

The role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women from the point of view of study sample

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Abstract:

Refugee women suffer from displacement because of wars and the consequent loss of housing and relatives and exposure to exploitation. Refugee women are also exposed to exploitation at work. Therefore, ensuring the protection and assistance of refugee women depends on the role of community institutions, based on their protection and on the diversity of programs offered to them. Self-help groups are among the groups that form within refugee protection institutions in order to provide aid and psychological and social assistance. They are also concerned with focusing on self-growth, through the practice of social activities that work to restore the person to herself and develop her self-confidence and her ability to face problems. Therefore, the study aimed to determine the role of Self-help groups to alleviate the labor problems of refugee women. The study found that their hypotheses were incorrect.

Keywords: Refugee women - self-help groups - labor problems.

Introduction:

The status of women in any society is one of the basic criteria for measuring the extent of society's progress. It is not possible to imagine any society currently progressing, leaving behind half of it in a state of backwardness. The progress of societies depends on the extent of women's progress and their follow-up on the path side by side with men (Al-Halawani, 2000, p. 2).

Therefore, women are considered an important component of society and play an essential role in its construction and progress. Needless to say, women bear sole responsibility for many of this society's maintenance activities. However, the social changes now led to women going out to work daily, which has created new roles for them besides the main role for them as a mother (Musa, et al, 2003, p. 23).

The contribution of women in the labor force achieves is, on the one hand, a development of their social conditions and an improvement in their economic capabilities. On the other hand, it is a positive indicator of the extent of their contribution to the production process. At the end it achieves their status and meets their economic, social and psychological needs (Al-Khalidi, 2006, p. 16).

Women's issues have witnessed remarkable interest on the international and Arab arenas, where women have been able to make tangible progress in the work field. However, there is an urgent need to study the conditions of working women in general, and in particular

refugee-working women, given the special nature of this group and the nature of the problems they suffer from due to displacement, and the urgent need to engage in the labor market to provide a better standard of living for herself and her family. This is consistent with the study of Al ajmi, (2005), which confirmed that this woman has become the first breadwinner and the main family caregiver as a result of the loss of her husband in one way or another.

Therefore, women are considered a human force that contributes to increasing the national income of any country and to raising the standard of living of the family. The absence of an appropriate environment for work and production, such as exposure to verbal and physical harassment, negatively affects their productivity at work (Abdullah, 2013, p.137). Women are exposed to multiple forms of exploitation, such as satisfying sexual desires and producing pornography, in addition to exploitation at work. (Abdul Hamid, 2015, p. 349)

Refugee women are also exposed to exploitation in forced labor, domestic servitude and forced marriage, the removal of organs and the exploitation of their children in begging, (United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs, 2019, p. 58), in addition to working in the informal sectors, which makes them more vulnerable to more risks and weak legal protection for them (CARE, 2017).

In addition to the suffering of refugee women from many psychological damages due to labor problems, such as a mental health disorder, the situation may eventually lead to isolation and a desire for revenge, which may turn them into criminals. (Al-Karim, 2008, p. 83). This is consistent with the results of Nelson's study (2015), which confirmed that refugees suffer from many pressures and disorders that directly affect family and social roles, including physical and social pressures.

Ibrahim (2005) aimed to monitor the most important economic and social problems facing working women in Egypt, including the inequality between men and women in both education and work, in addition to the depreciation of working women. Shehata, (2008) identified the most important economic problems facing refugees in Cairo, which were represented in the lack of opportunity to obtain work due to the restrictions imposed by Egyptian law.

Refugee women who lack personal security, economic opportunities, wealth and land ownership are more vulnerable to sexual violence, sexual slavery, early and forced marriage and

trafficking. (United Nations Report on the Status of Arab Women, 2014, p. 24). Therefore, the study of Qaed, (2021) sought to investigate the extent of awareness of Arab refugee women in the concept of economic empowerment, and concluded that refugee women were unable to obtain health and educational services, and that refugee women did not have job opportunities.

Women, in general, also suffer from racial discrimination and inequality, and this was confirmed by the United Nations report, which indicated that about 90% of people are deeply biased against women. It also confirmed that despite the continuous progress in bridging the gender equality gap, 9 out of 10 men and women around the world harbor some form of gender bias (UN report, March 2020). This was in agreement with the results of Lotfy (1998) which concluded that there are many manifestations of prejudice against working women, including inequality with men at work, especially in obtaining promotions, occupying senior positions, and obtaining the necessary training to perform the work.

Working women, especially refugees, also suffer from job insecurity, as this problem is reflected in the uncertainty of continuity in work, due to several dimensions that may pertain to the job itself, such as opportunities, promotions, and fluctuations during work periods, or demographic dimensions that pertain to the refugee woman herself. This was confirmed by a by Bamaref's (2008) study which examined the relationship between job security and personal ambition and the impact of demographic variables on it.

Sverke (2002) also referred to the consequences of the lack of job security on individuals, as it indicated that the lack of which leads to negative repercussions on the personality of the individual and her family within the society, and increases the chances of negative relationships with those around her. Personal feeling of job insecurity. It should be noted that job security comes at the forefront of the concerns of refugees in general and refugee women in particular, as they aspire to secure family expenses in the conditions of alienation that have been imposed on them. (Mufti, 2015, p. 42).

This was confirmed by the study of Blackmore, (2011), which focused on the need to understand the lack of job security and find a relationship between supporting the role of organizations and the lack of job security for working individuals.

Social work is a humanitarian profession that aims to help individuals develop their resources, satisfy their needs, and solve their

problems (Abu Al-Nasr, 2016, p. 13). The social work profession always seeks to achieve human welfare and focus on achieving social justice (Abdul Sanad, et al., 2014, p. 7).

The social work profession is concerned with caring for refugees as one of the vulnerable groups who need support in addressing their problems, whether psychological or social, in addition to facilitating their access to services and providing comprehensive solutions to their problems that hinder their integration into Egyptian society (UNHCR, 2009 , p.40)

The method of working with groups, as one of the main methods of the social work profession, seeks to help members acquire individual experiences and skills that enable them to adapt to the society in which they live (Fahmy, and Attia, 2003, p.7).

The method of working with groups increases the awareness of the members, develops their ability, and provides them with many skills that enable them to deal with the situations and problems they suffer from (Coulshed, 1988, p.102). This is done through the use of various types of groups that contribute to achieving the goals of the method. As such, self-help groups are among the most widespread and common types of groups because they contribute to supporting individuals who face many problems, by helping them and increasing their confidence in their abilities to solve their problems (Zastro 1991, 13).

In addition to satisfying the needs of their members and providing them with the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to employ their potentials and capabilities, self-help groups rely on providing all kinds of psychological, social and emotional support to the members and provides them with the necessary guidance to work through their obstacles. They provide an appropriate climate for the employment of energies and capabilities, and an opportunity for understanding and exchanging opinions and ideas about satisfying the members' needs and solving their problems (Trotazer, 2008, p.5).

Self-help groups also comprise all the emotional, cognitive, behavioral and material support the individual receives through the network of social relations to which the individual belongs, especially when she faces stressful events, or situations that cause anxiety and trouble (Shaaban, 2001, p.109). Therefore, self-help organizes the relationships of persons who have social contact in one way or another in order to provide them with support and social support (Barrera & Ainlay, 1993, p.11).

Therefore, the method of working with groups is practiced by many social programs that effectively enhance the ability of members to achieve their goals, by means of providing opportunities for mutual support. (Juliet, 2020.p.120).

Mouique (2002) showed that programs for the method of working with groups are effective with women who suffer from many problems, especially violence and racism, whether inside or outside the family. Thus, self-help groups always seek to increase confidence in the hearts of their members and work to reduce the psychological stress they experience. This is confirmed by the study of Kennedy (1990), which concluded that self-help groups work to help their members have a sense of safety and personal appreciation, and contribute to increasing self-confidence and self-acceptance, which enables them to address various problems.

Camacho (2016) also confirmed the effectiveness of self-help groups in providing aid and psychological and social assistance to people who suffer from psychological pressure.

In addition, self-help groups contribute to achieving self-satisfaction through a sense of independence and self-reliance in challenging the obstacles, difficulties and problems they face, which is reflected in the development of their ability to face these challenges (Fim, 1995, p.15).

Self-help groups are concerned with focusing on self-growth through the practice of social activities that restore the person to herself and develop her self-confidence and ability to face various problems and crises (Refecct1, 1991, p.163).

Meena (2008) revealed the importance of self-help groups in enabling women to change their attitudes and increase their ability to participate in solving their problems. Al-Kurdi (2022) emphasized the need to enable displaced Syrian women to be self-reliant, given the tough economic changes they encountered.

Through the previous presentation, the main study problem is determined as follows:

What is the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women?

Study Objectives:

- 1- Determine the nature of the problems that refugee women face at work.
- 2- Determining the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women.

- 3- Determining the relationship between the role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women.
- 4- Identifying the differences between refugee women in determining the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems, according to (nationality/number of years of asylum inside Egypt).

Study hypotheses:

First hypothesis: It is expected that the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women will be high.

Second hypothesis: The level of labor problems (exploitation - racism - poor job security) for refugee women is expected to be low.

Third hypothesis: There is a statistically significant direct relationship between the role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women.

Fourth hypothesis: There is a statistically significant difference between refugee women in their definition of the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems, according to (nationality/number of years of asylum inside Egypt).

Study concepts

Self-help groups:

Self-help group: It is a small group formed in order to achieve a specific purpose and is often formed by peers who have met on mutual assistance in order to satisfy a common need or overcome a problem that affects their lives in order to bring about social or personal change or both (Gartner & Riessmen) ,2008,105).

Operational definition of the concept Self-help group:

- A small group of refugee women joined to seek help from one of the institutions for the care and protection of refugees, since they suffer from similar problems related to work, such as exploitation, racism and poor job security. The members help each other in facing problems through participation, support and mutual support.

Labor problems:

It is a set of obstacles or difficulties that a person face at a work environment and makes it difficult to continue working. It is manifested in the lack of job satisfaction, the lack of sufficient rest period, the existence of discrimination, the difficulty of dealing with officials, the weak presence of moral and material incentives, and the low pay for the effort. (Al-Mursi, 2012, 39)

Operational definition of the concept labor problems:

- The set of situations and obstacles that refugee women face at work. They are unable to defend themselves in those situations due to weak

social and legal protection, which results in a lack of continuity in work. These problems include:

-Exploitation at work: It means placing the refugee woman in unfair working conditions or without her consent, which include utilizing her energy to its maximum limits, without taking into account her need for rest or appreciation.

Racism at work: It is the discriminatory behaviors faced by refugee women at work, including criteria for employment and promotion, wages or working hours, and the granting of job benefits.

Job insecurity: It is the extent of the refugee woman's uncertainty about the continuity of work for several dimensions that may pertain to the same job, such as opportunities, promotions, and fluctuations during work periods, or demographic dimensions pertaining to the refugee woman herself.

Theoretical Guidelines of the Research:

The Role theory:

The role theory is one of the leading theories in the science of social work, through which the nature of the roles played by the social worker in her field of work is determined.

The role is defined as a set of skills and responsibilities that determine the behavior of the individual's incumbent of the specified position, within the framework of the cultural pattern. (Robert L. Barker, 1999, P4.)

It is also defined as the behavior that the member performs to achieve the society's expectations of her as a concern for this social status. (Muhammad Abu Al-Nasr, Medhat, 2004, p. 233) There are many main roles that the social worker plays in alleviating the labor problems of working women.

First, there is the role that has to do with alleviating the severity of the exploitation of refugee women at work.

Second, it is the role that has to do with alleviating racism in the work of refugee women.

Third, there is the role that has to do with alleviating the psychological problems resulting from work for refugee women.

Fourth, there is the role that has to do with mitigating the severity of the successive problems that destroy the sense of job security among refugee women.

Methodology

This study belongs to the descriptive studies style, as it is one of the most appropriate studies appropriate to the subject of the study. It also relied on the comprehensive survey approach as a scientific method for it.

Studytool

The study relied on the use of the questionnaire tool to test its hypotheses, namely a questionnaire on the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women.

The tool included the following dimensions: The first dimension is the primary data of the respondents. The second dimension is the data related to the role of self-help groups in alleviating the problems of refugee women. The third dimension is the data related to the nature of labor exploitation problems for refugee women. The fourth dimension is the data related to the nature of racism problems at work for refugee women. The fifth dimension is the data related to the nature of the problems associated with the lack of job security related to work for refugee women.

The authors relied on Content Validity and presented the study tool to 6 social work professors, who made necessary modifications. Accordingly, the questionnaire was in its revised form. The authors relied on Split half stability on 5 members of the research community; test (Guttman) has reached (0.789). This level is considered high and acceptable, and the results reached by the tool can be relied upon.

Sample

- The spatial scope of the study was determined in Caritas Egypt association (Cairo) and the Shlo Buckel Charitable association (Hadayek El Maadi). These institutions were chosen due to the availability of the study sample within that institution.
- The size of the community of (refugee women) frequenting the services of Caritas Egypt (Cairo) is (44) individuals, and those frequenting the Shlo Bakeel Charity Association (Hadayek El Maadi) are 31.
- The study population was selected using a comprehensive enumeration method, according to the following conditions:
 - A- That she has a private, governmental or other job.
 - B- That she has a period of residence in Egypt that exceeds one year.
 - C- To be a regular visitor to the institution for a period of not less than 6 months.

- Thus, the size of the study population, after applying the previous conditions, reached (29) individuals, distributed as follows: Caritas Egypt (Cairo), 17 individuals, and the Shlo Bakeel Charity Association (Hadayek El Maadi), 12 individuals.

-Data were collected during the period (11/14/2022) to (12/27/2022).

Statistical Analysis Methods:

The level of the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women was judged using the arithmetic mean, where the beginning and end of the triple scale categories are: agree (three degrees), to some extent (two degrees), disagree (one degree). They were coded and entered as data to the computer. To determine the length of the cells of the triangular scale (lower and upper limits), the range = largest value – lowest value (3 – 1 = 2) was calculated, divided by the number of cells of the scale to obtain the corrected cell length (2 / 3 = 0.67). Then this value was added to the lowest value in the scale or the beginning of the scale, which is the correct one, in order to determine the upper limit of this cell.

Table (1): The arithmetic mean levels of the phrases and dimensions of the questionnaire and inquisition.

If the average value of the expression or dimension ranged between 1 - 1.67	low level
If the average value of the phrase or dimension ranges between more than 1.67 - 2.34	Average level
If the average value of the expression or dimension ranges between more than 2.34: 3	high level

The data were processed through a computer using the program (SPSS .V. 24.0) statistical packages for social sciences, and the following statistical methods were applied: frequencies and percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, range, stability coefficient (Guttman), Pearson correlation coefficient, t test, ANOVA test.

Study Results:

Characteristics of the study sample

Table (2) shows the description of the study population (N=29)

Age			
Mean age		37.9	
Std. Deviation		5.13	
S	Nationality	Frequency	%
1	Syrian	21	72.4
2	Sudanese	8	27.6
S	Number of years of asylum inside Egypt	Frequency	%

S	Age		
1	Less than 5 years	3	10.3
2	From 5-10 years	19	65.5
3	years and over 10	7	24.1
S	Qualification	Frequency	%
1	Illiteracy	1	3.4
2	You read and write	2	6.9
3	Intermediate education	14	48.3
4	University education	12	41.4
S	marital status	Frequency	%
1	Single	1	3.4
2	Married	16	55.2
3	Divorced	4	13.8
4	Widow	8	27.6
S	number of family members	Frequency	%
1	persons 5-3	12	41.4
2	persons 7-5	10	34.5
3	persons or more 7	7	24.1
S	Employment	Frequency	%
1	government sector	-	-
2	private sector	8	27.6
3	free business	21	72.4

The table above shows that:

With regard to age, the average age was (37.9) years, with a standard deviation (5.13) years, and this indicates that there is a discrepancy in the ages of the study population.

- With regard to nationality, it came in the first place (Syrian nationality) with a rate of (72.4%), followed by (Sudanese nationality) with a rate of (27.6%).

- With regard to the number of years of asylum inside Egypt, it came in the first order (from 5-10 years) with a rate of (65.5%), followed by in the second order (10 years or more) with a rate of (24.1%), while it came in the last order (less than 5 years). by (10.3%).

For the educational qualification, it came in the first place (intermediate education) with a rate of (48.3%), followed by in the second place (university education) with a rate of (41.4%), while in the last place came (illiteracy) with a rate of (3.4%).

With regard to marital status, the first ranking came (married) with a rate of (55.2%), followed by (widow) with a rate of (27.6%), while the last ranking came with (single) with a rate of (3.4%).

- With regard to the number of family members, it came in the first order (3-5 members) with a rate of (41.4%), followed by in the second order (5-7 people) with a rate of (34.5%), while in the last order came (7 or more) with a rate of (24.1%). %).

- With regard to the field of work, it came in the first place (self-employed) with a rate of (72.4%), followed by (private sector) with a rate of (27.6%).

Table (3) shows the level of role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women(n = 29)

N	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	The level of the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women	1.89	0.327	Average

The table above shows that:

The level of the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women reached (1.89), which is a medium level. This makes us reject the first hypothesis of the study, which states: It is expected that the level of the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women will be high.

We conclude from this that the role of the self-help group was not sufficiently tangible in facing the problems by providing its members with the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to employ their capabilities and abilities and help its members to positive collective participation in facing their common problems.

Table (4) shows the level of labor problems for refugee women (n = 29)

N	labor problems	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Exploitation	2.18	0.328	Average
2	Racism	1.88	0.213	Average
3	Poor job security	1.99	0.263	Average
Average labor problems as a whole		2.02	0.144	Average

The table above shows that:

The level of labor problems for refugee women reached (2.02), which is an average level. The problems came according to the following order: In the first order came (the problem of exploitation) with an average of (2.18), followed by (the problem of poor job security) with

an average of (1.99), and in the last order came (the problem of racism).) with an average of (1.88).

This makes us reject the second hypothesis of the study, which states: It is expected that the level of labor problems (exploitation - racism - poor job security) among refugee women is weak.

The results of the table agreed with the results of the study (Nelson, 2015), which confirmed that refugees suffer from many pressures and disorders that directly affect family and social roles, including physical, social and work pressures.

Table (5) The relationship between the role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women(n = 29)

S	labor problems The role of help groups	Exploitation		Racism		Poor job security		Average labor problems as a whole	
		Pearson Correlation	Sig.	Pearson Correlation	Sig.	Pearson Correlation	Sig.	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
1	The role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women	0,283	0,136	0,151	0,435	0,211	0,273	0,161	0,405

** Significant at (0.01)

* Significant at (0.05)

The table above shows that:

There is no direct, statistically significant relationship between the role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women, as the value of Pearson's correlation between the variables reached (0.161), and it is not significant at any significant level.

This makes us reject the third hypothesis of the study, which states: There is a statistically significant direct relationship between the role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women.

The results of the table indicate that there is a weakness in self-help group programs, which renders them ineffective.

Table (6) shows the differences between refugee women according to nationality with regard to their identification of the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems. (n = 29)

S	Variable	the society (nationality)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T
1	The role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women	Syrian	21	1.99	0.132	27	1.398
		Sudanese	8	2.08	0.166		

** Significant at (0.01)

* Significant at (0.05)

The table above shows that:

There are no significant differences between refugee women according to nationality, with regard to their definition of the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems, as the T-test value was (1.398), which is not significant at the degree of freedom (27).

Table No. (7) Shows the differences between refugee women in their identification of the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems, according to the number of years of asylum inside Egypt. (n = 29)

S	Variable	source of contrast	The sum of squares	degree of freedom	mean of squares	(F)	Sig. level	Sig.
1	The role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women	between groups	0.289	2	0.144	1.386	0.104	Sig.non
		within groups	2.711	26	0.104			
		the total	3.00	28	-			

The table above shows that:

There are no significant differences between refugee women in determining the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems according to the number of years of asylum in Egypt, where the value of the F test was (1.386), which is not significant.

In view of the results of the two previous tables, No (5) and (6), we reject the fourth hypothesis of the study, which states: There is a statistically significant discrepancy between refugee women in their identification of the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems, according to (nationality / number of years of asylum inside Egypt).

Eighth: The general results of the study: The results of the study, in the light of its hypotheses, are as follows:

1- With regard to the results and meaning of the first hypothesis of the study: It is expected that the level of the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women will be high.

The first hypothesis of the study was rejected, as the level of the role of self-help groups in alleviating the labor problems of refugee women was medium.

2- With regard to the results of the second hypothesis of the study and its meaning: it is expected that the level of labor problems (exploitation - racism - poor job security) among refugee women is weak.

The second hypothesis of the study was rejected, as the level of labor problems for refugee women was average, and the problems came according to the following order: in the first order came (the problem of exploitation), followed by (the problem of poor job security), and in the last order came (the problem of racism).

3- Regarding the results of the third hypothesis of the study and its meaning: There is a statistically significant direct relationship between the role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women.

The third hypothesis of the study was rejected, as it was found that there is no direct, statistically significant relationship between the role of self-help groups and alleviating the labor problems of refugee women.

4- With regard to the results of the fourth hypothesis of the study and its meaning: There is a statistically significant discrepancy between refugee women in determining the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems, according to (nationality / number of years of asylum inside Egypt).

The fourth hypothesis of the study was rejected, as it was found that there were no significant differences between refugee women according to nationality with regard to their identification of the role of the self-help group in alleviating their labor problems. Their labor problems according to the number of years of asylum inside Egypt.

-This shows that the self-help groups that are formed within the institutions that provide services to refugee women do not help solve the problems of refugee women, especially labor problems.

- The results of the study also reflect the presence of labor problems among refugee women represented in (the problem of exploitation), followed by (the problem of poor job security) and (the problem of racism), which calls for institutions concerned with protecting refugees in general and refugee women in particular to make a double effort in order to alleviate these problems. .
- It is also clear that all refugee women suffer from this type of problem, and the nature of nationality or the duration of asylum in the country does not affect that.

Therefore, the study has proposals to activate the role of self-help groups to alleviate the labor problems of refugee women:

- 1- Holding periodic meetings to discuss the various problems that refugee women are exposed to at work.
- 2- That the institutions announce their plans and programs for the recipient groups.
- 3- Evaluating the programs offered to working refugee women so that they reflect their actual and realistic needs.
- 4- Work to amend the regulations and laws related to refugees and the services provided to them.
- 5- Work to link refugee women with the institutions that provide actual services to them.
- 6- Develop a description of the role of the social worker with refugee women's groups.
- 7- The group work specialist should use modern methods and techniques that attract women to benefit from the institution's services, as well as interest in marketing the institution's services.
- 8- Away from providing material services only to refugee women and paying attention to problems related to their work and their ability to face and solve various problems.
- 9- Paying attention to developing the capabilities of working women to face the pressures of life.

Difficulties encountered in conducting the research:

The researchers went through a set of difficulties during the field application on the study community, the most important of which were the following:

- The refusal of some private institutions to work with categories of refugees to cooperate in conducting the research.
- The small number of refugee women associated with community institutions, which reduced the size of the study population.
- The study community (refugee women) feared cooperation with the researchers in conducting the study.
- The small number of refugee (working) women, as they depend on a breadwinner in the family, such as a husband or father.

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