

Unesco, Social science research and women in the Arab world, Frances printer (publisher), London, 1988.

This book discusses the situation of women and research in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. It addresses theoretical and methodological issues and the presents different views on objectives and priorities for further research to undertaken.

One of the main issues this book addresses is that we know very little about women's own beliefs regarding their sexuality or about their attitudes towards the dominant male ideology. We also do not know much about how they view themselves and how they interpret their statuses. Therefore, it is important to find out how different males and females views are negotiated in everyday life and how can changes in women's roles affect traditional views.

It was emphasized in that book that there is a need to demystify the prevailing view on women and Arab Islamic tradition whose ultimate premise is to reject women as producers and to recognize them only as bodies (reproducers). It also pointed out the importance to conduct research on areas like images in women in society, virginity and sexual repression, prostitution and the various forms of sexual violence against women. Further on, there are other research priorities such as 'the role of the superstructure and ideology in perpetuating the "innatist" image of women, conducive to their subordinate statuses and the various forms of violence against women'.

Moreover, the book discusses the different approaches by which social scientists analyzed the position of women. These approaches and theoretical perspectives include, among others, theories of modernization, developmentalism and dependency theory.

The book also presents a critical analysis of trends in social science research on the roles and statuses of women in the Arab region . It assesses research trends since 1960 in the field of history, political science and law. It concluded by criticizing researcher for dealing with women as one cohesive whole, homogeneous in all needs and resources. It pointed out lack of consensus about imperial indicators concerning the statuses of women. Also, it elaborated that there is little concern with how Islam in reality and in everyday life affects the lives of women.