



## Economic Value of Women's Work

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## Research paper on Economic Value of Women's work

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- Director of the Women and Work Program at the New Women Foundation.
- Consultant at The United Nations Committee on women Affairs 2015-2016 (Working on trade union and gender equality issues),
- Coordinator of the Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion Working Group of the Civil Society Forum and a member of the NGO Committee of the National Council for Women.
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*Al-Mashreq Foundation was established as a voice-up and a platform for women and young-people for a better future based on equality, justice and active participation in public life, aligned with the creation of successful mechanisms to enhance their social and economic status.*

### **Introduction:**

This research paper raises some questions: How big is the women's economic role? To what extent do women contribute to the national product? Is there a relationship between women's economic activity and the stability of society? How can the return of women's work be maximized? How can an atmosphere be created for women's work?

These are all questions that arise to us when talking about the need for women's work being an active actor in the Egyptian society. We find ourselves in front of two different trends and thoughts. The first is defending women's work, reinforced with the facts and figures that show the value of women's work. While the other opposes the work of women and puts obstacles before them, violating their right to work. Which in turn restricts their participation in generating income for their families and society and makes them vulnerable for various forms of violence to force them out of the labor market.

In this paper we try to highlight these problematic themes, which need to be carefully studied through the development of many worksheets and studies that address women's issues and their economic empowerment. We will start those series of studies with this paper, and we will focus on the following points:

- To monitor the gap between national legislation and international conventions.
- The economic contribution of women with the gender gap inside the work.
- The recommendations.

### **Mariam Soliman**

Director of Al-Mashreq Foundation for Development and Population

## **Economic value of women's work**

**Mona Ezzat**

### **Introduction:**

The protection of the women's right to work and the promotion of their economic participation are among the main issues adopted by international conventions, specifically the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women-CEDAW. Since its inception, International Labor Organization (ILO) adopts an essential strategy for protecting the rights of women to work, along with gender equality, and the ILO has issued several conventions in this regard.

Since the 1990s, the concept of women's economic empowerment has been developed, the concept of human rights-based development has gained increasing importance, and it has adopted a human rights-based approach that naturally rejects and addresses all forms of discrimination, including gender. In this context, the international organizations increasingly concentrated on women's economic empowerment in relation to the achievement of social justice and sustainable development. Since the 1990s, there have been many important conferences focusing on economic empowerment and gender equality issues. The most important being the Beijing Conference in September 1995, which devoted much space to the economic empowerment of women with highlighting all the economic roles of women (paid work and unpaid domestic work). This Conference focused on a number of strategies, the most important of which are<sup>1</sup> :

- Adopting macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women living in poverty.
- Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.
- Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty.
- Educating and training women, with equal opportunities for education and the eradication of illiteracy.
- Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has also put the issue of women's economic empowerment on its agenda. It organized and participated in a number of important conferences, including a conference in June 2000 attended by ministers from some 50 OECD members and non-members countries, where they acknowledged "Bologna convention on the policies of small and medium enterprises," and also emphasized the importance of the contribution of business organizations to foster economic development and social cohesion. In June 2004 ministers from 73 member countries and non-members of the OECD adopted the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) that are innovative and internationally competitive. Also the Declaration

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1) For more about Beijing conference: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/arabic/BeijingDeclPl.html>

has put emphasis upon the promotion of women-entrepreneurship by removing barriers facing their set-up of enterprises, such as obstacles to ownership or the right to sign contracts. In addition to follow up the design stages of economic policies for SME, and the impact of these policies on women's entrepreneurship in this area. In February 2006 Ministers from the Middle East and OECD issued another declaration on "Attracting Investments to Middle East and North Africa Countries- Common Principles and Good Practices." It acknowledged that boosting women's entrepreneurship is an effective strategy in creating jobs and stimulating economic development. Because empowering women makes society more democratic and promotes social cohesion <sup>2</sup>:

On 27 November 2007 in Cairo, the Business Leaders Forum for Women in the MENA and the OECD, a declaration was issued on the promotion of women entrepreneurship in the MENA. In order to activate this Declaration, on 22 November 2009 in Marrakech (Morocco) a conference was held to approve the Action Plan for the Development of Effective Methods of Economic Empowerment for Women and for mainstreaming gender into business reforms. This action plan was based on four key actions<sup>3</sup>:

- Promote the leadership and employment of women by creating an enabling and encouraging environment for employment.
- Facilitate business registration procedures and foster business growth through easier access to finance, especially for women-owned businesses.
- Improving economic policy through better statistics and indicators disaggregated by gender.
- Facilitate participation in the "Businesswomen Forum of the OECD and the MENA" and ensure greater networking between business networks.

Despite this wide international attention, the measures taken by states have been limited, have not contributed to the economic empowerment of women, and the gender gap in economic participation remains high. According to data, women are 24% less than men in the labor market worldwide, besides that women and girls do not have equal access to work if compared to men and boys. For example, women in the MENA region have the lowest labor force participation rate in the world at an average of 24% and suffer from a widening gender gap in entrepreneurship<sup>4</sup>.

These situations are not only negative for women but directly affect the competitiveness, productivity and social well-being of countries. It is estimated that raising women's

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2) Official website of OECD / <http://www.oecd.org>

The same source

4) For more details see: - UN official website / <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/women/> Competitiveness and Private Sector Development "Economic Empowerment of Women in Some Arab Countries", Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and Arab Organization for Administrative Development, League of Arab States, 2017, p. 3

The same source

5) UN official website <http://www.un.org/>

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participation rates in the labor force worldwide to men's levels could add US \$ 12 trillion to the gross domestic product (GDP) equivalent of 26% by 2025<sup>5</sup>.

In such situation, with the commitment of the United Nations to its responsibility towards the world, it mobilized world leaders/presidents in September 2015 to endorse the agenda of sustainable development 2030.<sup>6</sup> which set 17 goals that the world must work to achieve. The economic aspect addressed in this research paper is a key theme on this agenda, and is included in many goals. The first goal of the agenda focused on eradicating poverty, and the eighth was to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full productive employment and decent work." The ninth goal was "to establish a withstand infrastructure, stimulate inclusive and sustainable industrialization for all and to encourage innovation." The fifth goal was devoted to "achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls." The United Nations wanted to set a separate goal for gender equality not only because equality was a fundamental human right, but as a means to reaffirm that achieving sustainable development requires the elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination. Each goal has a number of purposes, which constitute an action plan and actions that the states must take to achieve these goals, and to measure the progress made in this regard. Among issues of concern of the economic empowerment of women, which the agenda focused on, the following<sup>7</sup>:

- Recognition and appreciation of unpaid care and domestic work and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and family, as appropriate at the national level.
- Implement reforms to enable women to have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership of land and other property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- Promote the use of technology, especially information and communication technologies, to boost the empowerment of women.
- Provide job opportunities for men and women, creating a safe working environment, and applying decent work conditions.
- Stimulate inclusive and sustainable industrialization, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, especially for women economically and socially marginalized.

All countries of the world must prepare national action plans to achieve the development agenda. In this context, the Egyptian government issued in 2015 a Strategy for Sustainable Development, Egypt Vision 2030<sup>i</sup>. This strategy includes three economic, social and environmental dimensions, each of which includes indicators of measurement. However the gender issues are slightly addressed in this strategy. For instance the economic dimension includes an indicator of the women's rate in the labor force and the target is to reach 35% in 2030, without referring to specific measures be taken to achieve this percentage. It has been referred in brief terms in one paragraph under the headline "Investment policies," to the Women's Empowerment Program which focuses on the provision of health services for women and social security in the informal sector.

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<sup>7</sup>) albeit

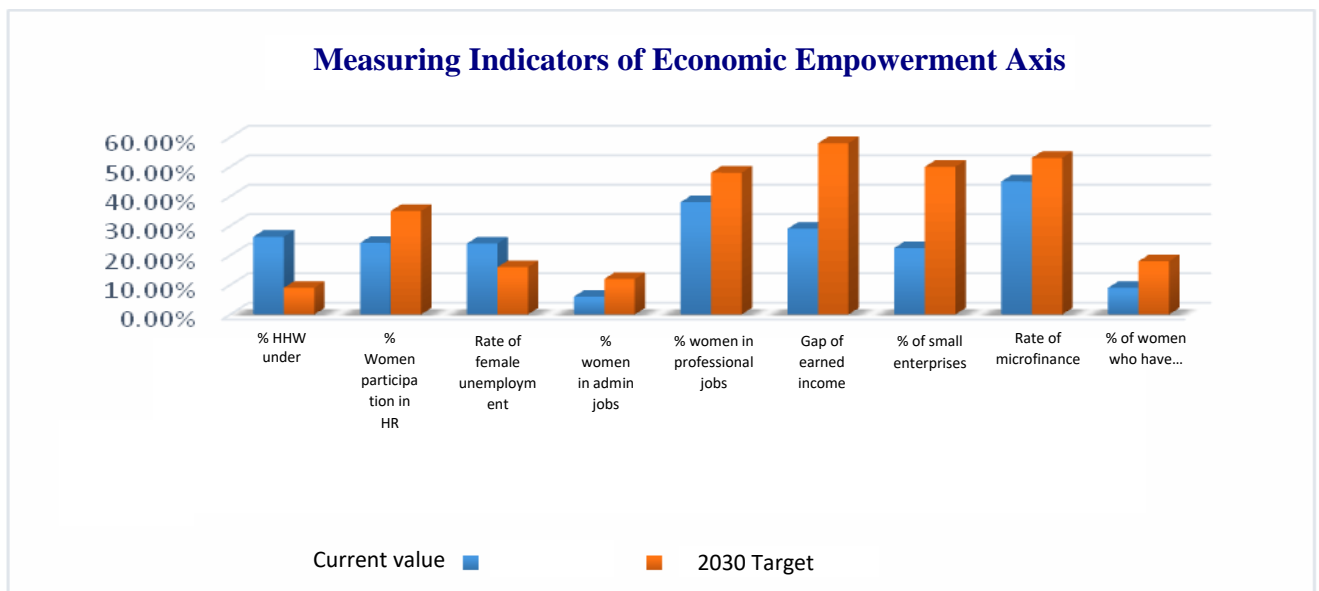
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It is possible to say that the economic dimension includes cross-cutting and partial references to the economic empowerment of women. Therefore, there was an objective need for the Women's Empowerment Strategy issued by the National Council for Women in March 2017, "National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030<sup>ii</sup>". The strategy includes the objectives that the State intends to reach as a means to achieve the 2030 development goals for gender equality, including a number of political, economic and social axes. In terms of the economic empowerment of women, the strategy adopted a general objective:

**"Developing women's capacities to expand their employment options, increase their participation in the labor force, and equalize employment opportunities for women in all sectors, including the private sector, entrepreneurship, and key positions in public bodies and private companies."**

### Detailed Objectives:

- **Supporting working women:** working to raise their productivity, provide support services for working women, creating a stimulating and safe work environment, issuing laws stemmed from a gender-based perspective, and promote a greater role for women in corporates and institutions governance.
- **Increasing women's employment rates:** opening up new fields of work, eliminating discrimination in job placement, encouraging intensive women- labor fields of work, and encouraging their management of projects.
- **Women's access to economic resources:** training and capacity-building of women and the promotion of entrepreneurship among women and financial services.



### Indicators for measuring the impact of the economic empowerment axis

The strategy for the empowerment of women is more detailed and specific, and includes measurable indicators. Also it noted the necessity of cooperation between the three

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development partners; the government, the private sector and the civil society. This is the real challenge facing this strategy, on the one hand, to what extent specific legislations and policies will be applied to respond to the objectives of this strategy. On the other hand, working to defeat the cultural and social obstacles that define certain traditional frameworks and stereotyped roles for women in the public sphere. Despite the diversity of women's economic contribution and the multiplicity of their economic roles (formal economy- informal economy-care economy), the right of women to work is still restricted by laws that contain forms of discrimination and violence such as labor and personal status laws. Added to absence of gender-sensitive policies and gender equality in the workplace, and this is reflected in Egypt's international status as it's ranked 132 out of 144 countries in the gender gap index, according to the World Economic Forum's 2016 index. This is a far cry compared to other countries, while it is higher than the previous years compared with Egypt's 136 ranking in 2015. This progress made by Egypt needs more efforts to get better results, and indicates that there are opportunities and challenges within the economic empowerment of women in Egypt. Accordingly this research paper will focus on the following topics:

- Monitoring the legislative gap between national legislation and international conventions.
- Economic contribution of women along with the gender-based gap in employment.
- The recommendations.



## **First Aspect: National legislation and international conventions- the legislative gap:**

The Constitution of 2014 includes a number of articles that represent a good opportunity to promote gender equality. The constitution gave guarantees and constitutional protection to women stated in a number of its articles. Article #9 obliges the State to provide equal opportunities for all citizens, and Article #53 criminalizes discrimination of all forms, as well as the incitement to hatred. Any discriminatory practice becomes a punishable offense. Accordingly, laws involving any discriminatory provisions must be reviewed and amended, and the same Article stipulates the establishment of a commission to combat all forms of discrimination.

Article #11 also provides for the State to undertake measures and procedures to address the discrimination against women in holding leadership positions and public posts and to assume positions in judicial bodies. The same Article states that "the State guarantees the empowerment of women to reconcile the duties of the family with the requirements of work." But despite the recognition of women's right to work, the constitutional legislator adopted the traditional believe that domestic duties are the responsibility of women, and they alone have to look after the family.

Article #93 of the Constitution stipulates that "the State shall abide by the international conventions, agreements and covenants on human rights ratified by Egypt, that shall have the force of law after their publication in accordance with the prescribed conditions." Under this article, the Egyptian Government shall abide by the international conventions ratified by the State, The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Egypt in 1982 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Egypt 18 September 1981. One of the ILO conventions, Egypt ratified in 1960 the Convention No. 100 "Equality of Male and Female Workers' Wage for Works of Equal Value." Article #111: "Discrimination in employment and occupation". Under Article #93, all laws that violate the principles and rights provided for in these conventions ratified by the Egyptian Government shall be reviewed.

### **The international conventions dealing with women's economic rights:**

#### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>iii</sup>:**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the following:

Item (2) Article #21: "Everyone has equal rights with one another in occupation of public positions in her/his country."

Article #23 states that:

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of the work, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. All individuals, without any discrimination, have the right to equal pay for the same work.

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3. Everyone has the right to a fair and satisfactory remuneration which guarantees her/him and her/his family a life of human dignity and, where appropriate, supplemented by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and join trade-unions, with others, for the protection of her/his interests.

Article #24: "Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, and in particular to have reasonable working hours and periodic holidays.

**International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights (ICESCR):** The ICESCR<sup>iv</sup> provides for more rights related to the training, education and rehabilitation of workers and provides for the right of women-workers to maternity leave and the necessary protection during pregnancy, as follows:

### Article #6

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes everyone's right to the opportunity to gain his living by work freely chosen or accepted, and shall take appropriate measures to safeguard this right.
2. The measures taken by each of the States Parties to ensure the full exercise of this right shall include the provision of technical guidance and vocational training programs. As well as the adoption of policies and techniques to achieve sustained economic, social and cultural development and provide full and productive employment under conditions guaranteeing individual's political and economic freedoms.

### Article #7

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

(a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:

- Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;
- A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;

(b) Safe and healthy working conditions;

(c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his/her employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;

(d) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays.

Item (2) Article #10

Special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth. During such period working mothers should be accorded paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits.

**The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

There is progress and a qualitative shift brought about by the CEDAW<sup>v</sup> with regard to definitions of sex-based discrimination and the provision of specific measures and procedures to address discrimination and promote equality. An Article of the Convention provides a specific definition of gender-based discrimination:

"Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

The Convention called on States to take temporary measures to change the cultural and social reality that prevents equality. The Convention stipulates so-called "special discrimination" measures, that is "positive discrimination", which may be provided for in constitutions or laws. Article # 4 of the Convention says, "These measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved" and States have been obliged in Article #5 to modify the prevailing patterns of social and cultural behavior of men and women, and to apply equality standards both in the public and private spheres. This article is very important to our society because the discrimination between men and women has social and cultural roots, and requires not only legislation or a number of measures and procedures, but the elimination of discrimination requires a comprehensive and integrated vision of legislation and national strategies and policies to integrate gender issues in all fields and at all levels. In addition to follow-up and evaluation processes in all political, economic and social spheres in order to ensure the achievement of the ultimate goal which is gender equality.

Article #11 stipulates the rights of women to work as follows:

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
- (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
- (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
- (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;
- (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

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(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

The same Article says, in order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

### **Gender Equality in the ILO:**

International labor standards have established that women's rights to work and the principle of gender equality are an integral part of human rights and a fundamental need for justice. The preamble to the 1919 ILO Constitution states that "universal and lasting peace can only be achieved on the basis of social justice." In this period also the principles of the protection of women in employment and equal pay for work of equal value were highlighted as areas that require immediate action. 1944 in Philadelphia, the International Labor Conference adopted a declaration, which is currently attached to the Constitution, states that: all human beings whatever their race or relief or sex have the right to work for their material well-being and spiritual advancement in conditions that provide them with freedom, dignity, economic security and equal opportunities. The Declaration states that "poverty anywhere is a threat to welfare everywhere." The importance of the Declaration of Philadelphia comes from the reaffirm of the right to work for all women and men and that work is one of the main approaches to eradicating poverty and achieving material well-being<sup>vi</sup>.

Since its inception, the ILO has issued 189 conventions that constitute international labor standards which are important instruments for achieving decent work. These conventions represent the basis upon which governments can base their legislation and policies on labor, including four ILO conventions that are essential instruments for achieving gender equality in employment:

- Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration (1951).
- Convention No. 111 on Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (1958);
- Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities (1981);
- Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection (2000).

In addition to other three conventions which are:

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- Convention No. 3 on The Employment of Women Before and After Childbirth (1919).
- Convention No. 177 on Home Work (1996).
- Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (2011).

These seven ILO Conventions and the above-mentioned international conventions protect women in the areas of formal and informal work and place the three parties (the government, employers and trade unions) at their responsibility for promoting gender equality, addressing reproductive and child care as a societal responsibility that is borne by all concerned parties not only by women, and family responsibilities should not affect the rights of women and men to work. The three parties should agree on policies that protect women against discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, ensure equal pay for women and men for work of equal value. In addition to implement national policies aimed at promoting equal opportunities and equal treatment in employment and occupation with a view to eliminating discrimination in employment, promotion and vocational training, as well as protection for women in the informal sector, where women represent a large proportion of them especially domestic workwomen.

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<sup>8</sup> Official website of the Ministry of Planning, Follow-up and Administrative Reform: <http://sdsegvpt2030.com/>

<sup>9</sup> Official website of the National Council for Women: <http://ncw.gov.eg/ar>

<sup>10</sup> Approved and published under the UN General Assembly Resolution of 10 December 1948, can be accessed through the website: [http://www.un.org/ar/udhrbook/pdf/UNH\\_AR\\_TXT.pdf](http://www.un.org/ar/udhrbook/pdf/UNH_AR_TXT.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Approved and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the UN General Assembly Resolution on 16 December 1966. Entry into force, 3 January 1976, accessed through: [hrlibrary.umn.edu/arab/b002.html](http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/arab/b002.html)

<sup>12</sup> The UN General Assembly approved the Convention on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1979, can be accessed through: [womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/0360793A.pdf](http://womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/0360793A.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> A.B Rights of Working Women and Gender Equality, ILO, Arabic edition 2015.

### **Egyptian Labor Law No. (12) of 2003**

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<p>Article (89): The concerned minister shall issue a decree determining the cases, works, and occasions for which women shall not be employed to work during the period between 7 pm and 7 am.</p>	<p>Apparently, these two articles are meant to highlight care for women by protecting them from unwholesome and morally harmful works as well as employment in industrial facilities during the period between 7 pm to 7 am. However, in fact, these two articles reflect and perpetuate the stereotypical images that women are always in need for those who provide them protection and could preserve their morals. The provisions of these two articles gives the concerned minister the right to intervene the female workers' will and choice as appropriate to their needs and circumstances.</p>
<p>Article (90): The concerned minister shall issue a decree determining the works that are unwholesome and morally harmful to women, as well as the works in which women may not be employed to work.</p>	<p>These articles include conditions limiting the applicability thereof, for instance, the ten-month condition in Article (91) as the female worker could obtain a maternity leave, as well as the second condition provided for in Article (94) which states that number of the workers in a given establishment shall not be less than 50 in order to have a childcare leave. It worth mentioning that maternity leave is an inherent right to the best interest of the child and their care and protection, which constitute an essential social responsibility that in principle should not be restricted by conditions that hinder the male and female works from taking care of their families.</p>
<p>Article (91): A female worker having spent ten months in the service of the employer or more shall have the right to a maternity leave of ninety days, with a compensation equal to her comprehensive wage, comprising the period before delivery and after parturition, providing that she shall submit a medical certificate indicating the date on which delivery most likely to took place.</p> <p>A female worker shall not be required to work during the forty-five days following childbirth. In addition, the maternity leave shall not entitled more than twice throughout the female worker's period of service.</p>	<p>Most employers do not adhere to the application of this article. This may attribute to fragility of control and accountability mechanisms in connection with non-compliance with applications of laws.</p>
<p>Article (94): A female worker in the establishment where fifty workers or more are employed have the right to take a leave without pay for a period not exceeding two years, to care for her child. This leave shall not be entitled more than twice throughout her service period.</p>	
<p>Article (96): An employer engaging a hundred female workers or more in the same place shall establish a nursery school or assign a nursery school caring for the female workers' children, according to the conditions and terms to be determined by decree of the concerned minister. Furthermore, establishments employing less than a hundred female workers in the same area shall</p>	

participate in implementing the obligation prescribed in the previous clause according to the conditions and terms to be set by a decree of the concerned minister.	
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From the previously mentioned conventions and constitutional texts, it is noted that equality between men and women in terms of employment, wages, and promotions is recognized. They also consider the reproductive role, children care and family responsibilities as a social issue not limited only to women. However, the Labor Law is still containing article implies some discrimination against women. It also does not provide an adequate protection to women against gender-based violence in workplaces. In the following table, articles connected to employment of women in Labor Law No.(12) of 2003 are listed.<sup>vi</sup>

In addition, Article No. (4) of the same law stipulates that provisions thereof shall not apply to certain categories among which the Domestic service workers (Women & Men). The legislator draws on an old legislative rule that is still in force to the present date; as houses are inviolable and their inspection as being workplaces eliminates their privacy. Thereupon, the owners of these professions are deprived from the prescribed legal protection, bearing in mind that most of those who are working in such field are from women. So, they subject to various forms of exploitations due to absence of law and the mainstream social conditions that stigmatize women who carry out these conditions and make their behaviors in question. As a result, they are exposed to different forms of sexual, physical and psychological violence. This requires review and amendments as per the constitutional provisions on labor and social protection as well as International Labor Organization convention No. 189 entitled "Decent Work for Domestic Workers.", knowing that Egypt has not signed this convention till now.<sup>vi</sup>

Subject to Article (97), female workers engaged in sheer agricultural labor such as harvesting and levelling ...etc. shall be exempted from applying the provisions of women employment since they are seasonal workers and has no regular contractual relations with an employer. Nonetheless, in the light of the aforesaid constitutional texts, legislations providing women social protection and care throughout pregnancy and childbirth periods should be enacted.<sup>vi</sup>

## **Second Aspect: Women Economic Contribution & Labor Qualitative Gab**

This section addresses several topics by means of data and analysis; they are as follows:

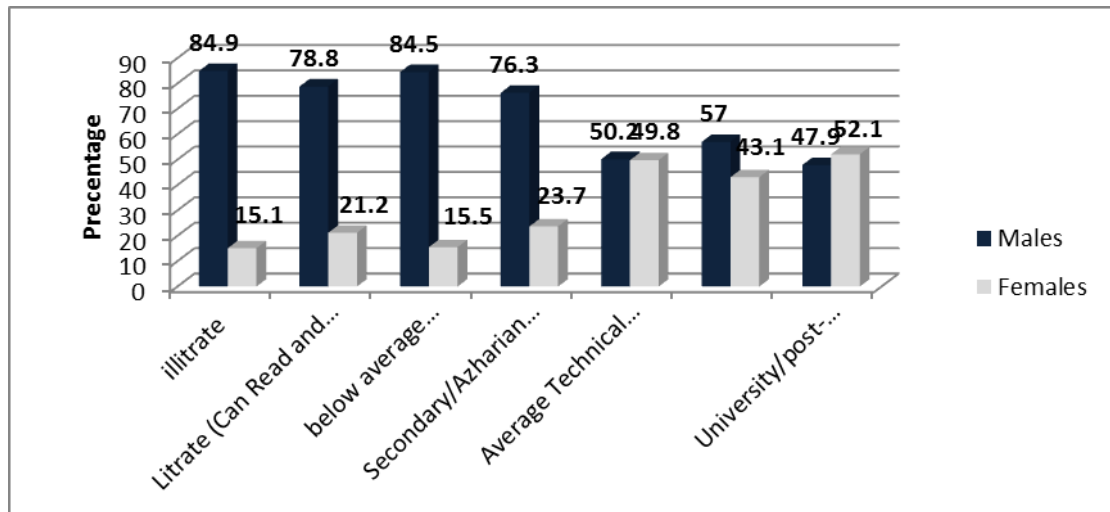
- 1- Unemployment
- 2- Economic Activity
- 3- Wages
- 4- Seasonal Workers
- 5- Gender-based Violence

6- Female Breadwinners

**Unemployment:**

During the first quarter of 2017, unemployment percentage among men is 8.2% while it is equal 24.7% among women.

**The Proportional Distribution of Unemployed Persons according to Educational Condition & Gender in the First Quarter of 2017**



**Source:** Quarterly Bulletin, Manpower Research, Central Agency for Public Mobilization & Statistics, June 2017.

These statistics demonstrate the widening of the qualitative gap in the unemployment rates in favor of men in addition to high rate of unemployment among women as the academic qualification gets higher starting from the holding an average qualification to the higher degrees. This mainly goes back to the private sector dependence on unmarried young women as not to afford burdens of providing nursery schools and maternity and childcare leaves. Moreover, young female workers are considered as cheap labor and their ability to know their rights is limited. Accordingly, their ability to claim for their rights is vulnerable. The largest percentage of university degree holders works in the administrative governmental bodies; most of them in sectors of services and social welfare.

The statistics also show the conservative and reactionary discourse, which is fueled by radical religious interpretation contradicting the proper religion. Unfortunately, this kind of discourse has been undermining the whole society for decades and affecting the societal trend towards the women work to restrict them to only the productive roles. It goes that home is the one place that suits women and sets restricted conditions for going out to work within narrow limits. Some employers adopt such reactionary approach and clearly declare so by asking for "Men Only" without any attempts to hide such reactionary adoption. Other employers accept employment of women but in some marginal tasks apart from supervisory and leadership posts. In addition, some workplaces determine specific way for women clothing.

**Economic Activity**



The proportional distribution of workers (15 years and above) according to gender and the economic activities in the first quarter of 2017

<b>Economic Activities</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Agriculture, Forest exploitations, tree cutting, and fishing</b>	21.4	17.9	20.7
<b>Mining &amp; quarrying</b>	0.2	0.0	0.1
<b>Processing industries</b>	13.8	7.2	12.5
<b>Power, gas and steam supply &amp; air conditions</b>	1.0	0.1	0.8
<b>Water supply, sewage networks and waste management</b>	0.8	0.3	0.7
<b>Construction</b>	16.9	0.5	13.7
<b>Wholesale and retail trading, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles</b>	13.1	11.9	12.8
<b>Transport and storage</b>	9.5	0.3	7.7
<b>Food and accommodation services</b>	3.1	0.8	2.6
<b>Information and communication</b>	0.8	0.8	0.8
<b>Financial intermediation and insurance</b>	0.6	0.8	0.7
<b>Real Estates &amp; Leasing</b>	0.1	0.0	0.1
<b>Specialized scientific and technical activities</b>	1.6	1.2	1.5
<b>Administrative activities and support services</b>	0.8	0.5	6.9
<b>Public administration, defense, and social security</b>	6.4	8.7	6.9
<b>Education</b>	4.7	20.2	7.7
<b>Health and Social work activities</b>	1.4	10.8	3.3
<b>Arts, creativity and entertainment</b>	0.4	0.4	0.4
<b>Other service and activities</b>	2.8	0.9	2.4
<b>Individual and domestic services</b>	0.7	16.7	3.8
<b>International and regional organizations and bodies, embassies, and foreign consulates</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100

**Source:** Quarterly Bulletin, Manpower Research, Central Agency for Public Mobilization & Statistics, June 2017.

The foregoing table illustrates the distribution of workforce on basis of gender. Tasks in which women are heavily involved are largely related to division of roles between women and men in the private and public spheres. Women's most fields of work are related to roles of care inside homes that is associated to the stereotypical and traditional division of tasks between men and women. The largest proportion of women works in the following areas:

- Education by 20.0%
- Agriculture, forests exploitation, tree cutting and fishing by 17.9%
- Individual and domestic services 16.7%

On the other hand, number of women working in economic activities require physical effort, transportation to remote or deserted areas or field works are as follows:

- Mining and quarrying
- Processing industries 7.2%
- Electricity, gas, steam supply and air conditioning 0.1%
- Construction 0.5%

#### **Wages:**

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Statistics of 2015 noted an increment in the percentage of men who work for cash wages to reach 59.2% against a percentage of 39.2 % as for women in the republic as a whole. The percentage of those who work for families without wage represent 30.4% for women against 5.1% for men. In rural areas, this percentage reaches 46.6% for women against 7% for men. The qualitative gap in the private sector is in favor of men as their wage is more than that of women by 17.7%. Ironically, the wage gap in the private sector widens in spite of provisions of Law No. (12) in Article (35) which states "Discrimination in wages because of the sex, origin and language, religion or creed shall be prohibited." This confirms that enactment of laws is not sufficient. There must be procedures inside workplaces secure enforcement of law. Moreover, penal articles in the said law need to be reviewed in order to ensure that employers are obliged to implement provisions of laws. <sup>vi</sup>

It seems that impact of the cultural and social situation is much stronger than compliance to law. This gap is the result of the cultural and social situation that constitutes the society's view of women's work. The society, until now, does not recognize the significance of women economic contribution to families, their entitlement to work and occupy all positions, and enjoying equality with men inside the workplace. The general trend in the society sees that women main role is limited to family caring and that the "Man" is the head of the household and the principle source of money. This masculine culture controls work environments. It provides more opportunities for men to have extra works and missions, which, eventually, reflected on their total wages.

The influence of this masculine culture and patriarchal authority also extends, on a larger scale, in rural and poor areas. Women, there, work to help husband or father in farms, raising of livestock and poultry, producing food and selling vegetables. The number of women started to increase in the field of crafts professions all with neither pay nor social care. In addition, such occupations are not recognized as work, but mere help of cooperation for the head of the

household". Accordingly, women are not entitled to have a wage. This explain the high percentage of women working without pay which is 30.4% and increases in rural areas to reach 46.6%. It also highlight the negative impact of not recognizing the economic role of women by establishing a negative image that the tasks performed by women are non-financial. This also devote to an inferior view to women in the society and makes all powers in the hand of man who controls process of family management and disbursement.

### **Seasonal Workers:**

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2015-Statistics show the following:

- Total percentage of men in the seasonal sector is equal 47.3% and women percentage is equal 44.7%
- Percentage of women working without pay for families is equal 84.2%, while percentage of men is equal 9.9%
- Employer hiring employees (percentage of women equal 2.2% to 19.6% of men)
- Self-employed (women equal 8.9% and 22.8% for men)
- Workers with pay from women represent 4.6% and 47.8% from men.

### **1- Most of workforce in the seasonal sector works in the following fields:** <sup>vi</sup>

- Female and male workers in the agricultural field.
- Production of food products (cheese, milk, and dairy products), raising livestock.
- Small handicraft workshops (less than 5 workers), average workshops (from 5-10 workers).
- Domestic works, especially embroidery, preparation of vegetables and simple handicrafts.
- Selling in markets.
- Domestic services workers.
- Construction workers.

### **2-Work Environment & Relationships**

- Subject to Article (4-B) of Labor Law No. (12) of 2003, domestic services workers are excluded from legal protection. In addition, Article (97) excluded sheer agricultural workers from women employment provisions.
- They do not enjoy any kind of social protection.  
Random relationships, conditions, and determinants in terms of: work tasks quantity and quality, wages, and working hours....etc.
- Exposure to verbal and moral violation to physical and sexual abuse for women.
- Exposure to various health problems due to quality and quantity of work (such as back pain, fractures, burns...etc.)
- There are areas or opportunities for vocational training and qualification.
- Exposure to violence and societal disrespect in general through suspecting their behaviors as being servants works in the houses of foreign people.

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### **Gender Based Violence**

<b>Work Condition</b>	<b>Percentage of Victims</b>	<b>Number of Victims</b>
<b>Working for pay</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>96 thousand</b>
<b>Employer and hiring other people</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>3.5 thousand</b>
<b>Self-employed and do not hire other people</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>21.5 thousands</b>
<b>Working for family without pay</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>18.5 thousands</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>139.6 thousands</b>

Women in workplaces are exposed to physical, physiological and sexual violence. The following table shows percentages of such violence cases according to work conditions. These percentages are the findings of the research conducted on women in work places by surveying the economic cost of gender-based violence in Egypt in 2015. <sup>vi</sup>

Women's exposure to violence whatsoever its form is not related to the nature of the workplace. Women working for pay are the highest category subjecting to violence with a number amounting to 96 thousand according to the number estimated. Field studies reveal that women in work establishment, whether in public or private sectors, exposed to various forms of sexual harassment by sexual looks, words or sexual phrase. The harasser can be (a colleague, supervisor, manager, or employer). Sexual harassment in workplaces does not associated to age, qualification, social status, or to the clothes of the women.

This violence is result of unequal power relations between men and women due to the masculine domination and patriarchal authority that control the social relationships. Women held responsibility for such violence, but collude with men and justify committing such disgraceful offense. Women suffer psychological issues that affect their productive ability and continuation in the same job. In most cases, women cannot complain because of the harasser's authority, fear of defamation, ignorance of their legal rights, and absence of protection policies in the workplaces. <sup>vi</sup>

### **Female Breadwinners:**

Despite the discrimination, gender-based violence, exclusion and marginalization the women suffer, they bear great economic burdens and contribute to household disbursements either with men or as being the principle breadwinner. Some official statistics illustrated that 33.5% of houses relay on women (widows, divorcees, abandoned wives, second wife, wife of unstable worker, wife of an unemployed, addict, patient or disabled person, in addition to wives who contribute to the family income and unmarried women). The following table shows percentages of female breadwinners, their distribution in the country's governorates, illiterate female breadwinners, widows and divorcee. <sup>vi</sup>

**Source:** Central Agency for Public Mobilization & Statistics, Manpower Bulletin 2015.

<b>Governorates</b>	<b>Female Breadwinner Percentage</b>	<b>Illiterate Female Breadwinner percentage</b>	<b>Widows &amp; Divorcee Female Breadwinner percentage</b>
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Research paper on Economic Value of Women's work

<b>Total</b>	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
	17	16.5	44.7	66.6	83.9	70.9
<b>Cairo</b>	18.5	0.0	42.8	0.0	85.7	0.0
<b>Alexandria</b>	15.5	0.0	35.5	0.0	84.8	0.0
<b>Port Said</b>	17.2	0.0	29.7	0.0	86.6	0.0
<b>Suez</b>	17.2	0.0	54.2	0.0	94.6	0.0
<b>Damietta</b>	16.5	15.7	33.7	45.9	86.1	81.3
<b>Dakahlia</b>	19	20.6	44.7	54.4	78.1	68.8
<b>Sharqia</b>	18	15.1	39.6	58.6	76.7	70.5
<b>Qalyubia</b>	15.4	14	53	61.2	86.6	77.7
<b>Kafr El Sheikh</b>	21	15.4	41	67.6	74.6	70
<b>Gharbia</b>	18.3	17	33.7	57.3	83.1	72.2
<b>Monufia</b>	17.4	15.4	38.7	54.1	85.2	74.4
<b>Beheira</b>	13.8	12.1	55.9	72.8	84.3	84.1
<b>Ismailia</b>	17.1	12.4	45.6	75.4	58.5	84.4
<b>Giza</b>	16.5	12.8	45.4	72.5	86	82.1
<b>Beni Suef</b>	15.3	15	60	76.8	90	70.7
<b>Faiyum</b>	16.3	14	50	73.6	78.9	72.1
<b>Menia</b>	16.7	16.5	53.2	79.9	71.4	7.4
<b>Assuit</b>	15.9	18.8	58.5	73.9	82.2	63.9
<b>Sohag</b>	19.7	23.5	66.3	74.7	74.1	56.6
<b>Qena</b>	20.2	25.4	67	70.9	80.3	61.4
<b>Aswan</b>	18.1	17.3	49.3	61.1	83.4	79.7
<b>Luxor</b>	17.1	14.6	66.7	79.8	85.8	92.1
<b>Red Sea</b>	6.4	0.0	35.7	0.0	97.6	0.0
<b>New Valley</b>	10.1	6.5	39.3	50	96.4	95.8
<b>Matrouh</b>	6.8	3.8	52.5	92.3	85	92.3

<b>North Sinai</b>	9.2	6.1	47.8	62.5	91.3	81.3
<b>South Sinai</b>	2.3	6.7	0.0	75	100	87.5

*From the forgoing table, the following can be observed:*

- The percentage of female heads of households in both urban and rural areas is almost equal as it reached (17%) in urban areas and (16.5%) in the rural ones. The highest percentage of female heads household was recorded in Qena by 25.4% and in Sohag by 23.5%. Percentage of illiterate female breadwinners in rural area is higher than that of the urban. Moreover, percentage of widows and divorcees is higher in the urban areas as it reached 74.1% in Sohag, 80.3% in Qena. It worth noting that Sohag and Qena are among the demographically unattractive governorates. <sup>vi</sup>

- Most of these women are pushed to the labor market without training or appropriate vocational level. Thus, most of them resort to seasonal work. Women in rural areas are working in fields of agriculture, selling of food products (cheese, milk and dairy products), raising and selling livestock. On the other hand, women in urban areas work in small and intermediate craft workshops (less than 5 workers as for the small one, and form 5 to 10 workers concerning the intermediate workshops). They also work in embroidery, simple handicrafts works, sewing, selling in the market, and as domestic services workers.

- The monthly income of these families is low and unstable. There are also no specific working relationships regulated by law. Most of these women do not enjoy any social protection. Subsequently, they cannot secure neither their families basic needs, nor opportunity for their children to complete their education, nor the necessary health care.

- Many of the female breadwinners or wives in poor familiar where the man has no stable or fixed income resort to loans to establish small and micro-enterprises. Percentage of small project loans provided for women by the Social Fund for Development is 16.4% from the total loans provided. Loans provided with regard to micro-enterprises reached 36.3% in 2015<sup>vi</sup>. The state now tends to increase the proportion of women who receive small loans to reach 50% and to reach percentage of 53% as for micro-enterprises loans. The government is also seeking to increase the percentage of women who have bank accounts to reach 18% by 2030 as set out in Women Empowerment Strategy 2030.

These objectives fall within the frame of the Central Bank's initiative to activate comprehensive financial inclusion policy. In this context, on September 13, 2017, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the National Council for Women and the Central Bank of Egypt to organize their cooperation in terms of supporting and empowering of the Egyptian women economically and financially. By virtue of this MoU, actions shall be taken to raise saving rates and encourage women entrepreneurship by increasing their access to financial services, but bank services in particular under the umbrella of financial inclusion. The two bodies will also work to raise the financial awareness by spreading the financial culture among women and female school and university students<sup>vi</sup>. Furthermore, the National Council for Women shall adopt several programs and projects to train and qualify female breadwinners and

poor women in popular and random areas and villages in order to provide job opportunities for women. <sup>vi</sup>

### **Third Aspect: Recommendations**

- There has been three years since the constitution was adopted; however, there is an existing legal gap between the international conventions and the applicable laws. To the present date, the Committee of Non-Discrimination provided for in Article (53) of the constitution issued in 2014, has not been established. In addition, in spite of the explicit condition in Article (11) of the constitution on the right of women to take-up judicial positions, number of female judges is 66 out of a total 16 thousand judges. The State Council and the Public Prosecution reject appointment of women. Besides, the labor law requires some amendments on the employment of women and deletion of some conditions restricting women to take maternity and childcare leaves. It is critical to conduct a serious dialogue between the government, employers, syndicates, civil society organizations, Ministry of Manpower and Social Solidarity to provide nurseries. However, there are some positive aspects at the legislative level including the promulgation of the inheritance law. It is a fair law for women, especially those who are deprived from their right in the inheritance in the rural areas by outdated customs and traditions. Such customs were depriving women from a legitimate right that can be used and exploited economically<sup>vi</sup>.

- Ministry of Social Solidarity needs to re-evaluate and develop specialized programs to support working women to increase their effectiveness and improve the services provided to working women. These programs must be extended in all governorates.
- Competing the efforts of the National Council for Women in cooperation with the ministries in order to activate and restructure the Equal Opportunities Units and to rehabilitate the staff of these units. In this respect, the National Council for Women and the International Labor Organization- Cairo Office held a training workshop on gender equality and decent work over four days from November 26 to 29, 2017 in Cairo. The workshop was seeking to introduce more than 40 participants from heads and members of Equal Opportunities Units in all Egyptian ministries. The workshop aimed at presenting the participants to the most important international labor conventions related to women's rights at work as well as initiatives of women labor future at the end of the world. By the end of the workshop, practical plans were developed to be implemented by the said units to enhance gender equality in field of employment.<sup>vi</sup>
- Activating the social discussion with participation of civil society and national councils in order to motivate employers to pay attention to corporates social responsibility from a gender perspective, whether outside workplace by paying attention to the society surrounding work environments or by working to provide a safe and stimulating work environment for both female and male workers.
- Organizing efforts between the National Council for Women, civil society organizations, concerned government agencies and the Central Bank in order to work on developing a plan for women financial inclusion in Egypt to get acquitted with financial services provided for women, concerned providers, their effectiveness, sources of saving methods used by women, and obstacles that may hinder women's access to financial services, with focus on women in rural areas. They shall also develop a future plan, within the light of the foregoing, to address challenges, organize efforts exerted by the concerned authorities, pay attention to processes of following-up and evaluation, make the necessary legislative procedures that allow women to establish productive unites and cooperatives. This will contribute to promotion of financial solidarity between women and the integration of work among them and substantial work opportunities in turn.

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<sup>vi</sup> International Labor Organization-Cairo Office, Social Media Page  
<https://www.facebook.com/ILOCairoOffice/>