cooperation with government agencies concerned with women's affairs.