منظمة المرأة العربية
ARAB WOMEN ORGANIZATION

The Reality of Mental Health for Women and Girls in the Arab World

"A Comparative Study"

Summaries of the
National Reports and the Regional Report

Prepared & Edited by
Roueida Hamade Menassa
Expert in Women's Affairs

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Introduction

This study comes within a regional and international context marked by an unprecedented rise in psychological and social pressures resulting from accelerating economic transformations, protracted conflicts, the erosion of social protection systems, as well as the profound effects of digital transformation and new modes of communication. In the Arab world, these challenges are further exacerbated within environments characterized by instability, fragile public services, and the persistence of stigma associated with mental health, making this issue one of the most silenced despite the breadth of its impact.

Within this context, women's mental health emerges as a complex issue shaped by the intersection of multiple health, social, cultural, economic, and political factors. Women in the Arab region face compounded psychological pressures stemming from traditional social roles, unequal family burdens, limited economic opportunities, and exposure to various forms of violence, including domestic, societal, cyber, and conflict-related violence. Nevertheless, women's mental health continues to be addressed in most public policies either as an individual matter or within general health approaches that fail to take into account women's specific experiences and lived realities.

This study forms part of the sustained efforts undertaken by the Organization of Arab Women to advocate for Arab women's issues and advance their conditions through the production of evidence-based knowledge, the promotion of comparative approaches among Arab states, and the provision of data and analyses that support policymakers in developing legislation and strategies more responsive to the needs of women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable groups. It also falls within the Organization's broader methodological effort to place women's issues, including mental health, at the center of public policies and rights-based and developmental debates in the Arab region.

The study does not merely seek to diagnose existing realities or identify structural deficiencies; rather, it aims to link mental health with women's rights, sustainable development, and social justice in contexts marked by multiple crises and growing fragility. While opening the way toward a deeper understanding of the structural challenges facing women's mental health in the Arab world, the study also contributes to breaking the silence surrounding this issue and lays the foundation for a broader regional discussion on integrating mental health into protection and empowerment policies, in ways that reinforce women's dignity and their right to health and a decent life.



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