

Issues and Challenges of Integration for Women in Syria

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Abstract

The Syrian refugee crisis has resulted in one of the largest refugee crises in modern history, with millions taking shelter in West Asian countries. While Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt have offered refuge, the process of integration remains deeply uneven and fraught with challenges. The causes and the consequences of wars affect women and men differently. The Syrian war affected women severely. Reconstruction efforts in conflict-ridden societies often overlook the true needs of women. The paper incorporates women's narrative highlighting the issues of war victims including housing, food, health, economic hardship, social exclusion and gender-based violence. The hurdles encompass legal and bureaucratic obstacles, restricted access to school and work, gender discrimination, and socio-cultural limitations. Many women are facing insufficient legal safeguards, unstable employment

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circumstances, and limitations on movement resulting from the host countries and entrenched border policies. Despite international frameworks like the UN's Women, Peace, and Security Agenda emphasising the necessity of resettlement. This article based on secondary sources analyses the structural and socio-cultural obstacles hindering the integration of Syrian women refugees in West Asia. In Lebanon and Jordan, strained resources and legal restrictions keep many in a cycle of uncertainty, while in Turkey, evolving policies offer both opportunities and challenges. Egypt, with its relatively smaller refugee population, presents a unique case of informal integration within urban centres. The study highlights the resilience of displaced communities, the role of local solidarity networks, and the tensions between host populations and refugee groups.

Introduction

The Syrian Crisis created the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis after the second world war. The Syrian Crisis has been one of the most complicated conflicts of the twenty-first century. This crisis involves multiple actors, such as Russia, Iran, the USA, Israel, and many non-state actors. The Syria conflict has posed a serious danger to regional stability and security

of the region. The conflict has drawn foreign parties into the battleground over the past few years and has evolved into a battleground for a multinational proxy war (Carlin, 2022). After the protests began in 2011, unlike the other former cases in Tunisia and Egypt, Assad's government responded to the protests against him and his government with the brutal orders to crush the dissent and their country people. Later, the armed forces of Assad carried out a brutal crackdown in the country to quell the protests against them, a move that further escalated the Syrian crisis. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based monitoring group, claimed that 511,000 people had died since the war began. According to BBC 2020 research, this crisis killed approximately 380,000 people and displaced about 11 million people (BBC News, 2020). The Syrian crisis persisted, resulting in the successive destruction of cities, and its effects extended to other countries. Since 2015, Russia and Iran have supported the Assad regime against rebel groups. (BBC News, 2020). While Iran and the USA supported rebel groups. International interventions heavily influenced the entire region. Everything was destroyed so badly in Syria, including historic places, schools, hospitals, water and sanitation centers, and landmarks. Where there were once busy markets, they are now ruined and turned into rubble. The war has also broken commercial and social ties with neighbouring countries,

which have badly affected the country's economy. The war has resulted in widespread grave exploitation, instability, destruction, and loss of lives in Syria. The Syrian Crisis continued to be violent and later escalated in parts of Aleppo and Idlib as well. Since December 1st, 2019, an estimated 900,000 people in northwest Syria have been displaced by conflict (900,000 Syrian Civilians Displaced from Idlib in the Middle of Winter, 2020). Due to the further attacks in northern Idlib, people are forced to squeeze into a smaller region, which is close to the Turkish border, a country that already hosts millions of displaced Syrian people. The complexities and instability of war led to widespread city destruction and atrocities. According to UNHCR 2022 research about thirteen million Syrians fled from their homes, and more than half a million have died (USA for UNHCR, 2022). It made the Syrian people's lives a constant terror. It has shattered families and communities apart because men were frequently slain, put in prison, or seriously injured. Syrians avoid death; they do not wish to remain in Syria, a war zone. Consequently, Syrians cross borders and are forced to live in refuge. Syrian refugees are scattered in almost all parts of the world. About 6.9 million people are still internally displaced and 5.6 million people flee their homes since 2011 and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. (UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency Turkey, n.d.,) Most of the Syrian refugees

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moved to West Asian countries, including Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt. (Rayaes& Al-Ghazi, 2020).

Most of the refugees from Syria are women, children, and elderly people (Sehgal, 2021). Syrians continue to make up the world's largest refugee population (USA for UNHCR, 2020). This has resulted in a major regional and international humanitarian emergency, affecting the lives of millions of Syrians and their respective host communities (Rayaes& Al-Ghazi, 2020). Syrian women navigated into an unpredictable environment which was open to new risks and unpleasant experiences (Kumar et.al.). Life wasn't straightforward for Syrian women, even in host countries. Syria's women are burdened with widespread problems, including poor housing arrangements, food insecurity, limited economic support, high living expenses, illegal employment, their inability to enroll their children in school, and intolerance from the locals. (Syria Crisis, 2021). Moreover, they had cultural and language variances, which created difficulty in communicating and adjusting in new setup and jobs in host countries. Language limitations and communication difficulties make refugees feel lonely, despondent, and antisocial, which frequently causes depression (Language Integration Bar-

riers: Perspectives from Refugee Youth, 2016). Language deficiencies and cultural barriers lead to discrimination at work, making it difficult for them to integrate in host countries. (Women, Work & War: Syrian Women..., 2016). Furthermore, they are facing constant threats in their host countries, including familial violence, sexual exploitation, prostitution, an increase in second and fraudulent marriages, and harassment. Large-scale instances of sexual abuse that occur in refugee camps go unreported in host nations. (Shetty, n.d.). Gender-based violence continues to be a daily reality for Syrian women.

After over 14 years of fighting and Assad's fall, more than 16 million people in Syria require humanitarian aid, and ninety percent of the population is living in poverty. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, prior to the most recent developments, over 6 million people had fled the country, 7.4 million people had been displaced within the country, and 2.3 million people were still living in camps. (Crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, 2023). In the uncertain aftermath of the toppling of the Assad government, Syria continues to face significant security and assistance issues in the northeast and beyond. According to the UN

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humanitarian coordination agency, OCHA, more than 25,000 people have recently been displaced from the northeastern city of Manbij, and bombardments and airstrikes have been reported.(Syria: Hostilities and Aid Challenges Persist Across Devastated Country, 2025). Syria is still in turmoil. It's necessary to consider the concerns and issues of Syrian women when formulating policies for them. Each country has a unique response strategy for refugees, whether it is in the form of legislation or aid and facilities. So, the objective of this paper is to analyse the challenges and opportunities faced by Syrian female refugees in West Asian nations.

Syrian refugees in West Asia

The majority of Syrian refugees have fled to West Asian countries. More than 130 nations have accepted Syrian refugees, but the majority of the refugees are living in these five host countries. Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt (USA for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, 2021). Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey are the three countries, especially, which have received about 90 per cent of the fleeing population from Syria (Achilli et al., 2017). The majority of Syrians fled to Turkey. It has been home to 3.6 million refugees. Turkey hosts the highest number of Syrian refugees. Ap-

proximately 90% of these refugees live outside of refugee camps and have limited access to essential amenities (Reid, 2021, para. 2). Families who have lost their fathers due to fighting or forced disappearances pose another important issue for Syrian women refugees.

Lebanon has the world's largest refugee population per capita (Rayes et al., 2020). The entry of more than a million Syrian refugees has impacted Lebanon, as it's a small nation of just over 4 million people. It is a small coastal nation in Lebanon that supports the second-largest population of Syrian refugees (Todd, 2019). About one-eighth of Lebanon's population is made up of Syrian refugees (Reid, 2021). Following Lebanon, Jordan has 656,000 Syrian refugees. About "120,000 live in refugee camps, including Za'atari and Azraq, where aid groups have converted desert wastes into cities" (Reid, 2021, Where are refugees going? para.3) Between January and mid-October 2013, the UNHCR conducted a survey in Jordan that looked at over 15,000 Syrian female-headed families (UNHCR, 2014b). In Jordan most of the refugees were living in tents and settlements. Over half of the refugees in Jordan's Za'atari refugee camp are children and 30 percent of the household are headed by women (Syrian Refugee Crisis: Aid, Statistics and News | USA for UNHCR, n.d.). While in Egypt, 136,700 Syrian

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refugees had registered by 2021 with UNHCR., and 82,870 of them had received registration services. Syrians constituted the predominant refugee demographic in Egypt, with 50% of the overall refugee and asylum-seeking population.

According to research, Jordan had roughly 630,000, while Lebanon had around 1.1 million Syrian people since late 2014. The number of registered Syrian refugees remained stable in Lebanon and Jordan. On the other hand, in Turkey, the number of registered refugees has consistently increased. The number of registered Syrian refugees in Turkey has risen to half a million just between October and December. Despite the flow of Syrians from Turkey to Europe, roughly 117,000 registered Syrian refugees are in Egypt, respectively, with an additional estimated 28,000 refugees in North African nations. (Ferris & Kirisci, 2016). Around ninety-two percent of Syrians who fled to neighboring countries live in rural and urban areas, with only about 5% residing in refugee camps (USA for UNHCR, UN Refugee Agency, 2021).

The unequal distribution of Syrian refugees across Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt creates disproportionate economic and social burdens on

host countries. Smaller nations like Lebanon and Jordan struggle more due to limited resources. Lebanon hosts nearly 1 million refugees in a country of 4 million, while Egypt, with a larger population, hosts only 117,000. The difference in hosting capacities leads to varied policies, affecting refugee livelihoods. Without burden-sharing mechanisms, host countries with smaller economies face deeper crises.

Jordan invited UNHCR for the management and registration of refugees. While in Turkey, camps were run by the Disaster and Emergency Management Agency. In October 2011, the Turkish government formally extended the temporary protection for the Syrian refugees and claimed that it would manage the situation of refugees without any international assistance. However, both Ankara's and Amman's hopes were that refugees would be able to return to Syria. Furthermore, Turkey has tried to seek international support against Assad's regime and for refugees inside Syria. Jordan, unlike Turkey, did not completely rupture its relations with the Syrian government. It may enable Syrian refugees from Jordan to return to Syria. Jordan also mobilised some more international support and assistance for the maintenance of refugees and to further limit their flow into its territory. Furthermore, a fragile sectarian situation has been created because of Hezbollah, which is a Shia

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Lebanese political actor and has been supporting Assad's regime in Syria. It has strained Lebanon's government's ability to not receive a large number of Sunni refugees. Thus, despite the fact that the number of Syrian refugees in 2015 exceeded one fourth of Lebanon's own population, the Lebanese government still requires a visa for Syrian refugees to enter the country. Lebanon eventually even halted the registration of new refugees.

The political response of countries towards the Syrian refugees has also changed dramatically particularly in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. Initially Syrian refugees were welcomed with generosity and initiated an open door policy. That time, the number of refugees was low and it was believed that they would return soon after the conflict deescalated. Over time, the general public's attitude towards Syrian refugees in these nations has also become increasingly unfavourable. There is a growing negative public perception of the Syrian refugees, due to which locals associate them with criminality in Turkey and Lebanon. (Ferris & Kirisci, 2016). However, the Syrian Crisis continued to get complicated and longer which has also increased the number of refugees intensely and made it difficult for the host countries to allow them to stay for so long.

Being a Syrian Refugee Woman is a Challenge

War affects both men and women, but it affects women differently and more severely. Wars often put women at greater risk of vulnerability and violence. Women often have to face multiple challenges during the war. As refugees, women encounter sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. Women have to adopt new gender roles. At home, women assume the role of caretakers, perform household chores, and, in the absence of their male partners, earn income for their family. The same is true in the case of Syrian refugee women. Their conditions have deteriorated more than men's. Syrian women fled due to the civil war and crossed borders in order to save their lives. When Syrian women and their families reach host countries, they often have to live in an unfamiliar and overcrowded setting that is prevalent in refugee camps and informal tented settlements. (Chayn,2018). According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Syrian female refugees feel unsafe without adult male family members. Syrian women in host countries often hide from people that they are living without any adult male members. They become more vulnerable when such Syrian female refugees live in homes that lack electricity, locks, or a private bathroom (2014b). Women who live alone or with no male partners face additional challenges. They

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are especially exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation. Parents who do not have enough money to support their families and are afraid of their daughters being molested may choose to arrange a marriage (Chayn, 2018). It has led to an increase in the number of forced marriages and child marriages among Syrian refugees in host countries. Furthermore, child marriages lead to early pregnancies, which add to the health problems and risks for Syrian female refugees.

Most of them had to face a daily struggle to generate enough money for basic necessities such as payment of their rent, food, and health care and are struggling to adjust to the host country's new environment. (Giovetti, 2021). Mothers often have to spend hours providing medical aid to their sick children in order to reach the hospital for treatment. Refugee mothers are compelled due to the complexities of economic burden and difficulty in finding jobs to engage their children in child labour. Refugee women often leave their small children all alone while they go away to earn money, and there used to be no one to take care of them.

Legal framework and Policies

Turkey, in contrast to these host nations that have ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, is an exception. Turkey is presently the only country in the world that effectively distinguishes between European and non-European refugees. It means Syrian refugees in Turkey do not legally have a full-fledged refugee status (Atakan, 2011). Instead, Erciyes (2016) grants Syrian refugees the “guest” status, which does not provide legal protection. In fact, Turkey maintains a geographical limitation on the protection of refugees (Atakan, 2011). The events that occurred in Europe before 1951 served as the first impetus for the international treaty that established the status of refugees. This restriction was, however, removed in 1967 with the passage of the Protocol on the Legal Status of Refugees (Refugee Status: Turkey Sticks to a “Limited” Application of the Geneva Convention, n.d.). Turkey adopted this amendment in 1968, although it only applied to “geographical constraints.” Turkey is currently the only country that makes a distinction between refugees from Europe and those from other continents (Refugee Status: Turkey Sticks to “Limited” Application of the Geneva Convention, n.d.). It only takes into account refugees from Europe.

It means that Turkey has neither granted Syrian refugees' status nor allowed them to stay in the country for an extended period of time. In spite of this fact, Syrians in Turkey are granted temporary protection with some rights and facilities. In between all the challenges, opportunities, and recommendations, Turkey is now taking steps to move about six thousand Syrians under the temporary housing schemes to other provinces. The Syrians begging in the streets particularly create resentment among locals particularly in the cities of western Turkey. Reports of occasional violence between refugees and locals can be heard. In 2018, President Erdogan developed a proposal to voluntarily return Syrian refugees to borderland safe zones in collaboration with the UNHCR (Todd, 2019). It will be critical to see in the future how this policy will affect Syrian women refugees from Turkey.

Lebanon is also signatory to the 1951 Convention as well, which defines a refugee as someone who is being persecuted in their country of nationality because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group and political opinion (Kheshen, 2023). However, Lebanon's local law has a broader definition, applying to anyone who is facing punishment for a political crime, whose life or freedom is threatened, equally for political reasons. (Kheshen, 2023). The governorate of Bekaa is home

to the largest population of Syrian refugees “(339,233), followed by North Lebanon (237,392) and Beirut (215,929).” (Roupetz et al., 2020, p. 2). The UNHCR interviewed nearly one in five Syrian women who said that their former head of family was unable to seek refuge because of visa and entry requirements. Due to Lebanon’s complicated immigration requirements, the majority of Syrian families are split up. Many Syrian women feel isolated and lonely because they don’t have anyone to share their feelings with. The UNHCR interviewed nearly one in five Syrian women who said that their former head of family was unable to seek refuge because of visa and entry requirements. Lebanon should take measures to ease their burden and to reunite them with their family members. The government of Lebanon has also reduced the amount of humanitarian aid available, and the introduction of new administrative procedures for the renewal of residency cards has made it more costly and challenging to obtain.

While Jordan is neither signatory to 1951 Convention nor its 1967 protocol. (UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency, n.d.) Jordan has presented a plan titled “Jordan Response to the Syrian Crisis Plan—JRP 2016-2018” has donated \$700 million to help it. (Bildung, 2024). This plan contained the pledge to eliminate any barriers prohibiting Syrian refugees from engag-

ing in economic activity within the camps and engaging in commerce with individuals outside of them, as well as to make the required administrative adjustments to permit Syrian refugees to work in Jordan.

Egypt is one of the two Arab countries that participated in the drafting committee for the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Later, Egypt also signed the convention (UNHCR 2010). The state of Egypt has been responsible for refugees since 1953, as stated in Egyptian constitutions (Sadek 2016). However, it was not until May 1981 that the Government of Egypt (GoE) agreed to the Convention and its 1967 Additional Protocol. Article 5 of the Constitutional Declaration of February 1953 recognised the right to seek refuge in Egypt (Rashed, 2023). The Egyptian government estimates that more than 250,000 Syrians had reportedly fled to Egypt by early 2015, with over 130,000 people, including children, and more than 50% of women registered with the UN Refugee Agency. (UNFPA, 2015). Syrians are one of the largest refugee groups in Egypt and an asylum-seeking population. In December 2021, the UNHCR's registered number was increased to 136,700 Syrians of whom 82,870 Syrians received registration services (Egypt - Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Syria in Egypt, n.d.). These visa and security requirements have separated the families, so various Syri-

an women have been left alone in Egypt while their male partners were not allowed due to security restrictions. (UNHCR, 2014a). Egypt does not force Syrian refugees to live in camps. Syrian refugees and asylum seekers, as well as those on visiting or student visas, are free to live, interact, and move across the country (Rashed,2023).

Turkey has the most organised legal system, with the Temporary Protection Regulation (2014) providing refugees access to healthcare, education, and work permits, although bureaucratic and linguistic impediments remain challenges. Jordan also gives refugees limited work permits, although tight sectoral limitations limit them to select areas such as agriculture and construction. Lebanon, which never joined the 1951 Refugee Convention, regards Syrians as “displaced persons” instead of refugees, with no official legal status, severely restricting work opportunities. Egypt offers Syrians residency cards and access to public facilities but limits their ability to formal work, putting many in risky informal labour.

Economic and Employment Struggles

The economic policies of host nations fail to provide permanent work possibilities for Syrian refugees, leaving them exposed to exploitation, destitution, and reliance on humanitarian relief. While Turkey has a formal work permit system, the majority of refugees are still unable to obtain one. Jordan and Lebanon have strong limitations that hinder economic self-sufficiency. While Jordan comparatively improved the issuance of work permits in 2024. Egypt grants residence but provides no viable work opportunities. These problems disproportionately affect women, who confront extra cultural, legal, and economic hurdles to labour-force participation. Without policy changes that provide equitable labour market access, Syrian refugees would be locked in a cycle of economic marginalisation and vulnerability.

In Turkey, among 2.16 million Syrians, around 1 million are expected to be in the labour market, the majority working informally in low-skilled and low-paid professions (International Labour Organisation, 2024). Language barrier in Turkey further complicates the situation for refugees. Syrian refugees do not know the Turkish language, and this creates a barrier for them in accessing employment. Syrian refugee women in Turkey do not have any specialized professional qualifications, which makes them highly de-

pendent on their husbands (I. H. 1. Mirici, 2018). Syrian refugees moved to cities with employment opportunities and had training services. There is a need for an easy process for work permits so that Syrian refugees can easily access them. There should be recognition of Syrian degrees, education and credentials in Turkey for jobs and training programs. Syrian refugee women in Turkey face sexual exploitation, where people often ask for sex in exchange for a job and money. While refugee women try to become self-supporting again, they often face sexual violence and gender-based violence at workplaces. People frequently request sexual favors in exchange for jobs and workplaces. According to the report of B. Kumar et al. (2018), there is a greater need for short vocational training courses for the skill development of both Syrians in Lebanon. There are restrictions that should be reduced in various job sectors so that Syrian refugees can work. Enhanced municipal and governance capabilities in Lebanon, along with the opening of work permit facilities, will simplify the process of securing funding.

Since 2012, UN Women has been providing safe spaces with the economic empowerment opportunities and programmes for girls and women in the Azraq and Za'atari refugee camps of Jordan. More than the 16,000 Syri-

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an refugees benefit annually from the Oasis centres which includes over 400 cash for a work with child care services counselling and opportunities to the referrals for gender-based violence (2018). In Jordan, over 93 percent of Syrian males and 54 percent of Syrian women were employed (RAND,2018). The employers compel Syrian refugees to perform menial, low-paying jobs in the absence of work permits. While the annual issuance of work licences to Syrians in Jordan increased from 45,000 in 2019 to 90,000 in 2023, resulting in a cumulative total of 340,000 permits granted (World Bank Group, 2024). Instead of these efforts over 93 per cent of homes in Syria and households in Jordan are under debt in order to meet their basic requirements (USA UNHCR, 2024). A UNHCR survey revealed that women-led families had fewer job prospects compared to their male-led counterparts.

One Syrian woman refugee in Egypt named Diala says, “A woman alone in Egypt is prey to all men” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014a, “para 12” section). Zahwa, in Jordan, says she was even harassed by refugees when collecting food coupons. “I was living in dignity, but now no one respects me because I’m not with a man,” (UNHCR, 2014a, “para 12”), she

said. They are taking a variety of low-paying jobs, often working 12 hours a day, to meet basic needs, but it's challenging to secure employment in Egypt due to their status of refugee. Exploitation doesn't stop here; only while they tried to leave jobs, employers refused to return passports.

All host countries extended generous support to Syrian refugees initially, but none of them allowed them to work legally (Ferris Krisci, 2016). This has also limited the opportunity and ability to earn a living for Syrian refugee women in the host countries. Lebanon has 92 per cent of men and 30 percent of women working (RAND,2018). The inability to find work and earn a living in host countries forces Syrian refugee women to indulge in sexual exploitation. It, also known as non-consensual "survival" sex, happens when women and girls, particularly in Lebanon, trade sexual favors for food, other items, or money to pay rent (Chayn, 2018). These exploitations affect Syrian women with psychological and physical wounds from the war that require attention.

They struggled to pay for their residency fees, rent, utilities, and food due to a lack of legitimate economic opportunities (Reid, 2021). Syrian refugees

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are forced to live in inadequate homes. For example, in Lebanon, many refugees live in overcrowded collective shelters and informal tented settlements. (Porch, 2019). According to UNHCR (2020), about 40 percent of refugees live in substandard apartments. Inhumane living conditions are common among many refugees who were living in informal settlements. Similarly, in Jordan, while some refugees live in official camps such as Zaatar, the majority live in cities where cheap and sufficient accommodation is rare. In Turkey, a large number of refugees reside outside of established camps, frequently in poor and costly leased housing. Economic restrictions and prejudice usually make it difficult for Syrian refugees in Egypt to find appropriate homes. Their houses were in poor condition, and they lived in rooms without electricity and lights. About twenty-five percent of refugees live in damp garages (Alami, 2013). Syrian women and their children are living in poor and overcrowded conditions. They have limited or no access to basic necessities of life. Syrian women refugees miss their old homes in Syria with their loved ones and comforts of spaces, gardens, and furnishings.

Education and Healthcare

Syrians wish to provide a good education to their kids and a stable career for their husband (I. H. 1. Mirici, 2018). Syrians have trouble getting their degrees and professional credentials recognized for work in the host countries. (Kumar et.al.). Turkey's Syrian families can't send their children to school while they are unable to register with the temporary protection services, which need the presence of a father or a valid death certificate, both of which most of them lack. (Rayes et al., 2020). Syrians living outside Turkey's official refugee camps face problems such as early marriage, having children at an early age, and living in poor conditions. (Narlı&Özaşçılar, 2019). Syrians married off their daughter due to the risks of sexual and gender-based exploitation in camps and outside. Syrian Women refugees in Turkey, both inside and outside the camps, are commonly involved in early marriages and polygamous marriages have become common practices. There are also cases where refugee women indulge in prostitution businesses just to get some milk and nappies for their children. Sexual abuse of women during displacement created risks of mental health issues among Syrian refugees. Apart from these challenges, ninety percent of refugees are

According to a UNHCR poll conducted in 2019, Syrian refugee children suffer the same issues as Egyptian schoolchildren, of overcrowded classrooms, low resources, and lengthy distances to school. Additionally, Syrian youngsters encounter the obstacles of dialect (Rashed,2023). Syrian women refugees in Egypt are also vulnerable to verbal, physical, and sexual exploitation. The registered Syrian refugees in Egypt provided therapy services for post-traumatic stress disorder. The number of Syrians who received therapy and reception services increased by 630%, from 100 people in 2020 to 710 in 2021 (Egypt - Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Syria in Egypt, n.d.). The daily expansion of counselling activities and streamlined counselling interviews at the Zamalek Office led to this growth.

According to UNHCR, in Lebanon, families marry off their underage daughters to protect their daughters, family honour, and provide them basic needs. The Syrian refugees in Lebanon were caught in a dangerous security net. In Jordan also, the rate of child marriage has risen significantly among Syrian refugee groups. By 2013, the number of Syrian refugee marriages in Jordan where the bride was under the age of 18 had risen from 12 per

cent to as high as 25 percent (Chayn, 2018). UNHCR and its partners had made efforts to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. Many initiatives led by UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA proposed specifically to support the refugee women and their families. Some programmes were also initiated for reducing the risks of children in female-headed households and providing them education. Syrian refugees face double trauma due to the death of their people and being separated from their families. UNHCR is helping Syrian war survivors by providing shelter and psychosocial support through counselling. The trauma of separation and exploitation has created distressful life for Syrian women refugees(2014a). Comprehensive regulations and focused initiatives are necessary because Syrian refugee women confront obstacles including healthcare and educational services. The general well-being of Syrian refugee women in host nations may be improved by funding easily available education, bolstering healthcare systems, and advocating for gender equality.

Resilience and Way Forward

Syrian women refugees face multiple challenges in adjusting to a new social and economic background, but they are dealing with it bravely. There

are instances where they work to help others as well. Women have mixed responses to their new roles. Some women respond that they are interacting more with the community because of their interactive roles as homemakers. For security reasons, Syrian female refugees left the house very little, only in times of need, as compared to when they were in Syria. There are Syrian women like Hala as well, UNHCR (2020) cites her, a Syrian refugee who, despite facing gender-based abuse throughout their tough journey to Lebanon, managed to establish a tiny informal village. She made the decision to give shelter to other Syrian refugee women and girls as a result of her harrowing experiences. There were hardly any mattresses in her home. There wasn't much space for standing up, playing, or even cooking. Hala, however, has provided shelter in the same location for additional Syrian refugee women and girls. She wants to help other women who are similar to her and defend them against abuse and unsafe settings.

In Turkey, Syrian refugee women work as teachers and translators to fulfil their families' basic needs. They primarily work to provide food for their children. In places, Syrian women refugees are also facilitating other refugees and those organisations working for them. Al Refaal, a Syrian refugee girl in Egypt, she was just an ordinary graduate, when she came to Egypt and

faced challenges. Later she decided to help other Syrian women refugees and organisations working for refugee support. So, she started providing assistance and support to the Syrian families. In the beginning their reach was limited to 60 families, but it grew slowly and gave birth to an organisation named Soryana. It was the first human resource development centre that was run by non-Egyptians. It comprised the partnerships of various nationalities, including Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Iraq, and a combination of embassies, including the Canadian and British embassies. They organise activities and talks among women of different nationalities to know their problems with one another and bridge the gap. It minimises the burden of organisations and also expands the reach of support.

In host countries, the majority of women's roles changed to that of sole heads of their houses, and they are taking charge of everything in the absence of their male spouses for survival. Syrian women in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt are engaging in self-employment activities. Providing financial advising, and marketing services may help these women reach more consumers and new markets for financial security and survival. It improves the chances of safe and dignified work opportunities and could yield broad

Syrians require more humanitarian assistance to become self-sufficient in life with dignity and a hope which comes from jobs. However, the rate of unemployment among the Syrian refugees is high. Most of the jobs available are low-skilled and low waged. Some provisions are taken for the availability of legal work permits but not working as planned. Many refugee workers live in village areas far away from the cities where the jobs are. The primary difficulty for Syrian women refugees while acting as heads of household is lack of availability of income. They want to work, but cannot due to sexual and gender-based violence. To lessen refugees' reliance on informal employment, Turkey and Jordan should provide legal work permits for women. Lebanon and Egypt must enact tighter laws prohibiting sex trafficking and forced prostitution of refugee women. For self-reliance they need vocational training programmes, childcare facilities, so that women could go to workplaces. After the fall of Assad, Syria is still unstable. A durable solution requires the development of safe government, reconciliation, and peacebuilding in the region. Private and local citizens who have the capability should also try to donate to UNHCR and other organisations that are assisting Syrian refugees. Resettlement and integration of Syrian

refugees is possible through political help and commitment.

Conclusion

The ability to host and integrate refugees is not just about numbers but also about a country's economic and infrastructural capacity. Smaller states like Lebanon and Jordan bear an outsized burden compared to their resources. Women constitute a significant portion of refugees in all four countries, but their access to work, education, and healthcare varies. In Lebanon and Jordan, restrictive labour policies push refugee women into informal work, increasing risks of exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV). Turkey provides legal work permits, but language barriers and social discrimination limit Syrian women's employment prospects. In Egypt, refugee women have better access to public services but face economic exclusion due to bureaucratic hurdles. Syrians still face the issue of visa and security limitations, which are necessary for safe refuge. Forced and child marriages are becoming more common in refugee camps. Syrian refugee women in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt are exposed to sexual exploitation and poor health outcomes due to a combination of legal precarity, economic marginalisation, and cultural shame. Addressing these concerns necessitates greater legal safeguards, specific healthcare treatments, and economic

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development programs prioritising gender-sensitive policies. If not, Syrian women would be locked in cycles of exploitation and misery.

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