

Women and Myths of Today: An Investigation for the Reasons of Gender Inequalities

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Abstract: The relationship between participation and gender is rather more fraught with tensions and contradictions. These points of tension between participatory and “gender aware” approaches to development arise from - and produce rather different ways of engaging with issues of gendered power. This paper aims to list the dimensions of “participation” and “gender” in development, highlighting paradoxes of “gender-aware” and participatory development interventions. From that part it raises a question, despite the continuous efforts that have been exerted in the past and up to present to minimize the gap of gender inequality, coupled with the fact that the percentage of females to males in the workplace is increasing rapidly; yet the same problems exist, in particular, the lack of employment opportunities and rights. Thus, raising issues such as is gender awareness necessary and sufficient for effective participation of women in gender and development practices? And what are the requirements for this effective participation? Does the effective participation of women overcome gender differences?

Keywords: *gender inequality; wage gap; labor force participation rate; unemployment rate*

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0 Introduction

In general, gender segregation appears in diversification in patterns of the appearance of men and women in political and public life, unpaid domestic work and caring, in young men’s and women’s choices

of education and the labor market. In absolute terms, it is considered the dominance of one sex in getting higher shares of something even more than what is expected to be given. Hence, for instance, a fair measurement of gender equality comes by measuring whether sex or the other is in the superiority in an occupation or a workplace. In the modern era, one may think that the feminization segregation does no longer exist and that this problem is a thing from the past eras. However, this is not true since men and women do not have the same opportunities in the labor market in most of the countries in the world. The labor market does not provide the same wages or careers for both the two sexes and the female employment is still concentrated in a small range of jobs. There are no obvious signs to show that the situation will be improving in the coming years unless making the gender equality a central policy concern^[1].

The presence of gender segregation and the tendency for women and men to be given unequal opportunities in most of the services and sectors is well known in countries with lower standards of gross domestic product (GDP) like many African and Asian states such as Nigeria and Pakistan. However, in the highly industrialized and wealthy nations of the world, the levels of inequalities are all at least moderately high. The debate should, then, be limited to the countries with more segregation. Sometimes, gender segregation is argumentative. Some critics argue that this is considered an abuse of rights, capabilities and can be a cause of economic incompetence. However, some advocates argue that the segregation occurs due to some laws, religions, cultures, societies, histories, and traditions. That is why gender segregation is always discussed in one of those three major approaches which are preferences, patriarchy, and human capital. Some

scientists believe that women empowerment may decrease gender segregation, but that is not true because some countries where women are empowered are still suffering from gender discrimination especially in the labor market and income^[2].

Most of the relevant studies have sought the alliance between gender inequality and economic performance. Gender inequality can occur in many sectors such as health, payment employment, and education. For more elaboration, some ideologies have highlighted the negative effect of gender segregation on economic growth. However, some other constructive theories somehow find the positive influence of gender inequality in education on economic growth since that gives higher concentration on boys' education. These days for developed countries, new aspects of segregation started to appear. In fact, sex favoritism in education, payment, and well-being has been superseded by gender segregation in economic participation and political empowerment as well as budgetary cooperation. Those previously mentioned kinds of inequality are considered modern gender inequality. The vitality of human capital led to new idea of the nature of work energy at this element just cannot clarify the effect about favoritism clinched alongside political strengthening also monetary investment looking into budgetary growth, in as much as insufflate background may be the principle motivation behind about favoritism which may be also a regular element the middle of human money what is more social money. Education, experience and furthermore experience are considered fundamental components of human capital that supports the productivity of the labor in all the sectors^[3]. Some studies meet suspension given the gender segregation and therefore inspect whether it does have impacts on economic performance, since the irrespective of morals, if economic performance is to be understood, some items have to be discussed to be sure of the economy's performance.

This paper studies the effect of gender segregation on economic performance among three important countries including the inequality in income and job opportunities. Some theories meet ambiguity in the topic of gender segregation and thus check if it is really effective on the growth or not. Since the paper discusses economic performance and takes it into consideration, then some elements must be discussed. Between these elements, we can find that the employment of women instead of men would not cause an obvious adjustment

on the economic growth and also the gap between the piles of labor at this level may not cause a positive economic performance. The second element is that when women are paid less this may lead to lower prices which promote exports and causes a good economic performance. Furthermore, if a country works hard to decrease the infant mortality, it will cause a surge in the rate of population; therefore, it will have a negative effect on the country's economic performance. These elements show that there is no relationship between gender inequality and economic growth^[3].

Although the prejudices are not desirable for in the level of social justice, people could find as well that some improved usage of the women's capability in the market can be resulting in better and higher efficiency. However, the microeconomic information on the productive signs of gender segregation is way more considerable than the macroeconomic information. The relationship is studied between economic growth and gender segregation at the macroeconomic height, highlighting the affectivity gains gotten by those kinds of segregations. If the interpretations that gender inequality are used as testimonies of market failure or prejudice are right, the gap between genders will be effectively used as an exaggeration tariff that has a completely negative effect on economic performance. This interpretation justifies that predicting the bad consequences of gender segregation on accumulation productivity may lead to a worse case in the economies^[4].

Gender segregation is mainly composed of two stages that can cause greater economic growth. The first stage and the most important are improving the equality in payment, health, and education; this stage leads to the start of the second stage. The second stage includes empowering women in politics and enhancing their role in economic participation. Hence, in the long run, it helps in achieving better economic performance by improving the equality between genders in economic participation and political empowerment. Unfortunately, not many countries have reached this stage in the modern era despite the efforts spent on this topic. However, the relationship between gender equality and economic performance need hard efforts to be measured and estimated^[5].

Women have a considerably high share of the human capital which are considered as a kind of applicable future for a positive economic performance, but females do not own good amount of knowledge in the part of

political empowerment and economic participation, therefore, due to the lack of information and important knowledge, women cannot believe in indirect factors, these will require females to proceed in incorrect agreements which to somehow will be kind of radical. For sure, shortage in the number of female capital may be a cause in deviations between men. Therefore, the gap between genders at some level will not change.

An important authority that may be a pivotal action in politics and the economy should surround outstanding and great talents and also social experiences as well. The shortfall of social training between females had to lead to a very low competence. Females have the highest number of human capital that may be needed to achieve higher economic growth. However, it is really of very high importance to consume some part of the time along with males for obtaining adequate experience. Therefore, making the gender gap decreasing may happen one by one or otherwise by setting aside highly skilled males by highly skilled females. Economic performance will then be greatly affected and will decrease. While in the long run by developing female capital, economic performance will then achieve some favorable conditions which may cause a high increase^[6].

1 Literature review

When discussing the gender inequality problem, it is important to shed light to remind ourselves of the issue from a historical perspective.

2.1 Gender inequality in economic theories

Economics always explore the recognized gender segregation in the labor market over some different conditions and around two important axes. However, to be more specific, the economists target the determinants of the women participation in labor market and the side of supply, while, the investigations examine the different treatment of females in the labor market which is regularly mirrored in somehow much less incomes and unequal chances in occupations for some women^[7]. Females face gender discrimination before and after getting to the workplace which means that they do not often get the chance to get a job and when they take it they get treated differently and unequally. The discrimination that occurs before getting the job is a result of social stereotypes related to the role of the different sexes in the society which forced females to be specific in their jobs selection and being limited to

some professional and educational alternatives. This is the kind of discrimination called indirect discrimination that always leads to decisions for women to work in only some attainable sectors such as education, secretary, and nursing.

Furthermore, after getting a job after being already discriminated against to get the job, women suffer from inequality and face wage and professional discrimination. Professional discrimination is related to the fact that women always get low profile jobs when they are compared to male employees or workers who do have the same capabilities as females. Women also do not always get higher positions in the managerial hierarchy of the firm. Females are also the first to be laid out as soon as a financial crisis occurs. The wage discrimination also occurs when male employees earn higher wages than women for the same amount of work that is being done by both of them^[8].

Economics studies found that there is some very high concentration in the examination of the segregation that females face before their admission in the professional life and all the theories that have been refined are divided to many large approaches. Among these approaches, there are the institutional approach and the neoclassical one. Their split takes place given the diversified methodological situation that these theories adopted and the economics schools understandings from where they accumulate. The review will start with the neoclassical approach followed by the institutional approach theories to better explain the results of gender discrimination.

The theory of human capital in 1962 mainly showed gender discrimination in firms' wages. In general, the differences on wages must be only based on differences in knowledge, abilities, or skills owned by the worker or employee. Another difference on wages can happen due to professional and educational differences between the workers since the professional or educational experiences help increase productivity and the performance of employees. It is believed that the difference in socialization between men and women even before entering the labor market creates differences in skills and abilities between males and females workers since women do not spend in human capital as much as men do. Hence, according to the theory, women are not discriminated against in the labor market or rewarded less due to segregation causes but because the women own less human capital and less productivity than men in the labor market as well^[8].

This theory was criticized greatly since it concentrated mainly on the women's personal productivity and neglected that there can be many other factors that affect the latter. These factors can be technological aspects in the businesses, their share in the labor market, social functions that predict the differences on wages based on differences in professional specs and also the role of syndicates in some specific sectors.

The economics of discrimination that has been written in 1957 can be considered as the first trial to inspect the aftermath of discrimination in the labor market's context. However, the author focused more on race and ethnic discrimination, but in general, his analysis included some other kinds of discrimination including gender discrimination. Becker argued that the inequality in wages arises from three types of racist preferences. The first one is the employees' preferences who do not prefer to work under a woman especially in a managerial hierarchy since there are some beliefs that women are not as good as men. The second is the employers' preferences who do not always like to hire women due to prejudice reasons, and the third is the customers' preferences who may not like to getting some services from women especially in physical works.

The previous theory was also criticized since the author was not able to provide an explanation and a clear interpretation of the existence of discrimination in the workplace and labor markets. The author considered the existence of discrimination as temporary and external shocks. Furthermore, the theory was criticized that it did not get the gender occupational discrimination that leads females and males to the variable occupational area. This approach is the provisional way of the organizations, given to which the diversity in salaries is not a reaction of diversifications in efficiency but is rather the consequence of institutional and communal belongings, such as the complexity and the operation of the working places, and the respective cost of careers in the community. Furthermore, the uniform background in which the salaries are specified includes many aspects including the scheme of the salaries stability and the scheme of the cumulative bargaining that may have an effect in the wages pay gap. This kind of theories has appeared as a reflection to the theories of neoclassical that granted the sole characteristics and the individual choice as the sole influence that may cause differences in salaries^[9].

2.2 Effect of gender segregation on economic growth

Gender equality is divided into two somehow important stages that may be a reason of a greater and faster economic growth. The first stage and the most crucial happen by improving the equality in payment, health, and education; this stage leads to the start of the second stage. The second stage includes empowering women in politics and enhancing their role in economic participation. Hence, in the long run, it helps in achieving better economic performance by improving the equality between genders in Economic Participation and Political Empowerment. Unfortunately, not many countries have reached this stage in the modern era despite the efforts spent on this topic. However, the relationship between gender equality and economic performance need hard efforts to be measured and estimated^[10].

Later, a study that included^[11] Latin American countries supposed that the relocation of the working capital to decrease the gender discrimination in professions in which females are jammed into a restricted amount of lower paid occupations may increase females' wages by about 50%. This increase will have an insignificant effect on the wages of men and may increase the nation GDP by an average of 5% in a year. He found also that the removal of barriers in the females' working capital. The author also found that when women are given equal chances to access many different jobs; the effect of poverty may decrease and will lead to an increase in average income in all the studied countries. However, the highest effects on economic growth are more probably about to happen in nations with considerable gender segregation in labor participation rates. The author argued that all this can happen by reducing the wage gap between the genders and by providing a distribution of occupations that are more balanced.

3 Comparative study between Egypt and Nigeria

In the research paper, I used many articles to collect the information needed in addition to several reports found on authentic websites such as the World Bank Group to provide accurate and précised data. These data are considered secondary data to acquire the needed statistics. This research paper includes a descriptive study that emphasizes the role of female participation in many sectors in the three countries by highlighting the importance of women's role in any economy.

This comparative study's timeframe consists of a 5 years period which starts from 2010 to 2015 in all three countries. I started by conducting the female labor force participation rate of female aging 15 and above in each of Egypt and Nigeria. Egypt has high rates of inequality between men and women. According to the World Economic Forum 2015, Egypt is categorized as one of the top worst performing countries regarding gender inequality and is ranked 136 out of 145 among countries in gender equality ranking a lot lower than Kuwait and United Arab Emirates that rank the highest among the Middle East region [Figure 1].

In Egypt, the female labor force participation is somehow stable comparing to Nigeria. However, it decreased in the period after 1988–2000 due to the decrease of public sector recruitment after Nasser period. During the period of Nasser, high school graduates and higher education graduates were always granted jobs in the public sector. After that, the public sector did not employ a huge number of females between 1988 and 1998. At that time, females' participation in the private sector rose, and many of the females did work in the informal sector. The marital status and the fertility ratios were somehow a factor in the employment of women. Women always quit their jobs in the private sector after they are getting married, but in the public sector, women were granted pensions after giving birth. Then, by 2004, Prime Minister Atef Ebbeid started the privatization period which decreased public sector employment but then led to an increase in 2007 due to increased employment in the private and informal sector. Then, by 2011, the employment rate decreased due to the revolution of January 25 when firms fired many employees to decrease expenses, and they fired more women than men during that period. After the revolution, the female participation rate increased again during the stabilization period after 2012^[12].

In Nigeria, women are mainly involved into farm and non-farm activities which include manufacturing and services. However, agriculture is the dominant industry in which women are working since a big amount of Nigerian lives in rural areas. In the non-farm activities, women work in housekeeping, teaching, and nursing. However, before 2004, education was not given any importance by the Nigerian government. After that period, females' education enhanced due to focus by the UN and the aids are given to the country to help education. The enhanced education helped increase the participation of women in administrative, law and accountancy occupations. However, the presence of women in the managerial level is considerably low that only 32% of the managers are women. Furthermore, the presence of females in sciences related occupations such as engineering and architecture is very low when compared to the presence of males. Another reason for the increased female labor participation in 2003–2004 was a law that was passed to adjust wages in the rural sector in which many females are working helped encouraging women to increase their participation and being more active in the community^[13].

In the Egyptian labor market, there were many laws that were passed to enhance the equality in the treatment of men and women in the workplace. Article 11 in the constitution of the state forces the country to enhance gender equality in the political, civilian, cultural, and social rights. It also forces the state to defend females against any form of discrimination. The inequality is more available in the private sector, but its amount is variable due to some economic activities. These laws, unfortunately, did not affect the private sector's wages but did affect the public sector greatly. By 2004, the wages for women increased dramatically in the public sector that females earned about 15% more than males. However, at the same time wages in the private sector

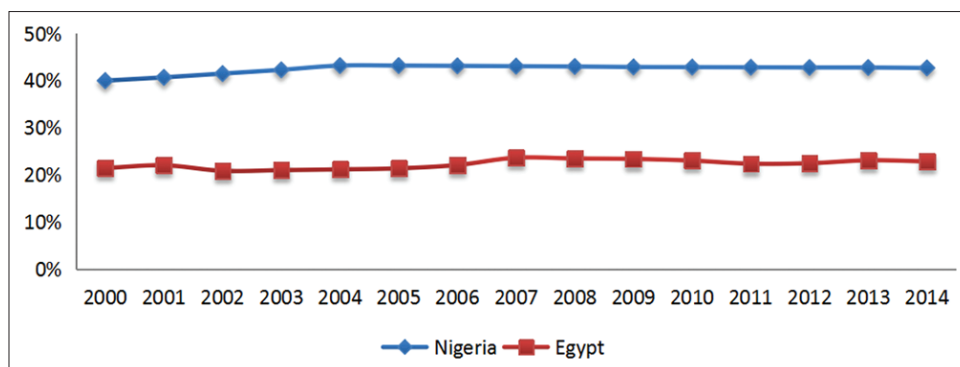


Figure 1. Female labor force (percentage of total labor force). Source: World Bank indicator

were much less for females than for males especially during the financial crisis of 2008 in which wages, in general, decreased due to hard financial situations in the Egyptian firms specifically and the international firms^[14].

However, in the Nigerian labor market, the wage gap is considerably high but still lower than the Egyptian wage gap. Recently, women in Nigeria tend to work more into part time jobs rather than full time jobs. This occurred because in Nigeria there are very limited rules that give women their rights in the workplace. Hence, they women do not have enough time to work and at the same time take care of their children and do the housework. At the same time, men are dominant in many high-income occupations, and women rarely join them at these jobs. The author found that 50% of the Nigerian females work in 7 jobs only. Another reason is that gender discrimination in Nigeria is high generally due to the stereotypes in the workplaces and the devaluation of the females' work. A study also found that female employees must be at minimum twice as accomplished as their male colleague to be paid an equal wage [Figure 2]^[15].

In Egypt, it used to increase remarkably until 2007 during the privatization period of Prime Minister Atef Ebeid during which jobs in the public sector decreased, and the private sector could not handle the amount of females who became unemployed during that time. However, by 2006 the unemployment rate decreased greatly with the rise of educational levels attained by females and the new ways of empowering Egyptian

women by giving them confidence and encourage them to work after marriage. Unfortunately, these ways did not last long and the unemployment started to increase again due to the rise of discrimination against women and the increase in the levels of harassment in the streets, workplaces and even in the metro and all the ways of transportation which led females to fear going out to the streets and go to their jobs^[12].

During the period of 2010–2015, Egypt's female unemployment rate kept increasing tremendously. Post 2011 revolution, the female unemployment rate has increased in a very high rate. The reason behind this increase was the recognized shifting opportunity structure in the labor market that obstructed and effected new entrants and women who are willing to get employed. According to the UNICEF in 2012, only approximated 35% of female have been occupied in jobs.

In Nigeria, the female unemployment rate is very low comparing to the other two studied countries and is more stable as well. The unemployment rate for females was increasing slightly from 2000 to 2013 due to some reasons. Among these reasons, we can find the high population growth that is related to rural-urban migration which enlarged the population in the urban areas and the unemployment as well. Another reason was the corruption and the instable political environment since Nigeria is led by poorly experienced leaders who fail to do their constitutional duties that must have decreased the gender discrimination in Nigeria. However, the Nigerian females are well known

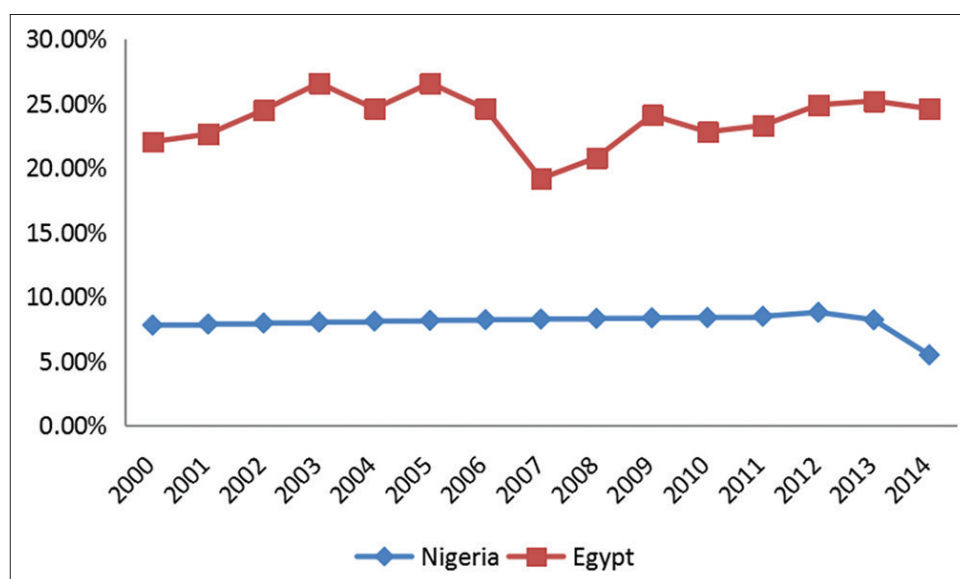


Figure 2. Female unemployment rate (percentage of female labor force). Source: World Bank indicator

for being good house workers that is why they always tend to work abroad especially in the Gulf area and the demand on them is incredibly high which decreases unemployment among the females^[16].

4 Conclusion and recommendations

To sum up, gender inequality is a huge threat to every nation's productivity and efficiency. Unfortunately, some advocates argue that the segregation occurs due to some laws, religions, cultures, societies, histories, and traditions. That is why gender segregation is always discussed in one of those three major approaches which are preferences, patriarchy, and human capital. Some scientists believe that women empowerment may decrease gender segregation, but that is not true because some countries where women are empowered are still suffering from gender discrimination, especially in the labor market and income.

Gender inequality in many countries had many social effects as well as economic effects. Among these social effects, it was found that the divorce rate among new married couples increased greatly as a conclusion to the previously studied inequalities among females. Another issue was also the violence against women especially in the harassment in low-income nations who decrease female employments because they fear getting out to work. In general, females are more emotional and cannot tolerate high violence rates. However, their level of satisfaction is higher than men and they do not have the ability to negotiate higher wages. Women also cannot take risks which led them to work in certain risk-free occupations such as education, nursing, and babysitting. Gender inequality has been given high importance lately in many economic forums due to its effective role in decreasing a nation's national income. Economics studies found that there is some very high concentration in the examination of the inequality that females face before their admission in the professional life and all the theories that have been refined are divided to many large approaches. Among these approaches, there are the institutional approach and the neoclassical one. Both of the two approaches were discussed previously, and it was found out that there were many theories that talked about feminization segregation including the Neo-Marxist theory and the neoclassical theory. Most of the relevant studies have sought the alliance between gender inequality and economic performance. Gender inequality can occur in many sectors such as health, payment employment, and education. For

more elaboration, some ideologies have highlighted the negative effect of gender segregation on economic growth. However, some other constructive theories somehow find the positive influence of gender inequality in education on economic growth since that gives higher concentration on boys' education.

Eventually, all countries suffer from gender inequality but with different rates due to different reasons behind each country's cultural beliefs. In some cases, women's depend on other sources of income such as her husband or her father which is commonly widespread in the Arab culture. They consider women's income as a sort of secondary income. Women tend to quit jobs further more than men due to problems that they face such as child care leave, maternity leave, and accompany husband abroad. Women also tend to have weak bargaining power skills resulting in low presentations in parliament and governmental vacancies.

To support women's right, there must be policies that should be conducted to increase and defend women's right to work such as to developing more economic programs, projects, and budgets from a gender perspective where training diversification takes place. To increase and support laws that ban and refuse unequal payment between both genders, and to embed the culture of work and production for women rather than coming up with violence against them.

5 Recommendations

The paper recommends decreasing the gender-wage gap by taking actions that fight occupational inequality and fighting the females' labor market segregation. It is also recommended for the governments to enhance equal opportunities for both females and males in the labor market by introducing career guidance and gender duties that eliminate genders stereotyping. The government also should introduce good part time jobs for females who have children and a lot of housework to be done every day with a relatively good income for the women to feel more independent. The governments also should monitor low paid jobs and assure that they offer the females at least the minimum wage as well as health insurance.

It is also important to support women careers' development by applying new measures on care services for children and by increasing fathers' reserved parental periods in the family laws. From the social side, governments should raise awareness between employers and managers regarding gender equality

and they can also send delegates to universities and schools to promote gender equality among children and youth to eliminate feminization segregation in the new generations.

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