



Saudi women excel in science and medicine

Friday, Aug 31, 2012

Manama The success stories of Saudi women are not limited to the world of finance and money, Saudis insist.

Writing for the Saudi Gazette daily, Samar Fatany, a radio broadcaster and author, stressed that the percentage of women graduating from university in Saudi Arabia is higher than in western countries.

“In the field of science, 40 per cent of Saudi doctors are women and there is an increasing number of successful women who have acquired global recognition as scientists and researchers and have inspired many Saudi women at home,” she wrote on August 18, citing a recent report by UNESCO.

Samar heaped praise on Dr Khowla Al Kurai, consultant and principle clinical scientist and cancer researcher at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSHRC), for her distinguished contributions in the field of medical research.

Professor Samira Islam, the head of the Drug Monitoring Unit at King Fahd Research Centre has made significant contributions in drug safety by defining the Saudi profile for drug metabolism, Samar wrote.

Another Saudi achiever is Dr Samia Al Amoudi, an obstetrician, gynaecologist and assistant professor at King Abdul Aziz University, known for her breast cancer advocacy.

A breast cancer survivor herself, Samia has received several awards for her courage and hard work for the amelioration of Saudi society.

A special tribute was also paid to Maha Al Muneef, the executive director of the National Family Safety Programme and councillor of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Samar wrote that she was a child protectionist and child rights advocate as well as a consultant on pediatric infectious diseases who has been involved in the national implementation of child protection services.

“Dr Al Muneef has worked hard to educate women about their legal rights and she has offered legal and social assistance to victims unable to escape from abusive homes. She has also been instrumental in establishing centres to protect victims of abuse,” Samar wrote. “In order to address the biased attitude which is sometimes found within the judiciary, she has engaged judges, lawyers, police officers and activists to protect the rights of women and children and expose the unjust and unIslamic criminal acts of abusive husbands and fathers.”

According to the columnist, “These Saudi women who have reached leadership positions and many others are role models for future generations.”

“The success of these distinguished women has undoubtedly boosted the morale of those members of society who were once abused and marginalised. Women doctors, scientists and researchers are expected to contribute toward a socially, politically and economically progressive Saudi Arabia.”

Commenting on the column, Dr Ali Al Gamdi said that he appreciated the effort to “shed light on some Saudi women and their achievements.”

“Unfortunately there are many who do not get the proper opportunity to be known,” he wrote.

His comment summed up the bitter frustration felt by some of the women.

By Habib Toumi Bureau Chief

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