



Sabika Shaban



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Title: The Disability Price Tag in Qatar

Abstract:

At the intersection of age and ability, children with disabilities (CWDs) have historically been considered a highly vulnerable group. Managing disabilities is a complex endeavor, requiring a support system that encompasses, inter alia, healthcare, education, and social integration – each of which comes at a cost. This extra cost of raising a CWD often results in the concept of “family spillover”, which is when the multiple demands made on the family in taking care of the CWD lead to adverse outcomes. The State of Qatar has been engaged in an ongoing and ambitious strategic exercise in aligning its Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 with the United Nations’ Agenda 2030, of which persons with disabilities (PWDs) comprise an important element. The rights of PWDs and CWDs fall under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 on Reduced Inequalities and has strong interlinkages with all other SDGs. Qatar ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1995 and was also one of the first countries to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. Yet, to date, only a handful of studies explore the area of disability in Qatar, mentioning the financial burden without deeper analysis. Through an in-depth, qualitative analysis, this study explores the financial dynamics of fifteen families who are raising CWDs in Qatar, including Qatari nationals and expatriates. It examines the additional costs incurred by the family in order to meet the child’s developmental needs; how families negotiate, manage, and budget these additional costs in relation to their overall family income; and most importantly, the impact and implications of their decisions on the family. The paper explores the financial costs for three key areas: healthcare, education, and everyday care and well-being. In doing so, it explains the wide variation in costs and their broader impact on the family and CWDs, and it concludes with discussing policy recommendations.

Bio:

Sabika Shaban is affiliated to the College of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University. Ms. Shaban is a disability advocate and founder of QaDR- Qatar Disability Resource. It is a platform that connects the disability community in Qatar to access high quality information. She holds an MA degree in Masters in Islam and Global affairs and remains actively engaged in various initiatives that deal with social inclusion and disability including at the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum.



Bio:

Hira Amin is a post doctorate researcher at the College of Public Policy, HBKU. She completed her PhD in history at the University of Cambridge focusing on modern transnational Muslim movements. Since then, she has embarked on many projects including, disability, education, as well as identity and social transformations in Qatar and the Gulf more broadly.
