

## **1. Women in the work force**

Today, women make up about half of the work force in Israel (1,275,300 women of 2,740,100 people, in 2005). 91.8% of all working women, as opposed to 82.7% of all working men, are employed by others. 37.8% of all women employed worked at a part-time position, as opposed to 17.2% of all employed men. There a high percentage of women work in lower paying jobs and the percentage decreases with an increase in the pay scale.

### 1.1 Self-employed and entrepreneurial women

In 2005, of the 179,000 self-employed people in Israel, 55,500 were women. Of the 107,000 small business employers, 17,000 were women. Of the family members who assist in businesses and not financially compensated, women constitute 0.6% as opposed to 0.2% of men.

### 1.2 Women managers

In 2005, of the 142,500 managers in Israel, 26% were women. The same number was recorded in 2002, meaning a stop in growth in the numbers of women in management positions. 9% of CEO of major companies are women.

### 1.3 Woman in civil service

The State of Israel employs, directly and indirectly, nearly half of the working women, employed mostly in health, welfare services and education. In 2004, of the 51,200 positions, 65% were woman, of which only 3% were Arab.

### 1.4 Women in High Tech

In 2005, of the 17,200 people working in the high-tech industry, 34% were women. This percentage remained constant between 2000 and 2005.

### 1.5 Women in Medicine

The portion of female doctors in Israel stands at 33%. Women comprise 37% of all dentists, and 25% of all specialist dentists. The percentage of female pharmacists is 58%.

### 1.6 Arab women in the work force

In 2005, only 17.8% of Arab women, of working age, were working, in comparison with 51.7% of Jewish women. Arab women's participation in the work force is very low, despite the fact that 29% of the Arab women workers have an academic degree compared with only 12% of Arab male workers. Practical ways to decrease unemployment among Arab women is to solve the issues of organized child care, proper training, available work places within villages and regular, convenient public transport between villages.

### 1.7 Child care

In 2003 there were 1,600 government day care centers, only 25 were in Arab towns.

### 1.8 Training

Of the 120 employment centers in Israel, only 14 operate within the Arab population.

### 1.9 Maternity leave

At the end of their maternity leave, 92% of the women who return to work are re-integrated into their old position, 4.5% of women returned to a more senior position, 3.6% of women returned to a less senior position and 53% of women were moved into a different position. **An average of about 1330 women a year, are placed at a disadvantage by their employers because of their maternity leave or by having chosen motherhood.**

The average overall time of absence from work during the pregnancy stands at 8.5 weeks (the average pregnancy lasts 38 weeks). **Women reported that the longer they were absent, the more disadvantaged they became in respect to advancement at their workplace.** Women who are younger,

new immigrants, secular and had less years of schooling were hurt more in their advancement. Arab women reported a higher rate of injury to their advancement (25%) in comparison to Jewish women (20%).

Last year maternity leave was increased from 12 weeks to 14 weeks. Current initiatives are advancing legislation to make maternity leave 16 weeks.

#### 1.10 Working mothers

The rate of participation in the work force among mothers is relatively higher 65.2%, than that of childless women, 42.8%. The rate of participation in the civilian workforce among Jewish mothers is estimated at 78.1%, in contrast to the 25.1% amongst Arab mothers.

Participation in the civilian work force decreases with the number of children, 74.8% among mothers with one child to 35.2% among mothers with four or more children. Participation in the civilian work force among mothers of children decreases as the age of the children decreases, 73.2% of mothers with children aged 10 - 14, and 56.8% of mothers with children aged less than 2 years old.

#### 1.11 Single Parent Working Mothers

A large majority of singles parents are women. In 2005, 80.6% of single parent mothers participated in the workforce. In 2003, the conditions were made more difficult for "single-parent" mothers to receive a guaranteed income subsidy, and they were forced to take almost any job as a condition to receiving the benefit.

#### 1.12 Unemployment among women

In 2005, the rate of unemployment among women was higher, 9.5% in comparison to the rate of unemployment among men 8.5%.

#### 1.13 Salary inequalities

As of 2005, the average monthly wage of employed women in Israel consisted of 63% of the average monthly wage of men. The average hourly wage for female employees in Israel was only 83% of the average hourly wage of men.

Salary gaps in favor of men exist in all branches of the economy, excluding the building industry. In 2004, the largest salary gap between female and male employees in Israel existed, in health and welfare services and the lowest salary gap between female and male employees.

The average monthly salary among Arab female employees was 74% of the average monthly salary of Jewish female employees. The average hourly wage of Arab women is 83% of the average hourly wage of Jewish women.

#### 1.14 Informal (hidden) salary discrimination

The majority of working women in Israel are not entitled to salary additions such as vehicle expenses, overtime, bonuses, stock options, which are not included in collective agreements, even when holding high ranking and high salary positions.

In spite of the existence of the **Law for Equal Opportunities at Work** women's professional advancement is slower, in private and public sectors, due to male social-professional networking, prejudice against, and suspicion of women, as well as the fact that most employers are men. The "glass ceiling" prevents the advancement of women to positions that are interesting, powerful and financially rewarding.

Job descriptions that are more prestigious or higher ranking, are given to positions filled by men, in order to **seemingly** differentiate it from a similar or equal position held by a woman.

Men are entitled to better retirement conditions, whether from the superior salary and conditions they received throughout their work years, from longer periods of employment, or from the character of the individual work contract.

#### 1.15 Pensions

Only 26.4% of women over the age of 60 receive a pension from their job, in contrast with 51.8% of men over the age of 65. Women's options to pension accumulation are significantly different from that of men. Furthermore, women receive a smaller pension than men, reflecting the fact that their employments were characterized by lower salaries and shorter career than those of men. Additionally, women stop

working temporarily or work part-time, because of pregnancy or childcare obligations, preventing them from continuously working and being promoted. A "birth fee" is given for only a 12 week period, and extending maternity leave will result in suspension of the pension. Most elderly women in Israel do not manage a private savings account and only 22% save for retirement. Because of this many elderly women are poorer than elderly men and have difficulty paying for household and medical expenses.

### 1.1 IWN Initiatives

- In 2006, the Israel Women's Network legal hot-line dealing with women's discrimination at work, had a noticeable increase in the number of calls, especially related to the dismissal of pregnant women and their rights during and after maternity leave.
- In 2005, the Commission for the Equal Opportunities in the Workplace was created to investigate and decrease workplace discrimination.
- The Israel Women's Network has initiated legislation to recognize childcare expenses for tax purposes. A tax benefit would bring more women out of the home and into the work place, resulting in an increase in work and GNP.

## 2. Women and Education

As a group, women are more educated than men at every educational level, from preschool to higher education. However, this fact is not reflected in everyday reality. In 2005, of people 15 years or older, the percentage who had 13 or more years of education, for women slightly exceeded that of men, at 42% vs. 40% respectively. However, the reality is far more complex. The overlap between status, nationality and ethnicity is reflected in the female groups as it is reflected in the male groups.

### 2.1 Illiteracy

The percentage of women who have no education (3.9%) is relatively high when compared with the percentage of men (1.6%). 1.5% of men and women in Israel have four years or under of education, and an additional 8.5% have between 5-8 years of education. An examination of the group of women who lack education (who had up to 4 years of schooling) revealed that Arab women are over represented. Among Bedouin women, the situation is even more severe, over half do not read or write and approximately one-fifth have not attended school at all.

### 2.2 Early Childhood

Early childhood is a critical time in acquiring gender identity. With all female staff and gendered environments in pre-schools, children internalize "gender appropriate" skills and behaviors and fix the association between femininity and care of children, parents and spouses. Even with numerous programs to combat gender bias, very little concealed discrimination has changed.

### 2.3 Elementary School

Most of the gender bias in the classroom pertains to the different attitude that teachers demonstrate towards boys and girls in the classroom. Language use is discriminatory and teachers must establish equal goals for both male and female students.

### 2.4 Junior and Senior High Schools

In 2005, the average number of years of schooling for both men and women was identical, 12.5 years. The average number of years of schooling for the female Arab population in Israel was lower, 11.0 years when compared with the 12.8 years of schooling of Jewish women and women from other groups. The percentage of females entitled to matriculation diplomas is higher than it is for males. The percentage of graduates who met university thresholds among boys was 87.3% and 85.8% for girls. In 2004, the percentage of candidates meeting the university threshold criteria from the Arab sector was 61% for female candidates and 64% for male candidates.

In 2004, of all candidates eligible for a matriculation exam, 46% of boys vs. 39% of girls were tested on a high tutoring level. The girls' scores were higher by 2-4 points on all levels in math whereas the scores in English were similar for both genders. More girls took the matriculation test in math's (85% vs. 81.3%) but more boys took the higher (4- and 5-units) study levels. More girls excelled on all matriculation levels,

most significantly in the 3- and 4- unit study levels. The relative minority of girls in 5-unit level math's and computer sciences is discernible, despite their higher scores in 3-units. The percentage of girls excelling in computer science, as well as in math, is higher than that of the boys, indicating that the small number of girls registering for 5-unit subjects cannot be attributed to inability.

In the Arab educational sector, of all students of 5-unit level computer science, the percentage of Arab female students is 50%, whereas in the Jewish education sector, the percentage of female students is 25%. Arab females tend to choose tutoring studies in math and sciences more than Jewish female students. In Arab education, as in public-religious education, math and science are less appreciated and are considered less 'masculine', thereby providing the female students with an opportunity to specialize in them.

## 2.5 The Vocational Route

In 2004, more boys 42%, than the 32% of girls participate in vocational education. The current gender bias leads to the integration of boys into hi-tech professions and girls into the service sector.

## 2.6 Female Dropout rates

4.7% of Jewish youths between the ages of 15-17 have never attended school and never worked (5.3% of adolescent boys and 4.0% of adolescent girls). 11.3% of the 81,000 Arab teens between the ages of 15-17 have never attended school and never worked (10.4% of adolescent boys and 12.3% of adolescent girls).

The schooling percentage among females (97.1%) is higher than the percentage for males (94.7%). In other words, the dropout rate for boys in all grades (between the years 1994-2004) was higher than the dropout rate for girls, in both the Jewish and Arab sectors. At the same time, the dropout rates of Arab girls are relatively high: 7.6% in the ninth grade, 5% in the tenth grade and 4.75% in eleventh grade.

## 2.7 Higher Education

Israel has a relatively high percentage of college graduates (29%) between the ages of 25-64, higher than the average (25%) in OECD member nations. Even with Israel's importance on education, high tuition costs and admissions criteria, economic, national and ethnic status effect access. Most college students in 2005 came from higher socio-economic families (18.1%) vs. a limited number who came from families with a lower socio-economic standing (2.6%).

Continuing university education for women is high in relation to the male population: 22.4% female vs. 16.5% male. In 2005, 91,000 male students and 113,000 female students attended universities and academic colleges. Of all Bachelor Degree recipients, the percentage of women increased from 49.0% in 1985 to 58.9% in 2004. The percentage of women in Masters Degree programs rose from 40.8% in 1985 to 57.0% in 2004. In the 2003/4 school year, half of the Ph.D.'s awarded went to women.

Most women still focus on 'traditional' professions (nursing, education, social sciences and humanities), constituting 83% of students in education and teaching. Few women study technological professions, which have the highest salary potential and give the most professional prestige. Their representation in medical, exact sciences and engineering faculties is relatively low. Women's choice of higher education does not translate into careers and executive positions in the market. Executive ranks in civil service include only 15% women, despite the fact that women fill 65% of the civil service positions and as well as a high percentage of low salaried jobs.

## 2.8 Academic Staff in Higher Education

Women comprise 43.3% of the staff lecturers, the lowest ranking position in senior teaching positions. 35.2% of the senior lecturers are women, 21.6% are associate professors and 11.9% are professors. Furthermore, the correlation between gender and ethnicity is also reflected in academia, where there is a distinct under representation of women Mizrahi professors.

## 3. Women in Public Office

Appropriate representation in government has been given a high standing in legislation and judgments in recent years. However, even with judgments and legislation, criteria have not been set anywhere for appropriate representation, but various bodies have defined a specific percentage of women

as being appropriate. Therefore, the representation of women in the support units of governmental service at the management levels varies, and the percentage of secured positions for women in every political party varies and stands between 25% and 30%.

Israel has no set incentives in the law or mechanisms that would bring about appropriate representation of women in politics. **The only solution that will bring about equality in the Knesset is purposeful legislation on the subject.** Nations which have representational equality in their legislature have established guaranteed representation.

### 3.1 Women in the Government

The current government (the 31<sup>st</sup>) has twenty seven ministers and deputy ministers, two of whom are women; this constitutes about 7%. The number of women in the current government is half that of the previous government.

### 3.2 Women in the Knesset

Currently, and for the first time, there is a woman holding the office of Chairman of the Knesset. However, only about 14% of the Knesset's members are women (17 in all), a decline in relation to the 16<sup>th</sup> Knesset, which had 21% women. Among all nations, Israel is currently in 78<sup>th</sup> place in the percentage of women who are members of the legislature (a drop of 19 places since 2004).

In bills written to amend the law of financing political parties, appropriate representation of women has been set to at least about 30%, and financing has been increased by 50% for each mandate represented by a woman. These bills are meant to encourage parties to reserve realistic places on their lists for women, by way of additional units of financing for each woman elected to the Knesset, if among every six candidates, two will be women. Similar bills are being proposed time and again and yet, **not one of these bills has been added to amend the law.**

### 3.3 Women in Local Government

As a result of local government elections in 2003, two women are serving as city mayors and three women are serving as heads of local authorities.

Representation by women in local authorities and councils has grown slowly and steadily, but still has only reached 12%. Of this 12%, 82% are on Jewish councils and 4% on Arab councils. Regrettably, most women don't serve more than one term.

In local Arab governing council's only two women of 770 elected members, were elected in the last two elections. The **modest increase** in representation by women in local government is due to the strengthening of the independent parties.

### 3.4 Women Directors of Government Owned Companies

At the beginning of 2007 the percentage of women in director positions in government owned companies stood at 33.6%. It has been seven years since legislation was passed, and still women have not achieved appropriate representation in all directorships. There has, in recent years been an increase in female representation, but this increase has been very small and does not come near the criterion set for appropriate representation.

Towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Knesset an amendment was passed stating that appropriate representation will be given to the director position in municipal companies.

The percentage of women directors in brokerage houses constitutes only about 15% of all directorships in these types of companies.

### 3.5 Women in Government Service

Women constitute 65% of all government employees. Their participation in the four highest ranks stands at only 43%. Arab women comprise 3% of all the women in government service. Among all government employees there is a higher proportion of women than men. Among the Arab population in governmental employees the proportion of men is higher than that of women. Among those at the judicial-management level the percentage of women is higher than at any other level.