

# Why Kurdish Women Are More Liberated Than Arab Women

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## Kurdish culture develops women's power and skills



A Facebook page dedicated to the Kurdish heroine says: “Adela Jaff Khanum, the strongwoman of Halabja, would come to dominate the Jaff tribe during the British Mandate of Mesopotamia during the 1920s.” (Photo: Anne Jaff)

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There is no doubt that the place of women in any society is a true mirror that reflects the reality of that society, the way of life, thinking and the level of consciousness. Women have also gone through different levels throughout history and have sometimes played a significant role and sometimes unplayed role.

In the pre-colonial era, the situation of Kurdish women is believed to have improved compared to those of neighboring nations. In the words of the explorers and orientalist, they have talked about in their writing documents, and now they are evidence of the truth and nature of the Kurdish people's life and their ability and competence, describing Kurdish women as a person with personality and ability in life.

For example, Pierre Ponafidine wrote in his 1911 book about Kurdish women: "Various Kurdish tribes often fight, mostly because of their wars against women. The Kurds are independent, friendly and love their freedom. Women's freedom is greater than that of any other Muslim tribe, and they do not cover their faces even with guests and foreigners. They work harder than other Muslim countries. In general, they have many obvious qualities that have made Kurds more important than Arabs".

Another evidence of the documents is from Rich's writings, a British explorer, who also wrote in his book about Kurdish women:

"Then again the drums and trumpets, the melody of the chop, and a class of women, numbering thirty women, came into the courtyard and held hands and sprang up slowly and properly. These women were in the adorned fairy, and it was indeed a very colorful scene, without a veil, with their flowers, jewelry, and silk shirts. Rather, it was new to me, because I have not yet seen a woman in the East – especially their wives – to freely mix with men, even Arab women are not as free in this field as they are, because they are more wrapped up. Even in some great Kurdish families, there were examples of Kurdish women rulers, like "Adila Khanum, daughter of Abdulqadir Bag, son of Hamid Bag, son of Mahmood Bag, son of Ahmed Bagi Sahibqran."

Adela Khanum, who had a great role in running the work of the region with her thoughts and because of her skills, was able to gain a good reputation and establish a good relationship with other tribes, which in the era of Wasman pasha and after his death, she was able to make decisions and positions politically, socially and economically, and was even mentioned by the some British authorities as "The Crownless Queen of Sharazur", because after the death of King Wasman, she had all his authority.

Women's participations in all areas of life in the past, and the level of awareness that has existed in those days, point out the freedom of Kurdish women; these prove to us that Kurdish culture and life was not against women's power and skills, but political, geographical, and colonial changes by neighboring countries have had an impact and caused the deterioration of women's role and position in life.

In the twentieth century, after the division of Kurdistan into Middle East countries, the duties and responsibilities of Kurdish women changed, and the mentality of occupation and backwardness has brought about a major change in the situation of women in Kurdistan in all different fields.

This has led to the beginning of revolution, uprising, and struggle for the freedom of human beings and the homeland. Women have also been active participants in these changes and struggles in parts of Kurdistan, with general concern for independence and rejection of occupation and resisting enemies of Kurdistan.

Women for the sake of freedom and independence of gender and equality, continued their struggle against the common tradition of patriarchy and by underestimating women's abilities and skills. They were struggling in different ways from striving. One of the ways Kurdish women fought to confront the enemies and invaders was by armed struggle, directly confronting them in the barricades.

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