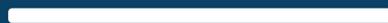


“I’m the Generation of Equality: Realizing Women’s Rights”

International Women’s Day 2020



**Gender gap
in
journalism work
environment**



Gender Equality Program

Preparation

Mayada Mujahid
Gender Equality Program officer at the observatory

Supervision and editing

Mohamed Abdelrahman
Administrative of the Research and Studies Unit

Revision

Islam Mohammed

Translate

Nourhan Tharwat

Design

Ibrahim Saqr

Introduction

Women have been working in the journalistic profession in Egypt since the late nineteenth century, and today their presence appears strongly on the field of journalistic work, competing effectively with their male counterparts, covering events, demonstrations and clashes that they do not fear and do not place their gender as an obstacle to proving themselves. Perhaps the killing of journalist Mayada Ashraf While covering violent events that took place in Ain Shams, east of Cairo, in 2014, the biggest evidence for women storming areas that were previously assumed to be suitable only for men, However, there are still some observations that make us wonder whether female journalists are looked at based on their work and competence or other basis are taken into consideration. Women are usually exploited in workplace as a cheap labor bower, that helps capital accumulation of employers, in addition to the prevailing custom in Egyptian society that considers the man as the main breadwinner of the family and therefore is distinguished by a higher wage than females who work in the same job and perform the same tasks, so we needed to ask whether female journalists are treated with a discriminatory way based on their gender when it comes to wages, despite the requirements of the job like confrontation, boldness, and courage?

In addition to another problem regarding their presence in leadership positions, despite the large number of female journalists in Egypt, which represents about a third of the syndicate, female journalists are absent from leadership roles and editorial leadership in a manner which doesn't represent their number in the work field, and therefore this calls attention to the reason for this phenomenon and does this happen because of a discrimination or other reasons?

In addition to the syndicate representation of women who are permanently absent from the Syndicate Council, no woman won a seat in the Syndicate of Journalists, therefore all these problems were a motive for research on the women situation in the Egyptian press regarding the economic situation, career advancement, and syndicate representation, in order to know if there is economical discrimination against

female journalists due their gender, such as inequality in wages with their male colleagues who occupy the same employment positions, career advancement, and whether female journalists are ignored out of arbitrariness when it comes to job promotions because of their gender, in addition to social empowerment with regard to syndicate representation, and does the syndicate truly represent them and their needs? To find out about these aspects, this report is divided into the following:

- **First: gender discrimination in wages.**
- **Second: Discrimination in career advancement on the basis of gender.**
- **Third: Women journalists and their syndicate representation.**



First

gender discrimination in wages.

Egyptian Labor Code (No. 12 of 2003), prohibits discrimination in wages. As its 35th article states: Discrimination in wages because of the sex, origin, language, religion or creed shall be prohibited.(1)

However, The report issued by the World Economic Forum in 2017 indicates that Egypt ranks 134 out of 144 countries that experience a wage gap between men and women, Although the gender wage gap means the difference in wages average for men and women working full or part time, it refers to the gender wage gap in different roles and positions they occupy, and therefore it's different from the idea of equal pay for the same job, but it refers to the declining economic situation of Egyptian women, and this is confirmed by the Global Gender Gap Index for 2018, where this indicator shows that Egyptian women get paid 32% less than men, this difference in wages between genders affects not only the women's professional lives, but also their lives after retirement, where the gender pension gap reaches 36.6%.

The economic empowerment of women helps the economic improvement of society as a whole. In spite of what the National Strategy for Empowering Egyptian Women 2030 indicated to the progress achieved by Egyptian women in the field of educational achievement, as they achieved relatively equal percentage with males, they even exceeded them in some educational stages, but there is a great deal of inequality between male and female in indicators of participation in Economic activity, and a gap in the average wages women earn compared to men due to gender discrimination.

There are multiple factors that may cause this gender wage gap such as individual personal characteristics "in terms of age, type and level of education, marital status, race, religion, etc.," or specifications of the job itself "in terms of contract type or working hours, or due to the concentration of female labor power in sectors and jobs that are characterized by low wage," or due employee gender and the consequent discrimination, for example, we find in a country like Britain, which despite the fact that the wage gap between the genders is less than Egypt, where it reached 9.1 % In 2017, however, the BBC has been accused of wage discrimination against its workers, and has been investigated by the British Commission for Equality and Human Rights after the Foundation published a list of its highest-paid broadcasters, in which the large gap between men and women with the highest wages in favor of men appeared.

We tried in our series of reports on conditions of female journalists in the work environment to focus on the forms of discrimination experienced by them in the press work field in Egypt, including discrimination on wages as the most important form suffered by Egyptian working women, so female journalists were asked about whether they are receiving less than their male counterparts who have the same tasks and on the same employment level, to understand whether the Egyptian press institutions practice this discrimination against their female workers or not?

This type of discrimination has emerged as the most challenging and difficult form of discrimination against female journalists, due to several reasons:

1. Female journalists are unable to know the salary of their male colleagues to confirm whether or not they are discriminated against. There is no available information about salaries that employees in press institutions receive:

One of the participants in the report says:

In general, I can't say that people who have my same position or with the same experience have higher wages or not, so I have no clear idea, but sometimes the male journalist is seen as more dedicated and gives more time, so he is preferred for other reasons, And this other thing is why his wage is higher.

Another one says: "there are no standards in matter of wages in most Egyptian institutions, even if someone in my same employment level and takes a higher salary. it will not be accurately or publicly announced, because no one will tell his salary, but it is very possible that you find someone who takes a higher salary. it depends on how close he is to the manager, especially when I work in a place with a manager who thinks that women's work is a shame, and he doesn't recognize their work at all, this may be an exception, I'm not sure, I worked with him for a long time and I know the way he thinks, he also thinks that if I'm married, and my husband pay for my needs, and if a second person id getting married, and there is an opportunity for a raise, he will take it instead of you, even if you make more effort, for him, it is not according to effort or competence, it is according to his point of view.

The conditions of the journalistic career in Egypt and the unfair and low wages for both genders, and therefore the difference in wages does not appear clearly, as a female journalist put it:

The career is known to be financially and economically poor, but I think that at my age there are slight differences between males and females in terms of wages, but what I notice is that whenever a female journalist rises in terms of career progression, there is a waiver of one of her financial rights, that is, so the male head of department has a higher wage than female one, and in cases of requesting an increase in salary and negotiating it, the response to the male is faster than responding to the female.

Another one says:

I have been working as a journalist for almost 9 years, and regarding to wages issue, not only me but many colleagues work for very long time at the beginning of their journalistic career without any payment in return, and most of the press institutions in Egypt do not give alternative financial compensation in many cases, however, If we talk about the wages of journalists like us or young ones who work in regular positions, aside of department heads, chief of editors, etc., they are very low, also some institutions face financial problems and crises, you can receive your monthly payment divided on 5 or 6 months.

There are no specific standards for salary in press institutions in Egypt as it is left as an employer estimation decision, in which he decides what he thinks is suitable, because of that a female journalist does not know how her work gets evaluated, and one of them complains, saying:

I started as a trainee for two years and did not hold a contract, I was required to achieve 90 monthly topics for 1080 pounds, and of course this was very difficult to achieve, therefore my manager was the one who decides to pay me the full salary or not.

Another says



I had a contract, but it did not have a copy of. in my work relation with the institution, I had a fixed monthly salary sometimes they add my 10% annual increase and sometimes not, there is no fixed agreement.



One of the journalists said:



There was discrimination by personal favoritism that had no specific standards for evaluating work and efforts of journalists.



One of them denounces the way the press institutions deal with the wages of female journalists and says:



Discrimination in wage can be due to many other reasons, and there are no standards in the press institution that determines why you or anyone take a certain salary, that means that you do not get evaluated depending on tasks or competence, the minimum wage in the country is 1500, so when you get employed you will take the minimum wage, and after deducting 10% of the social insurance you'll get 1350 pounds, this one is standard, but the increase after has no clear basis to calculate it upon, people may work for four or five years with no raise, even though the Labor Code says that each year is imposed by a 10% increase, but this is not what happens in press institutions specifically, they always justify this with lack of profits or its weakness, at the same time, new people get hired, get twice as much as your salary, and do much less than what we do and when you ask for a raise the respond with: we don't have enough resources! seriously!



Discrimination for sexual benefit, and this type of discrimination we explained earlier in the paper of sexual harassment of female journalists in workplace, as it is harassment based on exchange, in which the female employee falls under pressure to either provide sexual service directly or indirectly to obtain her employer satisfaction and if she refuses to do so she will be punished professionally in one way or another, and although this discrimination also may harm other males, as the worker feels that no matter how much effort and time they give, his co-worker remains in an advanced position as she pleases their employer, but it is also a discrimination made by males over their female subordinates whom may be harmed or lose their entire career if they refuse.

For example, when a female journalist was asked whether she was subjected to wage discrimination because of her gender, she replied



I do not see any discrimination based on gender, on contrary there are female journalists have more rights than men, meaning that I can favor a girl for other benefits.



Another says about how she was subjected to discrimination and harassment because of her gender:



There was an editor-in-chief who wanted to marry me with a customary contract and he kept nagging me to do it, and he made it clear that he would improve my job position with a great salary in return for our marriage or he ends my work as I work for him as a freelancer and that he don't like my ideas or work, he was that clear "



Another type of discrimination occurs for other non-professional reasons that are not related to gender, a female journalist says about this:

“ Discrimination in wages is not related to gender, it's related totally to kissing asses. it doesn't matter if you are a woman or a man

expresses the same idea as she says:

“ I think that discrimination has nothing to do with gender, it's related to mediation, favoritism and social circle, I mean it can be a woman but her salary is higher than me because she is related to someone important to the manager.

Consequently, there was no clear pattern for journalist's institutions in dealing with female journalists regarding their wages, and it was difficult for female journalists to determine whether they were actually discriminated against based on their gender or not? Despite this, a number of female journalists were able to confirm the occurrence of this type of discrimination against them as follows:

“ Salaries were low for everyone, but I can say that there was a difference in wages and gender had a role in this distinction.

“ There is a point that will never be told, but it is always obvious that the man who has kids or married will be favored as he has a family so he needs salary raise more than you do, but they never say that loud.

“ There has been such a distinction of wages, which was not direct, but we discovered it in some way, and we objected and no one listened, the response was that their experiences are greater or they went out to fieldwork and you didn't, and they were always ready, every time they had a reasonable justification that is away from gender, so you can't really find anything to prove discrimination, even if their justifications are not real, We had a period during which we had the most difficult coverage and the demonstrations because there was an opinion that males were more likely to be arrested than girls, so they assigned us these tasks, we had the most difficult tasks and at the same time we took fewer salaries, and men worked for more than one place, which was appreciated because they have families and responsibilities, and they had premonitions when it comes to working hours, and we were never allowed to be late for a minute, the priority is for men even in entering the syndicate or official buildings.

“ There was discrimination against me because I was a girl, and there was a person who had a salary more than mine, although I am more experienced and talented and I was paid less than him despite having a higher position. when asked they told me that he provides a family and you're not, I didn't agree to this and refused to accept it, I fought against until I took what I deserve

“ As for the salary, there was discrimination between me and my colleague on the basis that he was a man, he was getting over a thousand pounds, and I was once paid 400 pounds. I compared our work monthly to understand this gap, I found that I made a better work, I managed to get officials statements, however, he was ranked higher than me, and when I complained about this, I was told to leave him alone and not to think about him, and focus on my work, and I did not understand how they evaluate us!

Female journalists in governorates outside the capital are discriminated against because they work in governorates, so the salary is much lower than that received by capital journalists, in addition to the discrimination that may occur due to their gender:

“ I worked about 4 years in a newspaper, then they told us that they have to reduce the salaries, so I said there is no problem, I can take care until I get registered in the syndicate so I will be insured, but then the head of the department called me and said you know the issue of the financial crisis, and that the administration said they will not need two reporters in one governorate, he told me that I'm smart and passionate, but also a girl and that I will not be able to cover certain needs, and that my colleague is a man and has a responsibility, and that was a shock to me. I endured years of hard work for little money to be able at the end to enter the syndicate, I took shit with them and I had many exclusives, governorates' reporters are treated like slaves with no specific working hours, any event that takes place they must have at the same time. regardless of anything, I must cover the news despite of circumstances, the head of department called me at 1:30 am, there was an explosion, and he asked me to cover it, and I woke up and went to cover the story.

”



Second

Discrimination in career advancement on the basis of gender.



Career promotion is one of the most important measures through which the position of women in the workplace can be clearly defined. For example, the 2018 World Economic Forum report in the section on the gender pay gap indicates that a number of Arab countries, including Egypt, are in a late position where women hold managerial and leadership positions, the gender gap in relation to that is more than 90% in favor of men, and for the press field according to the Central Agency for Mobilization and Statistics, in 2018, the total holders of the position of "chief editors" of women reached about 18%. For national newspapers, this is not appropriate for representation Natural percentage of women in society on the one hand, and on the other hand, this boom has already been seen by Egyptian journalists since 2017, when Shaima Abdul Elah had the post of chief editor of the newspaper "Broujrah Egibsaan", to become the first female journalist to hold the chief editor position in a national newspaper in Egypt.

Other women's problems arise on the surface, although the percentage of female journalists enrolled in the syndicate's workforce represents about 32%, this percentage certainly does not reflect the women's journalistic group. as there is a huge number of unregistered female journalists in Egypt, despite that we can't calculate all female journalists number in total, but it became clear from the study sample that a large number of journalists work without joining the syndicate or even without an employment contract.

They were also asked about whether they could estimate the majority in their workplace, whether they were females or males, so most of the answers were that the number was largely close and other answers were saying that females are the majority, and although this question cannot accurately determine the number of females working in the press in Egypt or even guess if they are the majority or not, this was just a prologue to ask about career advancement and how many women are in leadership positions in the places where they work, trying to compare their actual presence in the profession with their presence in leadership positions, has made this paradox clear, although the answers in most of them were referring to the presence of females in profession is similarly strong or even stronger than men, but the answers regarding the presence in leadership positions came in favor of men, except for women's press organizations that mainly target the female audience. A female journalist says about the status of the institution she works in:

The number of male and female journalists was almost the same, but if you ask who holds more department head positions you will find that they were men, they never tell it frankly, but the main idea behind this that he is a man and they can recall him at any time, and in the end, the press is a reflection of the society in which you live in all its various classes and its various mentalities, including traditional and backward way of thinking, It was not possible that they say it clearly to me. that they prefer males to females, but it was generally and often as a joke: we do not want girls in the newspaper again, the profession doesn't need women as they can't do this job. but we can get the man anytime, the act like it's a joke, but you still know that they really believe that, and the truth is, regardless of the idea of a man or woman, this is one of the worst requirements in the press, so they deal with the journalist as if he don't have a life or family, and he supposed to be ready and available for 24 hours when we bring up that there are work shifts, the told us: you are not regular employees, your phone shouldn't be turned off, we need to be able to reach you anytime, but when it comes to managerial stuff the will treat you as an employee, so you should respect the working hours, and times of arrival and leave, and you're not allowed to be late without previous permission, but if I have work after working hours I must do it, what double standards!

Another journalist believes that she was discriminated against because of her gender.

My direct manager was in my batch, and is not better than me in any way, same age, everything is the same, press experience, but when they needed to managing editor, they choose him because he is a man and the manager loves him, so he became the managing editor, higher than me as an editor, it was the editor-in-chief point of view that the man who will deal better with the position requirements, he can come down at any time, but the girl will eventually be rolled by her home.

Another journalist tells us about the way her organization deals with her:

There are no promotions for females in general, they are not present in the decision-making circles within the institution, most of the promotions are directed to males. And all the time they say that women don't have the time, as she has a husband and kids and home responsibilities.

A number of female journalists had the opinion that they had no opportunities for advancement in the future for reasons related to their appearance and their communication style:

I thought that if I continued, I would still have no opportunity in promotion, the institution is not professional, and the evaluation not according to competence, and if you wear hijab or not. Do you know how to manage your relations with people or not?

Another says:

Opportunities for promotion have more dimensions in the profession of journalism than gender. For example, if you are a beautiful girl, believe me, I will promote you, I had an offer this way: let's get together and I will take care of you. and this was the reason I left for.



Third

Female journalists and their Syndicate representation



The representation of female journalists on the syndicate of journalists from the first election in 1953 until this day is a very weak representation that is not commensurate with the number of female members.

For the total of 31 councils, the position of the president of the journalists' syndicate has not been occupied by a woman, and the recent elections of the journalists' syndicate were very disappointing. Despite the fact that women journalists represent about 32% of the general assembly, and despite the clear presence of women as voters, the number of 11 women journalists as candidates for membership of the Syndicate Council represented 18% of the total candidates, but the results were so disappointing, women representation in the Council was zero, and that makes us look back to the Council in 1975 as the first syndicate board included three female journalists They Fatima Said and Amina Shafiq and Bahirh Mukhtar, and how we are currently in the 2019 Women's are not represented at all in the Council!

And when female union journalists were asked about whether the union provided them with the necessary protection or not, most of the answers were in the context of the benefit of syndicate membership being the allowance and the health insurance project. As for the profession itself, especially their gender situations, they see that the syndicate is largely neglecting its role in this. In particular, a female journalist says:

The current syndicate law does not give the syndicate the authority to represent the journalist interest in any conflict with his employer except if has has a work contract, and if the institution, for example, has a problem, the syndicate punishes with stopping the journalists registration, so the journalists are the ones who are been punished her not the institution!

Another one expresses her frustration, saying:

I am not interested in voting in the syndicate elections. The elections are not a necessary, all of the old board and the new are the same, they do not know what to do, frankly, its all about the housing services, allowances, and health insurance. The needs that are present in any regular social unions, not the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate, I mean, it is completely disappointed.

And another says:

Sometimes I don't vote, and I have a problem with the candidates and the president of syndicate in particular, he is acting as if he bought the votes of the journalists. He does not have a program. You buy votes through the allowance. The journalists elect the allowance.'

And another journalist says:

The union council has no power over press sites and institutions, whether they are men or women. The elections for me are purely administrative, in an entity that wants a new council to handle things, no matter who's in the council, things will work the same way.'

When asked about their opinion about the poor representation of women in syndicate councils, their opinions differed on the reasons for this, some of them believed that the reason was about the female candidates and their unattractive programs, while others had the opinion that the reason lies in the election itself and how there are other points that must be seen away from Gender, and a number of them say:

When I saw the programs of female candidates, they were always very shallow, unfortunately does not indicate any understanding of needs of male or female journalists, and they were separated from reality and literally their presence was honorary, and a sense that they themselves gave a feeling that they did not really compete.'

To be able to apply to the syndicate elections, you must be known among journalists, and this requires that you have reached high positions within the newspaper, as you are an editor or editor-in-chief, and of course this is not easy for women.'

I see that having women in the assembly is the least representation of female journalists and not being there is so bad. and I have a problem with the majority of the female candidates, that not all of them actually have a program, awareness or a vision, I mean, they are more interested in the show, and I am more interested in programs and it upsets me. in addition to the fact that the syndicate is related to how much relations you have and who's your coterie, that's what determines who will win and who will not.

women in the syndicate can't have their right, because the elections relay on two pillars, money and relations, and women don't have both''

Joining the Syndicate is the only hope for female journalists, which makes them agree on bad and inhuman working conditions in press institutions. Waving the Syndicate membership paper, press corporations practice enslavement on journalists in general and female journalists in particular and procrastination of promises to register them the syndicate lead female journalists to accept work without a contractual relationship and thus be subject to expulsion or ill-treatment And discrimination, in addition to this disproportionate representation in the syndicate Council increases the opportunities for incidents of violence and discrimination against female journalists in general, and contributes to the lack of female journalists in advanced positions within the press institutions.



Conclusion and recommendations

Egyptian female journalists still suffer from injustice regarding their work conditions, despite their strong presence in journalistic institutions, but through field research with a number of female journalists, it was found that a large number of them are not equal in payment with their male counterparts who carry out the same tasks. And on the same career level, and although this distinction is contrary to what the Egyptian constitution stipulates in prohibiting discrimination, and the labor code which prohibits discrimination on pay based on the gender of the employee, but this type of discrimination appears indirectly or in an unspoken manner, and press institutions do not follow a single pattern in dealing with its employees as it lacks transparency through which it can be asserted that this discriminatory behavior targets women because of their gender or not, as this discrimination also appears with regard to career advancement for female journalists whose percentage of presence in leadership and management positions does not match their number in press institutions, and because often the process of advancement is left in the hand of the editor-in-chief is a decision that follows his personal vision and preferences.

There is no specific standard against which the promotion process is measured, and therefore it becomes dependent on how the one who issues it thinks, which may be a person with discriminatory ideas, in addition to the Journalists Syndicate, which lacks female representation in its council, despite the fact that women represent about a third of the union, and how this contributes to deepening the discrimination witnessed by women in journalistic institutions, and the lack of justice in opportunities and protection between female and male journalists, all of which are problematic and discriminatory images. Female journalists require protection measures, a review of the mechanisms that regulate the work of the press in Egypt, and the creation of other mechanisms that are more representative of their needs and more effective to appeal to in the event of any form of discrimination against them. Consciously, we suggest the following from the recommendations:

First. For the Egyptian legislator:

Enact legal legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment or career advancement on the basis of gender.

Second. For press organizations:

- **Adopting clear and announced criteria for career advancement within the press organization.**
- **Transparency and announcement of wages for all employees within the organization, in addition to announcing the criteria on which the wages are increased.**

Third. For the Journalists Syndicate:

- **Create a committee within the Syndicate to look into gender issues.**
- **Inclusion of the quota system in the Press Syndicate elections to ensure a minimum level of Syndicate representation for women.**

"Gender Equality' program

This program seeks to empower Egyptian women journalists and media workers and raise their awareness to obtain their full rights and support them to reach decision-making positions within press and media institutions. The program also aims to educate media and media institutions on how to provide a safe and gender-sensitive work environment, and finally pressure to issue laws and legislation And policies to protect women within the press and media institutions

To achieve these goals, the program works on a set of activities, namely:

- 1 Contributing to the development of knowledge production on the conditions of women in the press and media
- 2 Monitoring and documenting violations of female and male journalists, and issuing a quarterly report on these violations
- 3 Work on submitting legal proposals to the bodies concerned with organizing journalistic and media work in Egypt and the legislative authority in order to create a safer and more stable environment for female journalists and media workers.
- 4: Establishing a set of trainings and workshops for female journalists and media workers to familiarize them with their legal, economic and social rights, and introduce them to technical and technical support mechanisms and digital safety tools and skills.
- 5 Providing psychological and legal support for female journalists and media workers through a group of psychologists and lawyers present in the observatory.