

FWF GENDER FACT SHEET - EGYPT

FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 116 of 189 countries (UNDP 2019)
- Gender Inequality Index: 116 of 189 countries (UNDP 2019)
- Global Gender Gap Index: 134 of 153 countries (WEF 2020)
- Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence: 25.6%
- Genital mutilation among girls and women (aged 15-49): 87.2%
- Child marriage: 17 %
- Child labour: 4.8%
- Adolescent birth rate: 53.8 per 1,000 births
- Infant mortality rate: 18.8 deaths per 100,000 live births
- Maternal mortality rate: 33 per deaths per 100,000 live births
- Mandatory paid maternal leave: 90 days
- Literacy Rate (adult, +15 years old): 71.2%
- Population with at least some secondary school education: female: 59.2% - male: 71.2%
- Share of seats in parliament held by women: 14.9%
- Labour force participation rate: female: 22.8% - male: 73.2%
- Total unemployment rate (female to male ratio): 2.96
- Sex ratio at birth (male to female births): 1.06
- Religions: Islam (90%), Coptic (8%), Christianity (1%), others (1%)
- Official language: Arabic

COUNTRY CONTEXT:

- Modern Egypt became independent in 1922. Nowadays, it has approximately 100 million inhabitants (February 2020).
- **Its population is predominantly Muslim; as a consequence, Islam religion and social norms control many aspects of social, private and public life and it is endorsed with law.**
- **In January 2011**, protests against the Mubarak government began, and they were directed towards Hosni Mubarak who ruled the country since October 1981. The former Egyptian politician and military commander was ousted after 18 days of demonstrations, known as **Egyptian revolution**.
- Egypt is known all over the world for its pyramids that made of this country a touristy spot.

Economy:

- The Egyptian economy has suffered from the political crisis and revolution of 2011; **economy started to recover from 2016, with growth of 5.3% in 2018.**
- **Agriculture contributes 11.2% of the GDP** and employs 25% of the population (World Bank 2018); it accounts for the 20% of total exports and foreign exchange earnings.
- The services sector represents 51.4% of the Egyptian GDP and employs 49% of the population. **Telecommunications and tourism sectors are the most developed.**
- The industrial sector (34 %) achieved 6.3% growth in 2018; **the textile and apparel industry account for 3% of GDP.**

Garment industry:

- **Egypt's textile industry has a rich and long history**, as it incorporates several steps of the supply chain including the cultivation of cotton, the production of yarns and fabrics– such as spinning, weaving, dyeing and knitting– as well as the manufacturing of a range of garments (ILO 2017).
- **Egypt has more than 2,500 apparel factories and employs 1.5 million workers, 50 % of which are women (ILO 2017)**. The apparel sector is the country's most important sector after agriculture with \$1.6 billion exports in 2018.
- **The U.S. is the main export destination** for the apparel industry because all the products manufactured within the Egyptian Qualified Industrial Zone are duty-free to the U.S; **Egypt also enjoys duty-free market access to the European Union**.
- **The growth of this sector is increasing rapidly because labour costs are low**, considering that **the minimum living wage is \$115**;
- Egypt is well-known for its cultivated cotton that is appreciated internationally for its excellent quality.
- Egypt is a major manufacturer for brands like Zara, Calvin Klein, Decathlon and Tommy Hilfiger.
- **According to a recent ILO survey, 71.3% of the 174 Egyptian factories were non-compliant with health, safety and hygiene standards, significantly behind the 1.172 factories in other African countries at 47.11%.**

Women in the society:

- Due to the patriarchal social tradition in Egypt, **women have a secondary role in economic, social, civic and political life**.
- According to Sharia, **Muslim women are not permitted to marry non-Muslim men**. Non-Muslim men who want to marry Muslim women must convert to Islam. Christian and Jewish women are not required to convert to marry Muslim men.
- If a married man is discovered to have left Islam, his marriage to a woman whose official religious is Muslim is dissolved.
- **A divorced mother is entitled to custody of her son until his is 10 and her daughter is 12, but if one parent is Muslim and the other is not, the Muslim parent has the legal custody**.
- **Women are generally left with the responsibility of childcare, household chores** and are supposed to care for family members.
- A study by the ILO argues that 34.2% of employed women work less than 35 hours per week, compared to 23.4% of employed men because they have more unpaid household chores compared to men, and therefore have less time for paid work.
- **Egyptian women do unpaid household work that is worth 30% of the country GDP**.
- Although the Egyptian labour law stresses the importance of gender equality **in the labour market**, job titles, job ranks and pay scales, this principle is not fully implemented, and **women are often discriminated and get bad jobs**.
- Even if men and women are equal under the constitution, **according to the ILO's 2015 Gender Pay Gap index, women's wages range between 4 and 36% less than men for the same positions and amount of time**.

Gender-based violence:

- According to article 11 of the 2014 Constitution **the State shall protect women against all forms of violence**.

- **In Egypt, the Criminal Code only partially criminalizes rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment** (these terms are legally defined), but there is **no law on domestic violence**.
- **Marital rape is not yet criminalized.**
- **Article 237 of the Penal Code provides that a man who surprises his wife committing adultery and who kills her and the person committing adultery with her benefits from a reduced penalty not to exceed 3 years prison.**
- **Abortion is prohibited**, but women who have been raped can have access to an abortion during the first months of the pregnancy.
- **The Nationality Law of 1975 was amended in 2004 to grant Egyptian women married to foreign men the right to pass their nationality to their children.** Nonetheless, Egyptian women cannot pass their nationality to their foreign-born spouses.
- **Sexual harassment is a widespread and serious problem in Egypt**, as the country ranks second in the world after Afghanistan in terms of this issue. **In 2014, sexual harassment was criminalized for the first time in modern Egypt.**
- According to a study conducted by UN Women in 2013, **99.3% of Egyptian women explained they had been sexually harassed, 91% of them did not feel safe on the streets.** In 2008, another study by the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights pointed out that **86% of the men interviewed admitted they had sexually harassed women.**
- In 2016, the Egyptian Parliament approved the amendment of **article 242 of the Penal Code that criminalizes the act of female genital mutilation** with a period of imprisonment of between 5 to 7 years.
- **Several women and girls said they were tortured or ill-treated by security forces on arrest, including being subjected to sexual violence.**
- According to Amnesty U.S.A., **"a deeply discriminatory divorce system also often leaves women trapped in abusive relationships.** While men may unilaterally divorce their wives without providing any justification, women must either forfeit their financial rights by accepting a "no-fault" khol' divorce or be prepared to fight a long and costly court battle to prove that their husband "harmed" them".

COUNTRY CONTEXT:

National legislation:

- **The Constitution specifies Islam as the state religion and the principles of sharia as the main source of legislation.** Nonetheless, it states that freedom of belief is absolute.
- The prime minister has the authority to stop the circulation of books that denigrate religions.
- In all public schools, Muslim students are required to take courses on principles of Islam, and Christian students to take courses on principles of Christianity in all grades; those who are neither Muslims neither Christians must choose one of the courses.
- The penal code criminalizes discrimination based on religion.
- **Polygamy is permitted by the Personal Status Law for Muslims.**
- **In cases where one spouse is Muslim and the other a member of a different religion, sharia law will be applied.**
- **Children from any unrecognized marriage are considered illegitimate.**
- **The law generally follows sharia in matters of inheritance.** In 2017, however, a judicial court ruled that sharia should not be applied to non-Muslims because the constitution

states that of the Christians and Jewish communities can apply their laws with regard to personal status matters.

- **The Labour Code Law No.12 of 2003 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in payment of wages.** Domestic workers are excluded from the Code.
- According to national decrees, **women are not allowed to do some works, including construction and mining, some types of night work, and roles deemed morally inappropriate.**
- Women are entitled to **90 days of paid maternity leave in the private sector and 120 days for workers in the public sector. Women cannot be dismissed because of being pregnant.** Employers with 100 or more women in a workplace must provide childcare facilities.
- **The right to strike is enshrined in the Constitution,** but according to Amnesty International it happens that workers are arrested simply for taking part in a strike or a peaceful protest. Some are also held in pre-trial detention for prolonged periods or subject to restrictive probation measures.

International legislation:

- **Egypt ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981** and maintains reservations to Article 2 (policy measures), Article 16 (equality in marriage and family life), and Article 29(2) (administration of the convention and arbitration of disputes). Egypt withdrew its reservation to Article 9(2) in 2004.
- **Egypt signed the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1980.**

SOURCES:

UN Human Development Index: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>;

Global Gender Gap Report (WEF 2020): http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf;

UN Report Egypt: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/EGY>;

ILO in Egypt: https://www.ilo.org/africa/media-centre/pr/WCMS_565938/lang--en/index.htm;

UN Women Egypt: <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/egypt>;

Amnesty U.S.A.: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/circles-of-hell-domestic-public-and-state-violence-against-women-in-egypt/>;