

CHAPTER IV

THE REASON OF TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS WOMEN'S RIGHT

In this chapter, the writer will explain more specifically about the reason behind Saudi Arabia reformation towards women rights in 2017-2018 and the implication towards the Saudi Arabia government.

A. The Influence of UN SDGs in Saudi Arabia Policy Towards Gender Equality

The United Nations adopted seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable Development Goals are not legally binding. However, countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving the seventeen Goals in order to end poverty, hunger and inequality, improve access to health and education, take action on climate change and the environment, build strong institutions and partnership and many more. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels, with regard to the progress made in implementing the Goals and targets over the next 15 years. The SDGs can be said as the indicators that already covered all of aspects that needed in order to achieve prosperity. It is the global values that adopted by the countries around the world.

The SDGs is an output from the world leaders meeting that have no legal binding. It means that actually, there are no such obligation for a country to ratified it or agree with it.

However, the SDGs contain a global values that is already adopted by most of the countries, such as to eliminate poverty, to support education to all element of people, to taking care on the enironment both in land or water, to reduce the inequality both in gender aspect or in economy aspect. All of those values are the thing that makes all of the country, including Saudi Arabia agreed it. Saudi Arabia as a modern and most influenced country in the Arab Penninsula, also need to consider the importance of keeping their strategic position in the International World. In order to keep Saudi Arabia's strategic position, one of the way that should be done is by taking part and involve in the international agreement.

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25-27 September 2015 in New York, there were approximately 193 world member states of the United Nations agreed on the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, it means that 193 countries pledged to "leave no one behind". The pledge to leave no one behind is a commitment to end extreme poverty in all its forms and to act explicitly to ensure that those who have been left behind can catch up to those who have experienced greater progress. To be ratified by almost all of the countries in the world, is something that can't he done easily. The SDGs is considered as something significant because it is can be agreed by 193 country. All of the countries involved, whether it is categorized as the develop or under-develop country could use the same indicators that later could be use as the milestones to learn each other from another country about how to deal with specific issues and how to reach prosperity in such a measureable way.

Saudi Arabia is one of the states that agreed on 17 SDGs. As one of the member of United Nations as well as one of the leading-economic country, Saudi Arabia is surely also taking part in this momment. This is considered as manifestation in how Saudi Arabia now begin to adopt the global values in its

country. It can be seen from the statement from Crown Prince Salman

“In order to preserve the unique environmental character of the region, environmental sustainability laws and mechanism will be developed. Natural resources will be conserved in accordance with the best practices and standards in place globally” (Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman)

By this agenda, the Kingdom commit to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by taking actions and an innovative approaches to align the 2030 Agenda and the Saudi Vision 2030 which is an ambitious development built about three themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation and shares the same timeframe and ultimate goals with the SDGs agenda. The Saudi Arabia is very serious in adopting the SDGs, it can be seen from the way Saudi Arabia make the Saudi Vision 2030 that all of the values inside it is more or less similar. It's like the Saudi Vision adopt the same way like SDGs. The different is Saudi Vision is more focusing on the future of Saudi Arabia itself in Saudi Vision 2030.

With the 17 points of SDGs, the author focused on point number five (5) about gender equality. The issue of gender is on concern because of the high inequality between women and men in the world. In some countries, girls are deprived of access to health care or proper nutrition, there are also many disadvantages in education, limited to access skills and opportunities in the labour market, lack of women participation in the labor forces and the gap of salary. Moreover, Based on the data, there are 35 percent of women between 15-49 years old have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner or non partner violence in the worldwide. This is certainly devalue all of us and undermining human potential. While, if the world not deny the women equal rights, then there are benefit such as a chance to build

economic sector and other sector of society. By this awareness, the UN adopted gender equality as part of SDGs and also agreed by the member states of the UN.

In Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom known as a country that placed women in second level due to the local values that called Wahhabism, where women have a "male guardian" system in taking action. By the adoption of SDGs, specifically point number 5, Saudi Arabia began to realize the importance of equality between man and women. Gender Equality is something that need to be achieve because the global world believe in the same right and same opportunities should be implement in man and women. One of the way to reach prosperity and to create balance in this world is by giving its people same right and opportunity without making gender as one of the consideration, so there is a need for equality.

As one of the commitment and the form of how Saudi Arabia realize the SDGs, specifically points number 5 about Gender Equality, the Kingdom issued the policy in order to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, which is in accordance with the SDGs Gender Equality indicator in terms of provision of infrastructure, public service and participation in the workers, give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and In the social reform. It's not only about normative but also it is be done through the making of policies. This is considered as one of the huge steps about how the global values could affect the Saudi Arabia until the level of this country adopt and making it as their guidance to make policies. Those policies are;

1. In the term of the provision of infrastructure, public service and participation in the workers. The Kingdom launched program to support the transport of working women (wusool), which aims to encourage to join the workforce and to increase their job sustainability by providing a safe transport between their home and work locations and a program to support the hosting of children of working women (Qurrah) which aims

are the same as wusool, to raise the participation in the workforce and support their job stability by increasing the number of children hospitality centers with improving the quality level of these centers as well as introducing new forms of childcare services, such as home-based daycare (Report, 2017). Saudi Arabia also provide training and other initiatives and increase the number of private sector jobs by 450,000 by 2020.

2. In the term of give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership, Saudi Arabia allows women to start a business without consent of guardian or male permission.

3. In the social reform, Saudi Arabia allows women to drive, enter the sports stadium, join the military and etc. Those are the policies form to promoting empowerment of women and girls.

This is line with the theory of regime, where United Nations as international support structure shared the value of SDGs especially Gender Equality which is where Saudi Arabia as a member of the United Nations accepts that principle so that Saudi Arabia acts in line with that issue by issued policies that support gender equality.

The implementation of 4 (four) things that absolutely exist in the International Regime at the same time become the characteristics:

1. Principles; are beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude.

As already explained that, the belief in facts is the realization that gender inequality is very detrimental and degrading to human beings so it needs to be eliminated.

2. Norms; are standards of behavior defined in term of rights and obligation.

The standards of behavior means that Gender Equality as the right that must be fought for.

3. Rules; are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action.

In the UN SDGs number 5 about gender equality, there are indicators or provisions to achieve gender equality, namely ;

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership all levels of decisionmaking in political, economic and public life
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

- Adopt and strengthen policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

4. Decision-making procedures; are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice”

This stage is considered as the manifestation of the values that being done through the policies and actions. It is when the Saudi Arabia decided to adopt the idea of Gender Equality from SDGs and breaking it down into the policies in the Saudi Vision 2030. The values and vision is in line. Saudi Arabia, a country that used to be placing women in second level, now started to creating same opportunities and chance to women. The women now have wider scope to develop in terms of job and personal rights. In Saudi Arabia, women now able to drive and have a license, able to go to public places, able to reach the same level in education and job, and many more. It is something that can't be achieved without the contribution of Global values that was being delivered in the SDGs.

B. The Changing of Norm and Identity in Saudi Arabia

The process of changing Norm and Identity is something that can't be done easily. This requires a long and complicated journey with so many aspects and variables. A country would never change its identity if there's no reason behind it. The biggest reason why a country could reach the level of changing norm and identity is because the interest of the country itself also changed. In this context, after explained comprehensively in previous chapter, The United Nations as the highest institutions among countries in the world playing a role as the one who share the global idea, which is gender equality. After several complex processes finally Saudi Arabia adopt the idea of gender equality through the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals no 5.

Prince Salman, as one of the stakeholder of Saudi Arabia played the key role in ensuring the delivery of Gender Equality idea to his people. After being inspired from the United Nation SDGs, Prince Salman make an innovation and solution to adopted that idea so that the people of Saudi Arabia can influence and support the new policy under Crown Prince Salman in the state that known as strict of Wahahabism. The people can't accept the idea that they don't know, so they have to accept this idea in such way that could drive them not only to understand but also to implement. This is relevant with the theory of constructivism that say the change in the interests of a country will make the country's policies change as well. The interest of a county under Prince Salman is to reducing oil dependency by make it become less conservative to moderate country. In order to realize it there's a need to change some policies. In this context, the Saudi Vision 2030 emerged as the solution and as the way to deliver those changes of policies. Through Saudi Vision 2030, Prince Salman did the political maneuver by allowing women to drive and having their own

driving license, allowing women to go to watch sport and go to movie and all other women rights based-polices. This is how the change of identity was begin

By the changing of Saudi Arabia's identity, there are interests that surely followed by this decision. The most dominant interests that is focused by the Saudi Arabia government, is in the economy sector. Making Saudi Arabia from the conservative country into moderate country could provide more opportunity for the investor to develop their business, project or anything else in this country. The new identity of Saudi Arabia is also related with the future of this country. The relation between countries could also become better because Saudi Arabia now is more friendly and pro women rather than before. The countries that share the common things usually have a close relation. From the close relation emerged opportunities that could bring benefit for the country. This is some kind of action that could be categorized as the effort to image-building. Saudi Arabia under Prince Salman try to be more open to the outside world. One of the goals of doing this thing is to widen the opportunities in doing trade among countries or doing partnership with other countries.

As a prove that by doing the reformation of women rights could have an impact towards the economy sector, according to Aba-Al Khail as a spokesman of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, the program of Qurrat and Wusool helped boost the employment market and increase the participation of Saudis women.

“The number of Saudi men and women who joined the labor market increased to 48,471 in October from 28,154 in September. Some 36,062 Saudis took up jobs in the month of November while 12,280 got employed in the first 15 days of December” (Al Khail)

The 'Qurrat' and 'Wusool' programs have been proved to be a big boost for working women. According to an earlier report published by the ministry, there has been a significant increase in the number of Saudi women employed in the private sector during the last Hijri year. The number of Saudi women who secured job in the private sector in the year jumped to 76.08 percent compared to 23.92 percent of expatriate women. The total number of Saudi women working in this sector rose to 466,000 against 146,765 expatriate women, the Saudi Press Agency reported. (Report, 2017)

As previously explained one of the strongest goal why Saudi Arabia make a reformation towards women rights is because they have new interest to fulfill, which is to boost its economy sector. This is something that need to be done systematically and in order. It is already proven that by eliminating the gap between man and women in Saudi Arabia and by promoting the idea of gender equality in terms of work and opportunities, the number of women in Saudi Arabia nowadays that can enter job is increasing dramatically. It is a sure thing when the number of work is increase it must be followed by the increasing in the economy sector. Once again, the thing that need to be highlight is that by giving the women chance to more deeply involve in sociey it would also impacting the economy sector. As one of the way to continue this progress in economy sector, Saudi Arabia create Saudi Vision 2030 as a milestones and solution.

Saudi Arabia known as the ultra-conservative country that used to be not support the idea of gender equality, but beside that Saudi Arabisa also famous with its identity as world largest oil producer. This is one of the greatest factors that could make Saudi Arabia reach this level of wealth. However, oil is something that will not last. Eventually it will drain out and collapsed. Saudi Arabia needs to think of another solution and plan to take over this matter. By the Saudi Vision

2030 this country wanted to not always depending on the oil sector but could also to develop the tourism sector. Entering the year of 2030, Saudi Arabia wanted to become a country that the national income is dominated by the Tourism sector. This is related to the policies that already being done by Saudi Arabia's government under Prince Salman which is to make the women equal by giving them more chance and opportunities to take a role in the society.

The author believe based on the research and data that have been collected, Saudi Arabia could not increasing the tourism sector well as written in Saudi Vision 2030, if Saudi Arabia not making a basic change in its country first. One of the change is the policies towards the women rights. By giving the women more chance to involve and take part in soiyety and job it will increasing the tourism sector. One of the way in implementing the policies towards the tourism sector is by opening the tourism object destinations, in this terms is Movie Cinemas or theathre. This is allign with the statement of Dr Alawwad, Minister of Culture and Information and Chair of the Board of the General Commission for Audiovisual Media, that was taking noted in an official statement :

“Opening cinemas will act as a catalyst for economic growth and diversification; by developing the broader cultural sector we will create new employment and training opportunities, as well as enriching the Kingdom’s entertainment options.”

The Saudi Vision 2030 also aims to increase Saudi household spending on cultural and entertainment activities from 2.9% currently to 6% by 2030. Lifting the cinema ban will open up a domestic market of over 32 million people, with over 300 cinemas and over 2,000 screens anticipated to open across the Kingdom by 2030 (Ranju Warriier, 2018)

This is the implementation in the form of policy that indicate Saudi Arabia is really focus on increasing its economy sector that is being done through tourism sector by also giving women more chance to work and involve in society. All of these things are linked and connected. Based on the data that already collected, the cinema industry which is considered as the tourism sector will have an economic impact that will increase the size of the media market, stimulate economic growth and diversification by contributing more than 90 billion riyals (USD \$23.99 billion) to GDP. This is also creating more than 30,000 permanent jobs and more than 130,000 temporary jobs by 2030, which all of these job opportunities is given also to the women.

Therefore Saudi Arabia hereby already prove itself that one of the strongest reason why they choose to change its identity from a country that used to be not support the idea of gender equality become a country who willingly give a chance and opportunity for a women to be more active and involve both in society and in job. This is being done, eventually, to boost the economy sector. All of the innovation and new policies towards the tourism object, all of the job opportunities and all of the policies regarding women rights included women can go to the cinemas, can allowed to get a job, to be more involve in society, all of those things are linked and alligned. The author can say based on the analyses that have ben done, Saudi Arabia now is on its way of the new era, in attempt to achieve prosperity and better economic situation, Saudi Arabia has create a new, better and more pro women way.