



# *The Most Important Acquisitions and Achievements of Egyptian Women since 2011*

*The Report of the Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue*

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## **Introduction**

*Recently Egypt has witnessed a noticeable positive progress in the field of women empowerment and support in addition to gender equality. This is because of the supportive political will to women issues, translating their constitutional rights into laws, strategies and executive programs implemented by governmental and non-governmental bodies and creating suitable atmosphere for unifying efforts of all society's categories (academic, legislative, religious, institutions, youth, men...etc.) in rural and urban areas besides many supporters who enable women and girls on all levels and fields.*

*This is evident in Women Empowerment Strategy 2030 prepared by the National Council for Women. The president Abd El Fattah El Sisi has entrusted the government, all state bodies and the parliament with considering this strategy as 'work document' for coming years to activate plans, programs and projects included in this strategy. The strategy includes four work axes and aims at increasing female ratio in public positions to 17% in 2030 and preventing discrimination against women in regard to occupying leadership positions in executive and judicial institutions and preparing women to succeed in these positions. It also targets enabling women economically and developing women skills and capacities to increase and widen work options and opportunities in front of them, enabling them socially, preventing practices which encourage discrimination against women or those which causes harm for them whether in public field or inside family and eliminating negative phenomena such as sexual violence which threaten women's lives, safety and dignity.*

## **Egyptian Women Challenges**

*Egyptian women face a number of challenges such as stereotyping their role in society, traditions and customs which dominate women's image, media means and dramatic works participate in establishing for image of weak women. Also still depriving girls*



*from education is one of the most dangerous challenges faced by women along with disinheritance and early/girls' marriage which affects girls' health on health, psychological and social level.*

*The statistics of civil status sector point out the capture of a case of early marriage with fake contracts every two days with an average of 12 cases monthly as the annual ratio reached from 144 to 200 cases. In addition, in 2017/2018 the ratio of lawsuits in courts regarding proving marriage reached about 16.000 lawsuits and 14.000 lawsuits regarding proving lineage of children who do not know their fate. In its report last year, the UNICEF declared that Egypt occupies the fourth grade internationally and the third one among Arab countries with ratio of 91% while Somalia comes in the first place all over the world in regard to ratios of FGM with 98% followed by Guinea then Djibouti, Egypt and then Al Sudan in the eighth grade internationally and the fourth one among Arab countries with 88%. Besides, the UNICEF attributes FGM to social legacies which link FGM with purity and preparation for marriage. In 2000, ratio of FGM in Egypt reached 97% then it decreased in 2015 to reach 92% and 87% in 2016. Yet this practice prevalence rose up again to 91% in 2017 although the Egyptian government has adopted punitive legislations against FGM committers since 2008; the matter which requires more efforts and attempts to reduce and eliminate such phenomenon.*

*According study by UN Women in 2013, about 99% of women in Egypt have been exposed to one form of harassment. Also in accordance with a study by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights in 2008, 72% of women who were exposed to harassment wore veil or Al Niqab (face veil). This ratio in 2008 equaled about total of women who wore veil or Al Niqab in society which reveals that Egyptian women are exposed to harassment regardless their clothes or appearance. Hence, this phenomenon becomes a main obstacle in front of women's safety and their participation in public life.*

*The increase of harassment rate in Egypt and Arab societies in general may be because of many reasons which are weak religious belief, weak moral motivation, neglecting*



*children by families in regard to proper upbringing, watching sexual stimulants on TVs and internet, absence of deterrent punishments, a negative society in many situations, spread of unemployment, lack of job opportunities along with high standard of living; the matter which makes it difficult for youth to get married which leads to increase of spinsterhood's ratio among both male and female youth.*

*Moreover, there are economic challenges faced by women since the numbers of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics reveal that rate of women unemployment is four times more than that rate among men because most economic sectors in the private sector do not employ women claiming that women's nonattendance rate is high due to their social duties. So the inevitable result is that ratio of working women in unofficial sector reached 46.7% i.e. high ratio of women work without any legal protection.*

### **Important Acquisitions and Achievements of Egyptian Women in Recent Years**

*Out of the principle of gender equality and the belief in women's effective role in society, the Egyptian women could access high positions recently supported by the president Abd El Fattah Al Sisi who is interested in women's role and exerts his best to be fair to women's rights and empowering them in all fields. The beginning was by issuing the constitution of 2014 which includes 21 fair articles to women, the most important of which is article no. 11 in which the state commits to achieving equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. This has yielded a lot of achievements among which are:*

- 1- Assigning the ambassador Fayza Abu El Naga as the first woman in the position of the president consultant of national security affairs.*



- 2- *Assigning the engineer Nadia Abdo in the position of Al Bihara governor as the first female governor throughout the history.*
- 3- *Women have six important ministerial positions with a ratio of 20% from the total number of ministers: Ghada Wali, the minister of social solidarity, Nabila Makram Ebied, the minister of migration, Sahar Nasr, the minister of investment and international cooperation, Hala Al Said, the minister of planning, Dr. Rania Al Mashat, the minister of tourism and Enas Abd El Daym, the minister of culture.*
- 4- *Assigning Lobna Helal the position of the first **deputy governor** of the Central Bank.*
- 5- *Assigning four female deputy governors.*
- 6- *The number of female judges increased to reach 35 female judges in addition to assigning 6 women as vice-chairpersons of State Lawsuits Authority for the first time in Egypt and assigning 6 women as marriage officials in Aswan, Al Sharkaya, Ismailia, Al Minia and Port Said. Also women succeeded in accessing 90 seats in the parliament in 2006 as women ratio increased to reach 15%.*
- 7- *On the other hand, the president is interested in female breadwinner by funding micro projects for women. The number of female beneficiaries from this fund has reached 1.680.000 beneficiaries till now.*
- 8- *Building social housing units for divorced women and widows.*
- 9- *In regard to laws, laws for women protection were enacted and approved such as increasing the penalty of FGM, sexual harassment and rape in addition to criminalizing disinheritance besides the current amendments being done regarding the draft law of personal status, draft law of protecting women against violence and draft law of combating girls marriage.*
- 10- *Females represent 57% of university students and also women represent 50% of teaching members in universities. Recently, the employment rate among*



*females reached 23% and for the first time reached 19.6% during 2019 and that the ratio of working women in the administrative body reached 44%.*

- 11- In some governorates the number of working women in the governorate body exceeds 50%.*
- 12- The number of women beneficiaries from financial and banking services reached 15% in front of 9% in 2015 in addition to the ratio of small projects dedicated for women which reached 64% while the ratio of women delayed in paying does not exceed 1%.*
- 13- 2 million women benefited from the program of Takaful wa Karama.*
- 14- Women ratio in parliament increased to reach 15% after it was 2% previously while women occupation of ministerial positions reached 25% instead of 6%.*

### **Conclusion & Recommendations**

*Undoubtedly all previously mentioned problems and challenges are still being faced by Egyptian women despite all achieved successes and fair legislations and which may affect the opportunity of apply these achievements in reality; the matter which calls experts and experienced people to continue in exerting efforts to stop such violence. So the Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue presents some recommendations which help in decreasing these forms of violence against women.*

### **Recommendations**

- It is necessary to raise the awareness of parents and girls regarding the risks of depriving girls from education.*
- Conducting periodical field following up through the offices and directorates of social affairs in the poorest and the most unaware villages and communities and*



*following up health and educational situation of girls in each family in addition to identifying their problems, knowing their reasons and help them in solving these problems.*

- *Establishing schools of different stages in each village.*
- *Codifying laws to criminalize depriving girls from education.*
- *It is necessary to organize religious seminars for both men and women to men to educate, raise their awareness and defining Sharia to them especially provisions related to inheritance allocation.*
- *Increasing campaigns and seminars to raise girls' awareness in regard to risks of early marriage and touristic marriage (getting married to Arabs).*
- *Aggravating criminal penalties regarding girls' marriage.*
- *Conducting periodical studies by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and its directorates to identify the focal points and areas where there are a lot of violations against women's rights and where violence is practiced against them. Awareness should be disseminated intensively by media and religious leaders in addition to disseminating good manners, morals and virtues among male and female youth, developing respect and religious instructions which urges to avoid all forms of this negative phenomenon and identifying the reasons behind these violations in such areas and help citizens in finding mechanisms and solutions for them.*
- *Launching developed and widened campaigns on social media and other websites to face all forms of violence phenomena in society.*
- *All institutions, departments, ministries and organizations should unify to play full educational and awareness role to warn citizens against harms and negative impacts of these phenomena.*



- *Al Azhar International Center for Electronic Fatwa (advisory opinion) should cooperate with different ministries (the ministry of education, the ministry of youth and sports, the ministry of culture, the ministry of higher education and scientific research) to hold lectures and seminars in schools, universities, youth centers and palaces of culture to raise awareness of youth regarding this phenomenon and how to face it.*
- *Enacting aggravating penalties to deter harassers.*
- *Monitoring the moral and value contents screened by social media and other websites.*