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## Championing Inclusion: A Conversation with Dr. Mervat Ibrahim on Disability Rights, AI, and Social Impact in Qatar



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Interview by Haroon Rashid Qureshi

Haroon:

Today I am deeply honored to host one of Qatar's most respected business leaders and

humanitarian advocates. Dr. Mervat Ibrahim is widely recognized not only for her professional

accomplishments but also for her compassionate service to the community, especially her pioneering initiatives for people with disabilities. Dr. Ibrahim, Assalamu Alaikum and welcome.

Dr. Mervat Ibrahim:

Wa Alaikum Assalam. Thank you for having me.

Haroon:

Doctor, could you please give us a brief introduction about yourself?

Dr. Ibrahim:

It's a pleasure to meet you, and let me say I truly admire your newspaper. It covers a wide range of important topics in Qatar and beyond. My name is Mervat Ibrahim. I serve as an Ambassador for Peace in Qatar and am the founder of the initiative Your Voice is Power, which supports individuals with special needs. My dream is to make it the leading global platform for empowering people with disabilities, giving them the voice to express their needs, talents, and aspirations. I strongly believe they possess immense inner strength. The real challenge lies in changing society's perceptions and creating inclusive environments. Disability can affect anyone at any time—it is part of God's will. Some people feel sympathy but don't take action. That's why I've devoted my life to creating opportunities, enhancing education, and improving the quality of life for them.

I began by volunteering with the Qatar Rehabilitation Society for over 10 years and have given lectures on Qatar's Vision 2030, sustainability, and inclusive education. We must prepare the disabled community for the AI era. It's already integrated into daily life, even on our phones.

Haroon:

Where did this idea originate? Why choose this field over so many others?

Dr. Ibrahim:

It came from deep within – truly from the heart. Years ago, I fractured my leg and had difficulty attending a TV interview about my award-winning book on social sustainability. That pain made me reflect. If one broken leg caused such hardship, how do people live who've permanently lost limbs or sight? The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of honoring people with disabilities. That moment changed my life. It gave me a deeper sense of empathy and commitment.

Haroon:

How frequently do you spend time with individuals with disabilities?

Dr. Ibrahim:

I try to visit them as often as possible. Although my professional obligations are demanding, I dedicate at least two days per week. Together, we do meaningful activities like recycling tires and plastic cups. We also provide free AI training such as robotics courses which aligns with both

Qatar's Vision 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

One remarkable girl, Inas, an Egyptian with autism, outperformed all her peers in robotics. She's proof that when given the right tools, their potential is limitless.

Haroon:

How many disability centers are currently active in Qatar?

Dr. Ibrahim:

There are approximately 10 centers, collectively serving about 6,000 people. Key institutions like the Qatar Society for Special Needs offer a range of services—swimming lessons, parent counseling, and training in AI-based tools. We teach apps such as Seeing AI and Be My Eyes, which assist the visually impaired in navigating daily life more independently.

Haroon:

You mentioned emotional moments. Could you share one with us?

Dr. Ibrahim:

Absolutely. During a lecture at the Qatari Cultural Center for the Blind, a young girl approached me and said, "I recognize your voice from the media. I'm so happy you're here, Dr. Mervat." I couldn't hold back my tears. It was a powerful moment of connection. I even brought American guests to witness firsthand how committed Qatar is to disability inclusion and innovation in AI.

Haroon:

Tell us about your academic background.

Dr. Ibrahim:

I hold a Ph.D. in Media (TV Journalism) from Cairo University. I also earned dual bachelor's degrees in Tourism and Commerce by attending two universities at the same time. Later, I pursued master's degrees in both Business Administration and Media.

Haroon:

How do you manage such a demanding life?

Dr. Ibrahim:

By the grace of God and thanks to my mother, who continues to support and accompany me, even at the age of 60. My achievements are hers too.

Haroon:

Are you satisfied with your professional journey?

Dr. Ibrahim:

Alhamdulillah. I'm grateful but I'm always striving for more. As an international sustainability consultant and the owner of AI and education-focused companies, I make sure my team is well cared for. But I won't be satisfied until every person with a disability has what they need to thrive.

I also run a charity in Mauritania helping villages affected by congenital blindness. There is an urgent need for clean water and basic healthcare. These are human rights, and global organizations must act.

Haroon:

Do you have any regrets?

Dr. Ibrahim:

None. I thank God every day. I am content and at peace with my path.

Haroon:

What message would you like to share with people with disabilities?

Dr. Ibrahim:

Love and peace. We are all part of one humanity. Life is short so let's focus on compassion and unity, not conflict. You are not alone.

Haroon:

What is the role of Artificial Intelligence in the betterment of people with disabilities?

Dr. Ibrahim:

Artificial Intelligence is a game changer. It has transformed accessibility in ways we could only dream of before. Through AI-powered tools, people with disabilities are now more independent.

For example, apps like Seeing AI describe the surroundings for visually impaired individuals, while voice-activated systems enable people with limited mobility to control their homes and communicate efficiently. AI can assist in speech therapy, personalized education, and even emotional recognition to support people with autism.

We are incorporating these tools into our training programs in Qatar to ensure the disabled community is not left behind in the digital era. With AI, we're not just supporting them – we're empowering them.

Haroon:

Thank you so much, Dr. Mervat Ibrahim. It has been an absolute privilege.

Dr. Ibrahim:

Thank you. It's been my pleasure