

Treating the Causes of Gender Salary Gap in the Moroccan Job Market

Theme(s):

- Economy

Type of Program:

- Raising Awareness (Research)

Country/Region:

- Morocco

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Initiative overview: The initiative is based on determining gender salary discrimination in Morocco during the last twenty years by analysing two national surveys.

Discriminatory social practices targeted: In spite of the laws that codify gender equality, women's participation in the economic and political arenas is still limited. This is due to the domination of paternalism and the negative attitude towards women's capacity for making effective contributions in such areas, resulting in discriminatory employment practices.

Socio-cultural context: The general view of women is limited to their roles as wives and guardians of social values, which most Moroccans regard as eternal. Women are required to transmit such values through child rearing. Educational curricula and general discourse reinforce such views; in addition, there has been an emergence of strict religious movements endeavouring to instill in society an ideology based on women's inferiority in the private and public spheres.

Discrimination also has negatively impacted on women's contribution to the national economy. In the 1980s the economic crisis had a negative influence on women. Because of discrimination, some countries took measures to expel women from the job market by promoting early retirement.

The media discourse, capitalising on women's traditional role in preserving the social fabric, grew. However, the 1990s brought about new economic changes, making women's work a necessity to increase family income and prosperity. In 2000 Moroccan women's participation in the job market reached 44%, one of the highest rates in the Arab world, whereas unemployment among women reached 22%. The last figure shows that women are increasingly present in the job market and female job seekers hope to be hired under the same conditions, specifications and requirements as for men.

National laws and policies: The Moroccan constitution dictates gender equality in all fields. Women have succeeded in obtaining the right to vote, occupying high political positions and expressing opinions. Although support for women's leading roles was part of political propaganda, the actions of the civil society over the last few years generated important results in terms of more women participating in parliaments and political parties. However, women's participation in local councils remains limited.

Since independence, Moroccan women's conditions and roles have witnessed significant changes. Women have become effective partners in socio-economic development. To consecrate the principle of gender equality, Morocco ratified many international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (21 June 1993) and the Equal Remuneration Convention (Convention no. 100 – 29 June 1951). It also enforces pay equality between men and women for equal work on the basis of the principle of 'equal pay for equal work'.

Within the framework of the new labour law, the new Moroccan legislation protects workers' rights in the area of maternity (Articles 152 to 165 and Law 65-99). It also exempts women from hazardous and exhausting jobs such as working in mines and quarries (Articles 179 to 183, Law 65-99 and Order 2-04-682 issued on 29 December 2004). Women's night work is conditioned by the provision of appropriate conditions (Order no. 2-04-568 issued on 29 December 2004).

Objectives and Goals

The initiative is based on determining the causes of gender salary discrimination in Morocco during the last twenty years through national surveys. The study also deals with the reality of the job market in terms of gender salary discrimination in order to shed light on the reported employment violations.

Good Practices

Innovative Approach

The initiative presents a critical appraisal of the national household budget survey which was carried out in two periods from 1990 to 1991 and 1998 to 1999.

The first survey covered a sample of 19,667 individuals, including 381 women, whereas the second survey covered 30,457 individuals, including 922 women.

- This is the first initiative to analyse gender salary discrimination in Morocco on the basis of a national survey. More importantly, the results of this national survey analysis will be used as a basis for the 2008 survey with a view to monitoring achieved progress and results.
- The results of the study can be used to formulate future strategies to overcome gender discrimination in the Moroccan job market and elsewhere.

Overcoming Challenges

- The analysis shows that women's employment is destabilised by maternity and marriage. In addition, the small number of female university graduates is a significant variable. Employers do not want to hire women aged 25 to 35.
- The Moroccan government made an important step forward in women's education, but rates differ up to the retirement age. Women's rate in this field is the highest.
- The study shows that salary differences by weeks between 1991 and 1999 were in favour of men, but such differences decreased thanks to the enacted legislation on equal pay for men and women. By comparing the private and public sectors, it has become clear that the gap in the public sector was 31.5% in 1991 and 21.8% in 1992. This percentage is much higher in the private sector. It was 37.5% in 1991 and went down to 33.5% in 1999. Following the data analysis aimed at determining the factors responsible for such differences, it has become obvious that hiring is gender-based. More than men, women seek to obtain lowly paid job opportunities and prefer to work in the public sector because of the lack of social benefits in the private sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The study used national surveys and quantitative and qualitative data.
- The initiative relied on specialist statistical analysis software.

Ensuring Sustainability

- A booklet will be published for specialists and national economic research centres. It will focus on challenges and the variables and factors that must be adopted in studying gender salary differences in the Moroccan job market or in any other Arab country.

Contribution to Social Transformations

- Some recommendations will be incorporated in future strategies to advocate bridging the gender gap in the Moroccan job market or in any other Arab country.

Lessons for Replication

- The initiative laid the foundations for undertaking similar actions in similar Arab states. It hopes that other groups will use the same tools to analyse the rate of gender salary differentiation through national surveys.