

Egyptians' Perceptions regarding women rights

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WOMEN'S STRATEGY



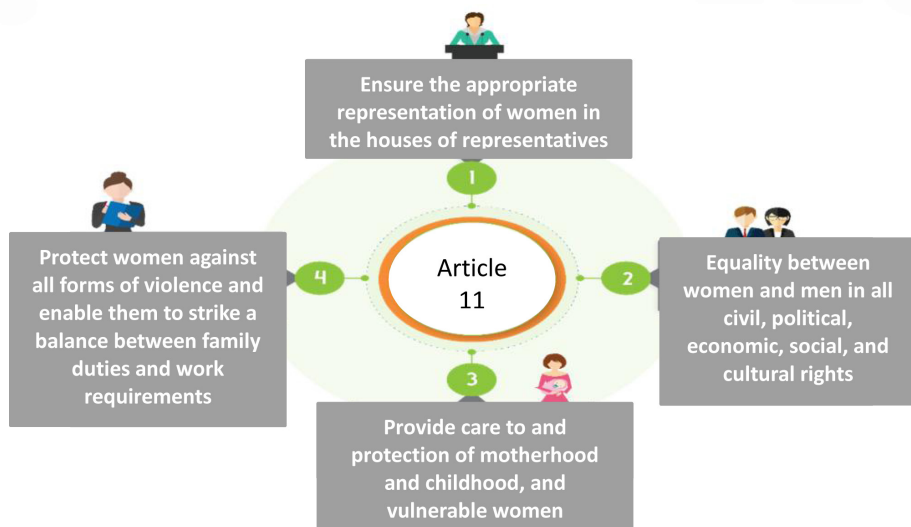
I- Introduction

Different academic studies showed that any Human Development paradigm should include women to maximize Human Development capacity and to preserve women's equal rights with men¹.

Egypt's Constitution of 2014 addresses women's issues in a more comprehensive way than previously, and for the first time the Preamble uses gender-sensitive wording. The 2014 Constitution includes more than 20 articles addressing the rights of women so as to ensure equal opportunities and prevent discrimination, protection against all forms of violence, and to ensure women's empowerment and commitment to care at various stages of their lives. Article 11 insured women's economic, political and social rights and assured the equity between women and men. Egypt National Strategy for Women Empowerment highlighted the importance of undertaking these rights and translated that into quantitative targets to be reached by 2030.

One hundred years after the first participation for women in public life, Egypt indicators of gender and women empowerment shows a great improvement in women's practice for their economic rights and the results of this practice.

¹ Reid, J., & Shams, T. (2013). Gender and Multigenerational Global Human Development. *Sociology Compass*, 7(8), 612-629. doi: 10.1111/soc4.12060.



The latest update of the Egypt National Observatory for Women shows some improvements over the last 5 years in women's economic participation and employment, women's financial inclusion, and political participation. However, this participation is still limited and achieving more improvements needs a social consensus about women rights and the importance of supporting women to have access and practice these rights.

This paper aims at exploring the perceptions of Egyptians regarding women economic rights. This includes rights to work, rights to establish private enterprises, rights to make decisions regarding using her income, rights to have her own bank accounts and inheritance rights.



II- Methodology

Baseera conducted a survey on Egyptians' Perceptions regarding women rights during the period from October 24th to October 29th, 2018. The data were collected from a random sample of 1,515 respondents aged 18+. Respondents were accessed through their landlines and mobile phones. The data were weighted to represent population distribution by region, gender, and education level. All estimates in this paper are subject to a less than 3%- margin of error.

III- Main Results

In general, around half the Egyptians believe that Egyptian women have access and practice their rights in Egypt while 18% see that Egyptian women have access to some rights and 31% see that Egyptian women don't have access to their rights. In the following sections, the respondents have been asked about their perceptions on women access to certain rights. The following sections present the respondents' opinions and perceptions regarding women access to certain rights.

III-1 Perceptions on women's right to work

Around 59% of Egyptians see that women have the right to work while 32% see that they don't have the right to work and 9% couldn't decide. The percentage of those who see that women have the right to work decrease from 62% among males to 55% among females. The percentage of those who see that women don't have the right to work didn't differ between males and females while those who couldn't decide



increased from 7% among males to 12% among females. The percentage of those who believe that women have the right to work decrease from 62% among youths less than 30 years to 55% among those who aged 50+.

Despite the high percentage of those who believe that women have the right to work, 37% of those who see that women have the right to work mentioned that women shouldn't work if they have children need them and 12% said that they shouldn't work if they don't need money. These results show that work-home conflict still exists.

Figure (1): Perceptions on women's right to work



When asked if an unmarried female is working and her father wants her to leave the work and she refused, what her father should do, 36% of respondents said that her father must allow her to work, 36% said that her father must oblige her to leave work, 18% suggested other solutions



including to discuss the matter with her until they reach a consensus or to kick her out the house. The remaining percentage couldn't decide.

When the question was repeated but asking about a married woman who is working and her husband wants her to leave the work and she refused, what her husband should do, only 22% of respondents said that her husband must allow her to work, 29% said that her husband must oblige her to leave work, 14% said he must divorce her and 25% suggested other solutions.

Only 7% of Egyptians accept that the wife may work and her husband take care of the house and the children if she is offered a job with a higher salary than her husband's salary.

On the other hand, 51% of Egyptians see that women have the right to refuse to work if they don't want to work even if her family needs her to work. This percentage decrease from 60% among males to 41% among females.

The majority of Egyptians (88%) believe that women has the right to choose their work place but her husband should accept first, while 5% believe that women don't have the right to choose he work place and 6% believe women have that right even if their husbands didn't accept.

III-2 Perceptions on women right to decide how to spend her income

Two-thirds of the Egyptians believe that wives have the right to decide how to spend their income and 24% believe that wives and husbands should participate in this decision, while 11% believe that



the husbands should decide how to spend the wives' income. The percentage of those who believe that wives have the right to decide how to spend their income increases from 60% among males to 68% among females and increases from 58% among those with less than intermediate education to 70% among those who have university or higher education. Moreover, 23% of the Egyptians believe that wives should decide how to spend husbands' income and 37% believe wives and husbands should decide together how to spend husbands' income.

Most of Egyptians (79%) see that wives should tell their husbands about all sources of their incomes. This percentage decreases from 89% among males to 69% among females.

Respondents were asked whether the wives have the right to save all or part of their salaries even if this will negatively affect HH standard of living. Only 8% of Egyptians accept that wives save all their salaries or use them for their needs and slightly more than one third accept that wives save part of their income or use it for their needs while 51% refuses that wives save any part of their salaries if this will negatively affect HH standard of living. The percentage of those who refuse increases from 49% among males to 53% among females.

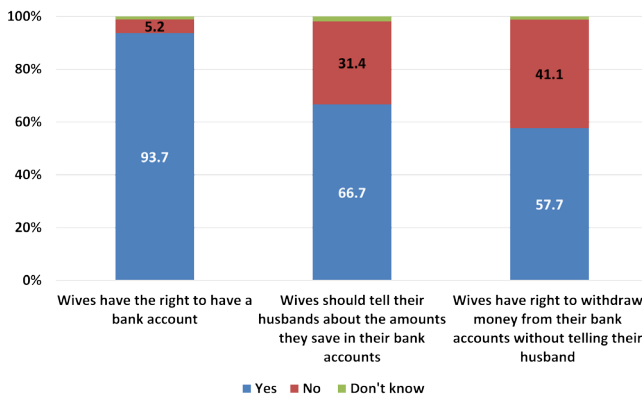
III-3 Perceptions on women financial inclusion

The majority of Egyptians (94%) think that women have the right to have a bank account. The percentage didn't differ between males and females. However, two thirds of the respondents believe that wives should tell their husbands about the amounts they have in their bank



accounts. This percentage decreased from 74% among males to 60% among females. It also decreased with the increase of the education level from 74% among those who have less than intermediate education to 52% among those who have university or higher education. Egyptians seemed to be less conservative about wives' right to withdraw money from their bank accounts without telling their husband as 58% accepts that and 41% refuses that. The percentage of those who accept is higher among females than among males (63% vs. 53% respectively).

Figure (2): Perceptions on women's financial inclusion



III-4 Perceptions on women right to get her inheritance

Almost all the Egyptians (97%) believe that women have the right to get their inheritance as mentioned in the law. However, 19% think that if women inherited agriculture land, they must leave the land to their families and accept financial compensation, 76% believe that women should get their inherited agriculture land and 5% couldn't



decide. The percentage of those who think that women should leave the land to their families and accept financial compensation does not differ between males and females while it increases from 12% in lower upper Egypt to 24% in urban governorates and 25% in upper Egypt.

III-5 Marriage financial obligations

A set of hypothetical questions were asked to the respondents to measure their values regarding marriage financial obligations such as dowry, jewelry, list of furniture (Qayma)², alimony and after divorce financial support (spousal support). They were asked if they have a daughter, would they accept to marry their daughters without dowry, jewelry, list of furniture, and alimony and whether they accept that their daughters pass up their spousal support (Nafaqa) if they got divorced.

Around half the Egyptians accepted that their daughters marry without dowry. This percentage is almost the same among males and females while it increases from 35% among those with less than intermediate education to 65% among those with university education. The same results were observed when asked about jewelry.

On the other hand, only 16% accepted to marry their daughter without the list of furniture and 17% accepted to marry their daughters without alimony. Around 26% accepted that their daughters pass up their spousal support if they got divorced.

² Qayma or list of furniture is a document in which the family right all the furniture and electrical devices that the wife or her family bought and the groom signs it as a trust receipt. If the husband disposes of one of the contents of the list, the wife can sue him.



These results indicate that Egyptians tend to facilitate the marriage and decrease the marriage requirements but on the other hand they want to guarantee their daughters to live with dignity if they got divorced as mentioned by the respondents.

IV- Policy implications and recommendations

A significant percentage of women see that work is not one of women's rights. Many of the respondents who acknowledge woman's right to work, do so when she needs the money, and without compromising her role as mother and housewife. Surprisingly, women are more conservative than men regarding women work. These results suggest that a major change in Egyptians' values is needed not only to assure that work is one of the women's rights but also to bring it as one of the country priorities to achieve economic development. This could be achieved through the following: The increase of the percentage of those who trust women capabilities to act as political leaders between 2014 and 2018 may be due the increase in women in leadership positions between 2015 and 2018. This suggests that appointing women in these positions gives women the opportunity to prove their capabilities. These results suggest the following:

- Highlight the economic gains of women's participation in the labor force and the economic activity.
- Promote equal and shared parenting. Media, education and religious leaders could play an essential role in changing these values.



Increasing women financial inclusion is one of the main objectives of Egypt. It is clear that Egyptians support women financial inclusion but they put restrictions on women's banking transactions. Women requests more freedom than men allow in this regard. Women financial inclusion also means their financial freedom to save and withdraw their money independently of their husbands. This needs to increase the knowledge of women about the measures that are taken by banks to protect the confidentiality of their customers' accounts. To tackle this issue, the following could be adopted:

- Banks to increase and simplify their messages to the potential clients, inform the public about accounts confidentiality and protection measures and provide more products that are gender-sensitive.
- Awareness campaigns for men and women to promote for the financial rights, and the financial freedom of women.

Despite the positive values reported by the respondents regarding allowing women to take over their inherited agriculture land, the courts data and the reported cases of not allowing women to get their inherited land especially in upper Egypt tells us that the positive values are not what control families decisions regarding giving women their inherited lands. Afraid of the society disrespect to the families that give women their inherited lands may be one of the factors that stands against improving the situation. More qualitative research is needed to provide deeper understanding for this conflict.