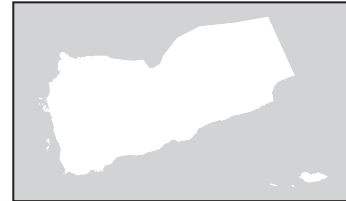


Yemen

Population	22 383 108
Female population (as % of total population)	49.4
Women's life expectancy (in years)	64.4
Men's life expectancy (in years)	61.1
Fertility rate (average births per female)	5.5



Degree of gender discrimination (based on SIGI quintile)

Low	Low/medium	Medium	Medium/high	High
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Inequality is widespread in Yemen, largely due to patriarchal traditions and religious beliefs. The population is predominantly Muslim and follows Islamic Sharia law. Yemen's overall poverty also contributes to the difficult situation of women which include limited access to health care, economic opportunities and education. In fact, Yemen has one of the world's largest gaps between net primary school attendance rates for girls and boys. Less than 30% of Yemeni women are economically active; the majority of women who do work are employed in the agricultural sector.

Family code

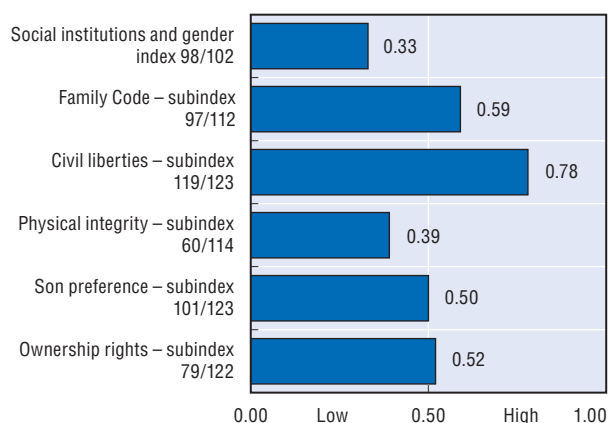
Family matters such as marriage, divorce and inheritance, are all governed by the 1992 Personal Status Law that does not set a legal minimum age of marriage. A 2004 United Nations report estimated that 27% of Yemeni girls between 15 and 19 years of age were married, divorced or widowed. Women cannot conclude their own marriage contracts; rather the agreement is made between the woman's guardian (always a male) and the groom.

Following provisions in Sharia law, polygamy is legal, allowing men to take as many as four wives provided that they can support all wives financially. Yemeni law does not require that men who wish to practice polygamy inform their first wives of this intention, nor do they need permission to enter into subsequent marriages. A 1997 Demographic and Maternal and Child Health Survey reported that 7% of women were in polygamous unions.

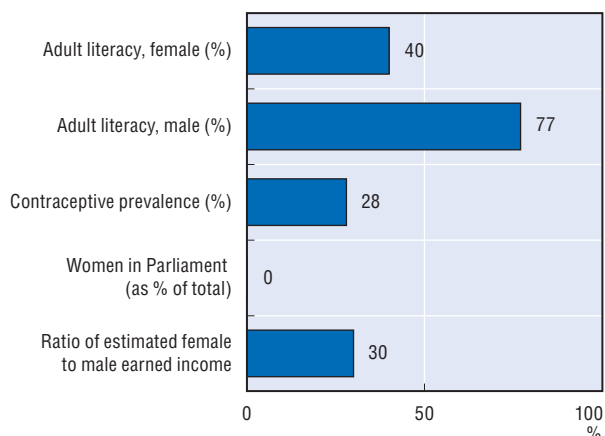
With regard to parental authority, Islamic law views fathers as the natural guardians of children, and the mother is the physical custodian. In the event of divorce, mothers are granted custody of children only until they reach a specified age. Women cannot confer citizenship to children born to a non-Yemeni father.

Islamic law provides for detailed and complex calculations of inheritance shares. A woman may inherit from her father, mother, husband or children, and under certain conditions, from other family members. However, her share is generally smaller than a man's entitlement.

SIGI ranking



Select indicators of gender equality



Physical integrity

There are no laws against domestic violence. Similarly, the country has yet to establish any laws against sexual harassment in the workplace.

The government has banned the practice of female genital mutilation in official hospitals, but it is known to continue in private clinics. In a survey conducted in 2003, CEDAW estimated that 38% of Yemeni women have undergone female genital mutilation.

Ownership rights

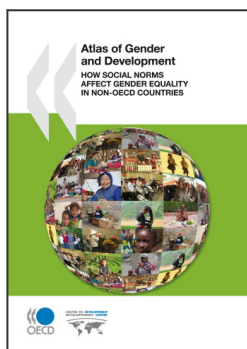
Yemen has taken steps to support the financial autonomy of women. They have the legal right to access land and property other than land. But poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness of economic rights and patriarchal traditions limit the ability of women to exercise these rights. The National Strategy for Women's Development recently emphasised the need to strengthen women's financial empowerment and enhance their control over economic resources.

Similarly, there are no legal restrictions on women's access to bank loans and credit, but women encounter many limitations in this area. The common view in Yemeni society is that a woman's place is in the home, and that financial matters should be managed by her husband. Statistics reported by the CEDAW Committee are telling: between 2002 and 2004, the Agricultural Credit Bank had over 20 000 male borrowers – compared to fewer than 2 000 female borrowers. The National Foundation for Micro-Financing, Yemen's first micro-credit facility, opened in 2003 with the aim of providing credit and insurance services to women.

Civil liberties

For women in Yemen freedom of movement is subject to numerous limitations. They generally need to ask for their guardian's permission to leave the home or to apply for a passport. Once a passport is obtained, women are legally entitled to travel independently.

Social and religious norms limit Yemeni women's freedom of dress. Although there is no legal requirement to wear a veil, most women cover their heads, faces and bodies.



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