



**A Study On**

**The reality of **female academics** in  
academic institutions in the Gaza Strip**

Gaza-2020

**Lead Researcher**

Dr. Abeer Abdelrahman Thabet

**Research Assistants**

Dr. Samia Alghossien

Sanabel Alhamdani



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## Preface



**C**ommunity Media Center (CMC) continues to work with women and youth under the unique social, economic, cultural, and political contexts of Gaza Strip and in very difficult and sensitive circumstances in an attempt to lessen the impact of these circumstances as well as the issues associated with them on our target groups. We also hope that our work would open a window of hope and form a motivation to build a bright future for them and future generations.

Within this framework, CMC is implementing the second phase of “Ambassadors for Women’s Rights – Support Her” project, whereas the study on the reality of Palestinian female academics and their conditions inside universities and institutes of Gaza Strip is one of the most important activities of the project. CMC began the implementation of the project at the beginning of 2020, and its activities were drafted based on the outputs and recommendations from the first phase of the project implemented in 2019.

Through working with the universities to raise awareness of female and male students and academics as well as administrative bodies, a code of conduct was developed to protect and promote women’s rights inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip. CMC succeeded in gaining the support and endorsement of female and male administrators to this code of conduct from five universities and three community colleges across Gaza Strip, not to mention their serious participation in the conference held in October 2019.

The most prominent recommendation of that conference was the need to prepare a research study to document and discuss the conditions and reality of female academics working at the academic institutions in Gaza Strip. Thus, the study at hand comes as a response to that recommendation and a cumulative build on the results of the first phase of “Ambassadors for Women’s Rights – Support Her” project.

During the preparation phase of the study, we realized that it is the first study in Palestine to document and analyze the reality of female academics and highlight the obstacles and gender discrimination issues they face inside the academic institutions as part of the general context in a society that still regards women as inferiors even if they hold the highest academic degrees.

CMC hopes that this study would constitute an entry point for other studies and researches that focus on issues of discrimination against women, whether in the academic field or other fields of work women strongly and competently engage in and in which they hold the highest degrees and experiences, intending to expose this discrimination and put it forward for discussion and correction by the decision-makers at all levels, including the community level.

In the end, we cannot but thank our partners at HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG for supporting our efforts in combating all forms of discrimination against women.

**Andaleeb Adwan**  
Director of Community Media Center



**The** study focuses on the reality of female academic staff working in academic institutions in the Gaza Strip. The study is an activity within the framework of “Ambassadors for Women’s Rights – Phase 2” project, carried out by Community Media Center in partnership with the HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG. The project aims at promoting the role of female academics and female university students in defending women’s human rights and combating gender-based violence (GBV) inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip.

This study tackles and analyzes the reality of female academics and their conditions inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip via reviewing the policies in force in the academic institutions, which include procedures of employment, retirement, promotions, administrative assignments or tasks, etc. Moreover, the study aims at identifying the most important gender-based discriminatory policies practiced by the academic institutions in the Gaza Strip against female academics.

The study also focuses on the extent to which academic institutions abide by the international treaties endorsed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) that guarantee women’s rights and gender equality in administrative positions according to competence standards. In addition, it looks into the relationship between female academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and human rights organizations (HROs) and means to enhance them. The study attempts to provide focused visions by presenting a set of forward-looking recommendations and suggestions to improve the status of female academics to enable them to reach higher positions inside universities and to ensure their access to their rights as stipulated in international laws and treaties.

The study tries to answer the main question: What are the working conditions of female academics inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip? To conclude an integral answer for the main question and the sub-questions stated in the study, it addresses the status of female academics working in five academic institutions in Gaza Strip, which are Al-Azhar University, Islamic University, Al-Quds Open University, Al-Aqsa University, and Gaza University.

### **The study used several quantitative and qualitative research tools as follows:**

**First: The Quantitative Tools:** The Questionnaire: It was employed as an essential tool for data collection, and it was designed based on the previous literature and related issues.

**Second: The Qualitative Tools:** This included focus groups, individual interviews, and case studies.

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1. Focus Groups: This included in-depth interviews with groups that were selected according to specific criteria to obtain collective and qualitative information. Two focus groups were conducted: The first was held at Gaza University, and it involved University President, two female Deans, and three of male Deans. The second focus group involved five full-time and part-time female academics from the study sample (the five universities).
2. Individual Interviews: (4) interviews with female academics working in each of the five universities were carried out with total of (20) interviews.

During the interviews, in addition to eliciting information and identifying obstacles, the participants shed light on their reality inside the academic institutions and the challenges facing their work; they shared their suggestions and views on how to address the problems they suffer from.

Most of the interviews were conducted through direct contact with several participants. However, it was not possible to communicate with the others face-to-face due to the event of universities closure in light of Coronavirus pandemic, and thus, we were forced to conduct these interviews virtually.

Besides, (9) in-depth interviews with actors from civil and human rights organizations were conducted to identify the causes and contributing factors, the forms and effects of GBV on female academics, the level of cooperation with female academics, and the reasons for lack of involvement with those organizations in general.

3. **Case study:** Case Studies were prepared on female academics that had experienced GBV and were subjected to discriminatory and exclusionary policies in different cases.

**The study concluded several findings, the most important of which include:**

- There was consensus among most female academics that academic institutions partially abide by the endorsed laws and treaties. For example, academic institutions abide by gender equality in terms of laws on retirement, wages, and promotions in the case of full-time female academics; however, there are discriminatory practices against part-time female academics in terms of regularization procedures, financial rights, administrative assignments and tasks, and the distribution of academic courses.
- The interference of political affiliations in the affairs of the academic institutions and playing a fundamental role in the employment process and distribution of administrative positions greatly affects the opportunities of female academics in employment and in attaining academic positions, especially which female academics are politically independent and are not affiliated to any Palestinian political parties.
- Female academics are not allowed to participate in the decision-making process at the universities despite having higher degrees, and therefore, they are prevented from contributing to shaping the next generation that will lead the society through all its governmental and private institutions. This would instill the patriarchal culture in the mindsets of the next generations, which, in turn, would increase women's inability to lead and limit their role in teaching academic subjects only.
- Academic courses are assigned in a discriminatory and gender-based manner, where the major and important academic courses are assigned to male academics.
- Several female academics suffer from discrimination inside their department, especially when one of them becomes Head of Department as their male counterparts refuse to deal with her or abide by her instructions as Head of Department merely for being a woman.
- Despite all the obstacles these female academics face as Heads of Departments, they have proven their competence in holding their positions and have achieved a score of successes for their colleges, as stated by the administrations in their universities.
- Female academics chairing committees, such as the examination committee or committee of scientific conferences, face difficulties that hinder their work and the cooperation with them. These difficulties are a direct result of the patriarchal culture of many male academics who refuse to cooperate with these female academics. However, a few male academics, who believe in their competences, support them and their success.
- Some universities that are affiliated with religious groups or ideologies prevent female academics from teaching male students, whereas they allow male academics to teach female students, which means that male academics can teach students of both genders. This limits the opportunities available for part-time female academics to obtain teaching hours relevant to their expertise.
- Female academics in some academic institutions are exposed to various forms of GBV; they are subjected to discrimination owing to their external appearance, religious beliefs, or social level.
- Female academics are entirely excluded from certain faculties; they are hired only if male academics in the same discipline are not available.
- Female academics are entirely excluded from decision-making positions in academic institutions. The study

did not find any female academics holding the position of University President or any higher position such as a Vice President or Dean of any major college/faculty. As for the Faculty of Human Sciences, their presence does not exceed - in most cases – one female academic in the whole academic staff. The same applies to the Boards of Trustees, where there is no presence for female academics, as well as University Councils although these female academics hold academic awards from prestigious universities.

- Female academics lack the supportive environment that would help them carry out their dual tasks at the university and their homes since they exert double the efforts inside and outside the university to accomplish the tasks they are responsible for from academic and research responsibilities to life responsibilities relating to raising their children and managing their homes.
- Academic institutions did not involve female academics in the process of managing Coronavirus pandemic since their presence in decision-making positions is almost non-existent. They received instructions to implement the e-learning system without being consulted about their ability to work with this system from home. This pattern of education has placed an additional burden on female academics working from their homes in light of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Female academics do not resort to NGOs, particularly women's and human rights organization, for help, counselling, or to participate in seminars or workshops. Moreover, there has been no indication of any form of cooperation between female academics and women's organizations in Gaza Strip, except for the activities carried out by the Community Media Center targeting female academics inside academic institutions.
- NGOs focus their work and attention on the marginalized groups of women (divorced, widows, graduates, and young women), but they do not focus on female academics; they lack information about their conditions, numbers, percentage of their representation in different universities, or the issues they face inside the academic institutions. These organizations do not provide female academics with any legal advice regarding their rights as stipulated in the Palestinian Law or organize any training programs for them. Besides, there is a lack of studies on the challenges and obstacles facing female academics that can be used as references for future interventions.
- A lot of academic institutions prefer hiring males for academic work, given the nature of women's role, their family responsibilities, and the leaves that they are entitled to due to childbirth and maternity. That is if applicants from both genders apply to a vacancy and their qualifications are similar, male applicants are preferred over females; however, in the absence of male applicants, academic institutions are obliged to hire female academics until male academics become available.
- Nepotism and favoritisms affect the process of distributing and assigning academic courses and hours to non-regularized female academics in most universities, which affects the opportunities of female academics to work.
- There is lack of participation for female academics in decision-making positions, mainly the position of University President to this day. This is attributed to two reasons: the patriarchal culture and the cultural and social heritage that reduce the academic potentials, as well as the political parties that constitute a major obstacle to the female academics in assuming such positions as these parties prefer males to implement their political partisan agenda.
- Female academics lack basic knowledge on the Palestinian labour law and the international treaties endorsed by the PNA which guarantee their rights.
- Some female academics are only interested in the academic work and are reluctant to take on administrative work, which can be attributed to their fear of assuming these positions and going through the experience as well as the influence of the cultural heritage, including the customs and traditions, on their lives.
- Academic institutions do not sign contracts with non-regularized female academics, which deprives them of their rights. Also, this allows universities to evade fulfilling the financial rights of these academics immediately after the end of the semester similarly to the regularized academics. Several semesters may pass before the part-time female academics receive their financial entitlements on the pretext of the poor financial situation at the university.





**Women** in the Palestinian society face a score of obstacles in all walks of life in which they seek to prove themselves; the most prominent of these is the patriarchal social heritage that continues to constrain women and prevent their advancement and access to senior positions in all their governmental and private institutions.

Women working in the academic field are part of this society. Nevertheless, academic work has certain peculiarity due to the doubled burdens female academics have to bear as it is one of the most difficult professions for women given its additional burdens compared to other professions. Being a female academic requires the constant acquisition of knowledge, continuous efforts, the constant follow-up to all developments of curricula, and regular participation in scientific conferences and publication of researches.

Although male academics are regarded as the most knowledgeable and aware sector of the society, women working in the academic field, who hold higher academic degrees and work alongside male academics to form and shape the personalities of the Palestinian university youth, face many challenges and difficulties, the most prominent of which is the policy of exclusion and marginalization practised against them, which reflects negatively on their academic performance.

In light of the current circumstances the world in general, and Palestine in particular, is witnessing due to the widespread of Coronavirus and President Abbas's announcement of the state of emergency in 09/03/2020, leading to the suspension of work at universities and launching the remote education or electronic learning modality, the academic burdens and tasks of female academics have increased and doubled, especially since remote education is considered as a new experience for the majority of people working in the academic field in Gaza Strip on one hand and the students on the other hand.

This increased the stress on many female academics. In addition, staying at home doubled domestic burdens and obligations related to their husbands and children, which augmented the rate of GBV whether in the academic or family spheres.

The importance of studying the reality of female academics in the academic institutions in Gaza Strip is attributed to the need to identify the challenges and obstacles they face, level of knowledge of their rights, level of commitment of academic institutions to ensure rights following the international conventions and Palestinian laws, mechanisms for defending those rights. The study also promotes their role in combating GBV against them in addition to consolidating values of justice and equality, which contribute to the access of female academics to decision-making positions in the academic institutions.

"Ambassadors for Women's Rights – Phase Two" project, implemented by CMC in partnership with the German organization HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG, aims at strengthening the role of female academics and university students in advocating women's rights and combating violence against women inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip. This study comes within the framework of this project. It is the first study in Gaza strip to contribute to shedding light on the conditions of female academics in the academic institutions and the discriminatory measures they suffer from in the universities, which affect their professional and academic development.



# Chapter 1



## The Methodological Framework of the Study

### 1. Importance of the Study:

- It is considered the first study in the Gaza Strip, if not in all Palestine, to discuss and analyze the reality of female academics and their issues inside the academic institutions as well as all forms of GBV against them.
- This qualitative study constitutes a strong motivation for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations (HROs) not just in Gaza, but in all Palestine, to create channels of communication with the female academics to get informed about their conditions in public and private academic institutions.
- This study presents strategic suggestions to reduce discrimination and violence against female academics for all concerned institutions, be they formal or informal, as well as for the female academics themselves.

### 2. Objectives of the Study:

- Shedding light on the challenges and obstacles that female academics face via researching and investigating their conditions in Gaza Strip by reviewing the policies applied in the academic institutions, including procedures of appointment, promotions, administrative assignments, and out of country missions, etc.
- Identifying the most important discriminatory gender-based policies academic institutions in Gaza Strip practice against female academics.
- Focusing on the level of commitment of the academic institutions to International Conventions endorsed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), and which guarantee women's rights and gender equality in managerial positions based on competence.
- Looking into the relationship between female academics and NGOs and HROs and means to strengthen it.
- Attempting to provide focused strategies to present a set of suggestions and forward-looking visions to improve the status of female academics so as to enable them to access senior positions at the universities as well as ensure their rights as stipulated by the law.

### 3. Problem Statement of the Study:

Female academics working in the academic institutions in Gaza Strip face various forms of GBV as well as discrimination, elimination, marginalization, and exclusion from participation in the decision-making process, not to mention limiting their access to and preventing them from holding senior positions at the Palestinian universities or participating in developing and improving the educational process. Until this moment, no female academics have been appointed for the position of University President, whether in public or private universities; in addition, female academics are rarely appointed as Faculty Deans or Heads of Department. Even at the level of University Boards of Trustees, women's presence is rare in these bodies despite that percentage of women receiving higher academic degrees and gaining various professional experiences has increased in past few years. This is considered as a clear and grave violation to the rights of female academics, particularly since these academic institutions have declared their commitment to the international conventions on the rights of working women endorsed by the PNA.

### 4. Questions of the Study:

This study attempts to answer one main question: What is the reality of female academics in the academic institutions in Gaza Strip? In order to conclude a comprehensive answer to this main question, the study tries to answer a set of sub-questions, listed as follows:

1. What are the most important challenges female academics face in their work at the universities? How can these challenges be mitigated?
2. What is the level of commitment of the academic institutions to international conventions and treaties on human rights and women's civil, political, and economic rights endorsed by the PNA?
3. What are the policies in force in the academic institutions towards female academics, including, for example, appointment, out of country missions, promotions, and retirement, etc?
4. What are the most notable discriminatory gender-based policies and measures the academic institutions in

Gaza Strip practice against female academics? The most significant of which is the out of country missions, the distribution of academic courses and other administrative issues.

5. What is the relationship between female academics and WROs and HROs? How can it be strengthened and promoted?
6. What is the percentage of female academics who hold leadership positions in academic institutions? To what extent do female academics participate in formulating university policies?
7. What are the most prominent obstacles that prevent female academics from assuming senior positions in academic institutions?
8. What are the strategies and procedures required to enable female academics to assume senior positions and participate in the decision-making process at the universities?

To answer the above-mentioned questions, the study examines the conditions of female academics in five academic institutions in Gaza Strip: Al-Azhar University, Islamic University, Al-Quds Open University, Al-Aqsa University, and Gaza University., and in light of the current emergency in Gaza Strip due to Coronavirus pandemic, the study used several scientific approaches that were conducted using different tools, both in-person and virtually.

### 5. Study Methodology

The study used various scientific methodologies to reach the required results as follows:

#### 1. Descriptive Analytical Approach:

Using this approach, data, information, and statistics were collected according to official data and figures about female academics in the academic institutions during the past five years. Also through this approach, the study attempts to answer the questions raised, analyze the scientific researches that addressed this issue and identify the most important aspects on which these researches were based on and the failures that were vital to focus on in this study.

#### 2. Content Analysis Approach:

By using this approach, the study tries to analyze the behaviour of the educational institutions and the decisions of their officials on issues related to female academics via understanding and analyzing the organizational and administrative structures in force in these academic institutions as well as documents issued by university administrations that reflect the universities' visions, missions, and policies, in addition to the code of conduct.

#### 3. Foresight Approach:

After collecting the required data and information on the conditions of female academics in the five universities and the most vital obstacles they face, the study presents strategic suggestions to solve the problems and eliminate the obstacles that female academics face inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip. The study pinpoints the impact these suggestions could have on their future performance and their role in the Palestinian society.

### 6. Study Tools:

The study raises very specific questions on the reality of female academics and the discriminatory policies and measures practised against them, that lead to exacerbating their sense of discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization. Also, the study puts forward suggestions, from the perspective of female academics, to amend or adopt any measures or policies that could combat violence against them, meet their needs, and advance their status and their ability to access their rights.

## **The following research tools were used:**

### **6.1 Literature Review:**

Researches and studies published on the rights of female academics and GBV against them were reviewed. The study concluded that literature tackling this issue directly is scarce and that all available studies address GBV in general, but had not shed light on issues of female academics or the violence against them in particular, which constituted an additional burden on the study.

### **6.2 Interviews with Female Academics:**

- Throughout the study, (20) individual interviews were conducted, with an average of (4) interviews with female academics from each academic institution. The sample included female academics working in the five selected academic institutions: Al-Azhar University, Islamic University, Al-Aqsa University, Al-Quds Open University, and Gaza University.
- During the interviews, in addition to collecting information, we listened to female academics' suggestions and points of view on how to address the obstacles and problems they face in their academic institutions.
- The interviews were conducted in person with a score of them, but, due to the emergency mentioned previously, it was not possible to contact the others, and thus the interviews were conducted virtually.

### **6.3 In-depth Interviews with Women's and Human Rights Organizations:**

- The study conducted (9) in-depth interviews with female human rights and feminist activists from WROs and HROs operating and active in advocating human and women's rights in Gaza Strip. These interviews helped us pinpoint the root causes of the problem; study the contributing factors, forms of GBV female academics face inside their universities, and the implications of all the above; and identify the level of cooperation between these NGOs and female academics and reasons of the apparent lack of communication between these NGOs and female academics.

### **6.4 Focus Groups:**

- The study also conducted focus groups or in-depth interviews within a group that was selected according to specific criteria, as it is one of the qualitative research methods to get collective and qualitative information.
- Two focus groups were carried out as follows: The first focus group was held at Gaza University, and it involved University President, (2) female Faculty Deans, and (3) male Faculty Deans. The Second focus group involved (5) regularized and non-regularized female academics with permanent contracts and fixed-term contracts from the (5) five universities (the study sample). The selection was done in this manner to ensure that the questions raised by the study were answered.

### **6.5 Case Study:**

The study presented case studies of female academics who were subjected to various forms of GBV and discriminatory and exclusionary policies despite their higher degrees and years of experience, commitment to university bylaws and regulations, and efforts to develop and advance the status of their universities.

### **6.6 Study Questionnaire:<sup>1</sup>**

- To collect information related to the topic of the study, the questionnaire was designed and used as a basic tool for data collection, whereas it was designed in light of previous literature and relevant issues. Additionally, the researcher conducted several individual interviews with senior staff of the academic institutions in the Gaza Strip and some female academics to pinpoint the most important factors that can be studied. As a result, the researcher developed the questionnaire and presented it to a committee of experts and specialists as

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<sup>1</sup> See Annexes

well as CMC for review. Its statements were modified and codified, and the final draft of the questionnaire was as follows:

### 6.6.1 Questionnaire Data

- Personal Data Part: It consists of a set of classificatory variables such as age, scientific qualifications, employment nature, and years of experience, marital status, and academic institution.
- Second Part: Employment and Academic Tasks: This part was divided into two fields: Functional Distribution (8 statements) and Tasks Assigned to Female Academics (7 statements).
- Third Part: Bylaws and Rights of Female Academics. This part was divided into two fields: Bylaws and Female Academics (8 statements) and Out of country Missions and Training (6 statements).
- Fourth Part: General Policies towards Female Academics (7 statements).
- Fifth Part: Violence against Female Academics (8 statements)

The researcher verified the validity and reliability of the questionnaire through a set of steps and field procedures, whereas the questionnaire was carried out on a pilot sample of (35) female academics, who were included in the actual study sample since it was difficult to reach out to several female academics in light of the state of emergency in Gaza. No changes or amendments were made on the questions of the questionnaire that was first applied to this pilot sample.

### 6.6.2 Study Population:

The study population consisted of all female academics working in the five academic institutions that were selected as a sample for the study in Gaza Strip: Al-Aqsa University, Al-Azhar University, Islamic University, Al-Quds Open University, and Gaza University.

Al-Aqsa University was selected as it is a governmental university, while Al-Azhar University and Islamic University were selected because they are public universities and include the largest number of students. Gaza University was selected because it is a private university, and Al-Quds Open University was selected as it is the only university in Gaza that offers the distance education system and has branches in all governorates of Gaza Strip.

Table (1) shows the characteristics of the study population:

Table (1) shows the distribution of the study population according to the academic institution and nature of employment.

Academic Institution	Regularized Female Academics	Non-regularized Female Academics	Total
Al-Aqsa University	70	0	70
Islamic University	38	20	58
Al-Azhar University	19	9	28
Al-Quds Open University	6	53	59
Gaza University	11	25	36
Total	144	107	251

Table (1) shows that the number of female academics working in the (5) academic institutions, the study sample, is (251) female academics: (144) are regularized and (107) are non-regularized working with fixed-term contracts or on hourly basis. This data was collected from the (5) academic institutions.

### 6.6.3 Questionnaire Sample:

A random sample of (200) female academics was selected from the original study population, the (251) female academics. The study tool was sent to them electronically. Only (134) female academics responded, with a response rate of 67%. Table (2) shows the characteristics of study sample.

Table (2) shows the disaggregation of the study sample according to variables of: age, educational qualifications, nature of employment, years of experience, marital status, and university.

Demographic Disaggregation	Variables	Number
Age	0 years or less	15
	331 – 40 years	40
	41 – 50 years	44
	50 years or more	35
Educational Degree	Master's Degree	39
	PhD	87
	Prof. Doctor	8
Nature of Employment	Regularized	63
	Non-regularized on hourly basis	51
	Non-regularized with fixed-term contract	20
	Years of Experience	35
Marital Status	6 – 10 years	33
	11 – 15 years	25
	More than 15 years	41
University	Unmarried / Single	42
	Married	76
	Divorced or widowed	16
	University	25
	Islamic University	31
	Al-Aqsa University	38
	Al-Quds Open University	22
		18
<b>Total</b>		<b>134</b>

### 6.6.4 Validity of Questionnaire:

Validity means that the questionnaire can measure the phenomenon it is designed to measure and that its statements are understandable, transparent, objective, comprehensive, and linguistically accurate. The researcher verified the validity of the questionnaire by verifying the content consistency of the questionnaire's views, which is achieved by calculating the correlation coefficients between the questionnaire's statements and



the total grade of the field it is included.

### 6.6.5 Correction of the Questionnaire:

The main measurement tool used to understand the reality of female academics in the five academic institutions is the questionnaire, with a total number of statements (44) distributed on (6) main fields. Statements were given response choices as follows: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, strongly disagree, disagree.

### 6.6.6 Reliability of Questionnaire:

Reliability of the questionnaire shows the stability of its results. The researcher verified the reliability of the study questionnaire through the following methods:

#### A. Reliability using Cronbach's Alpha

This method uses the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each field in the questionnaire.

Table illustrating Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the fields of the questionnaire:

No.	Fields of Questionnaire	No. of Statements
1	Functional Distribution	8
2	Tasks and responsibilities	7
3	Bylaws / Regulations	8
4	Out of country missions and training	6
5	General policies towards female academics	7
6	Violence against female academics	8

#### B. Split Half Reliability Method:

This method, the fields of the questionnaire and the total score are divided into two parts: one for the statement with even number and another for statements with odd numbers. The correlation coefficient between them is calculated, and then the Spearman-Brown formula is used to correct the coefficient.

## 7. Statistical Methods and Treatments:

The researcher employed the following methods to conduct statistical analysis:

### 1- Descriptive Methods:

Descriptive statistical methods and tools were used to present the distribution of the sample and answer the first question of the study. This included the use of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and relative weight.

### 2- Inferential Methods

The researcher used in the study at hand a set of inferential methods such as: correlation coefficient to verify the validity and reliability of the questionnaire; normal distribution by using Culm grove Simonov method to identify the nature and moderation of the data curve; and one-way analysis of variance between three groups or more to find the differences between the estimates of members of the study sample according to the variables of the study. The researcher also used post HOC tests to determine the nature of the differences.

## 8. Geographical Distribution of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was geographically distributed on the (5) universities of the study sample.

1. Al-Azar University: Gaza governorate and Middle Area governorate (Al-Moghraqa branch)
2. Islamic University: Gaza governorate
3. Al-Quds Open University: (5) branches in all governorates of Gaza Strip.
4. Al-Aqsa University: Gaza and Khan Younis governorates
5. Gaza University: Gaza and North Gaza governorates

## 9. Study Challenges

One of the most critical challenges that affected the study's implementation was the scarcity of references and research on the conditions of female academics in Palestine in general, and in Gaza Strip in precise.

The extraordinary circumstances of the Coronavirus pandemic and the suspension of work in all universities challenge the study. In contrast, shelter-at-home measures and the adoption of remote work modality have formed a double burden on female academics and hindered communication with them. Some of them were unable to cooperate to complete the study increased academic and life-related overburdens.

## 10. Study Terminology:

1. Gender: It refers to the social relationships, roles and norms constructed by the society for both genders (men and women); these relations, roles, and norms vary and change according to place and time due to their coinciding and intertwining with other social relations such as sex, religion, social class, and race. Although these relations vary in the different institutions of society, all of these institutions resist change.
2. Gender-based Discrimination: It is any preference, exclusion, limitation or prejudice against a person based on gender in the political, economic, social, cultural, and civil spheres. Although gender-based discrimination can be practiced against women and men, it is practiced prominently against women and girls only. Gender-based discrimination is linked to other concepts, such as patriarchy, stereotypes, and gender roles. It might also be linked to the prevailing belief that a certain gender is intrinsically superior and imperious than the other gender.
3. Academic Institutions: In a comprehensive and profound meaning, they are the origin and foundation of sciences. They are also known as universities. They are institutions for higher education with various majors in all fields. These institutions specialize in the fields of higher education and scientific research. They are accredited at the local and international levels, and they award degrees in various fields of university and postgraduate education, as well as honorary memberships according to precise governing criteria.
4. Female Academics: This term refers to women working in the academic field in the academic institutions; they teach in the different educational programs that offer students several academic degrees. This includes:
  - Female academics with permanent contracts (regularized): They are full time staff members and are considered as core or official employees of the university.
  - Female academics with fixed-term contracts or without contracts (non-regularized): They are not full-time employees, but they work on hourly basis (each academic course includes a specific number of academic hours and each academic hour is estimated at a specific wage for teaching it), or other female academics that work with annual or per-semester contracts.

## 11. Study Limitations:

Throughout the implementation of this study, all ethical issues were considered. This includes the following:

- The information that was collected was used within the framework of the scientific study only.
- Confidentiality and privacy of information collected from female academics who represented the study sample were maintained
- "Do no harm" principle was ensured. Study team ensured that no harm fell upon the respondents as a

result of participating and giving their opinions.

- Credibility of reporting the information collected from the participants was maintained via using different documentation means such as audio recording and/or writing.
- The right of female academics to see study results and recommendations was respected and ensured.





# Chapter 2



## **Analytical Reading for Results of Study Tools**

**D**iscrimination and exclusion at work are regarded as the most serious violations of human rights principles, and thus all international charters and treaties stress the importance of preventing them, not to mention that all modern employment systems in the developed countries have ensured the application of the principle of equality and provision of equal opportunities for all citizens whether in applying and obtaining public jobs or during performing their jobs.

Palestinian Basic Law guarantees the principle of equal opportunities in employment opportunities as it does for the principle of equality in rights and distribution of duties among employees according to their disaggregation and rank in the career ladder. Thus, the study depended on the articles stated in the Document on the Rights of the Palestinian Women<sup>1</sup> to study and analyze the challenges and obstacles female academics face. The importance of this document lies in the fact that it came as a result of the collective organizational work of women's rights organizations since the establishment of the PNA in 1994 until it was published in 2017.

It basically adopted what was stated in the Palestinian Declaration of Independence: **“The State of Palestine is the state of Palestinians wherever they may be. The state is for them to enjoy in it their collective national and cultural identity, theirs to pursue in it a complete equality of rights.”**

These are the civil rights every citizen enjoys, including women's acquired rights, which must neither be denied nor its endorsement be postponed. The most important pillars of these rights are the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988, the Palestinian Basic Law, and the Palestinian Laws and Legislations.

The Declaration includes a number of rights and legal principles which all stress on the necessity of ensuring all rights of Palestinian women as stipulated in the international charters and treaties on women's civil, political, and social rights endorsed by the PNA. These include their right to employment opportunities, work, promotion, and equality in all labor's rights.

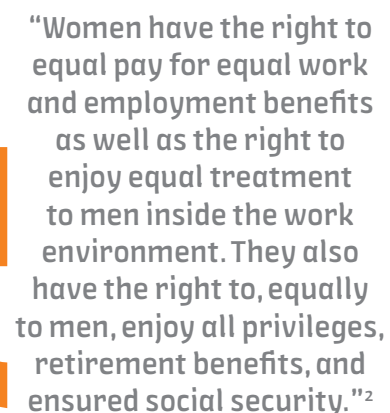
Using the research methodology and tools mentioned previously in the methodological framework of the study, the study concluded the following:

### **Part one: Conclusions Related to Female Academics:**

#### **First: Commitment of Academic Institutions to Palestinian Labor Law and International Treaties Endorsed by PNA.**

Since its establishment and So far, the PNA has endorsed several international conventions and treaties. Most important of which is the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These conventions are regarded as vital to human rights in general and women's rights in particular as they are, according to international law, abiding by the signatories and must not be violated. Also, they set clear obligations on the State of Palestine to maintain women's rights, values of justice, and equality; combat all forms of discrimination against women. And present periodic reports reflecting upon the status of human rights and the State's efforts to take the necessary measures to eliminate discrimination and ensure equality for all citizens in general and for women in precise.

And since academic institutions abide by the policies and laws of the State of Palestine, they must abide by these



“Women have the right to equal pay for equal work and employment benefits as well as the right to enjoy equal treatment to men inside the work environment. They also have the right to, equally to men, enjoy all privileges, retirement benefits, and ensured social security.”<sup>2</sup>

1 Document on the Rights of the Palestinian Women, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2017

2 Rights of Worker Women in Palestine Study, International Labor Organization (ILO), 2016

conventions and harmonize their internal bylaws to comply with those conventions.

The results of the interviews with female academics showed varying conclusions, whereas most female academics confirmed that their universities do not fully abide by these conventions. For instance, they ensure gender equality in wages, retirement law, financial rights and promotions according to the conditions of scientific research in force at the universities, as well as maternity leave and others in the case, the female academics are regularized, whereas these female academics receive equal rights in these administrative issues, similarly to their male counterparts. However, these academic institutions significantly discriminate against female academics who are non-regularized, which is clearly evident in the employment and regularization procedures, female academics' financial rights, administrative assignments and tasks, and distribution of academic courses. They do not abide by the law which guarantees gender equality.

On the other hand, in some universities, female academics confirmed that they face gender discrimination in wages, especially in governmental universities, which manifests in the fact that male academics are allowed to add their wives and children.

In contrast, female scholars are denied this right. Most female academics working in governmental universities have complained about this issue, given that this procedure has created a considerable gap in wages between female and male scholars. Furthermore, in these governmental universities, academics receive a bonus for development purposes, which is granted to female academics with much less value than male academics, although the academic load is equal.

This huge difference in the amount of the developmental bonus entails a difference in salaries. That is, salaries of male academics are higher than salaries of their counterparts, the female academics, who are always financially treated as single, even if they are married. Female academics have demanded equality in this regard repeatedly, but to no avail; and although some of them are divorced and the sole providers for their children or some of them have never been married, but they are the sole breadwinners for their families, nothing has changed. This problem is related to the Civil Service Law on the public job. Meanwhile, in other universities in Gaza Strip, such as Al-Azhar and Al-Quds Open universities, both genders are treated equally, and the only variance is the academic degree only. From the statistics collected by the study, we found that the percentage of female academics working on permanent contracts "regularized" is minor compared to the number of male academics who are similar in employment status according to the records of the Ministry of Higher Education, which is (14%) of the total number of regularized male academics.

“Non-regularized female academics working on an hourly basis in these universities face grave exclusion and discrimination in terms of obtaining equal teaching opportunities compared to male academics; this is attributed to several factors.”

The below table illustrates the percentages in the (5) universities in Gaza Strip, as the following:

No.	Academic Institution	No. of Regularized Female Academics	No. of Regularized Male Academics	Percentage of Female Academics
1	Al-Azhar University	19	226	8%
2	Islamic University	38	400	9.5%
3	Al-Aqsa University	70	450	13%
4	Al-Quds University	4	68	5%
5	Gaza University	11	41	26%

**Note: The table indicates the number of regularized female academics compared to regularized male academics in the (5) universities.<sup>3</sup>**

Al-Quds university has the least percentage of employed female academics, which is an indicator of gender-based discrimination in the employment process, especially that the university allows co-education; that is, it allows female academics to teach male students, contrary to other universities. Furthermore, the university adopts the open education or distance education modality which could constitute a good advantage for female academics who bear other family related burdens, and thus the scarcity in employment opportunities for female academics compared to their male counterparts reflects the discriminatory policies adopted by the university in terms of preferring to employ male academics.

Additionally, female academics confirmed that there is no parity in the number of female academics holding senior positions at the universities such as Faculty Deans or Department Heads despite the fact that most of these female academics hold higher academic degrees.

**Statistics have established this as follows:**

No.	University	No. of Branches of Colleges	Deanship of Colleges or Presidency of Branches	University Council
1	Al Azhar University	12 Colleges	None	None
2	Islamic University	11 Colleges	None	None
3	Al Aqsa University	10 Colleges in 2 Branches (Gaza and Khan Younis)	None	None
4	Al Quds University	5 Branches in Gaza Strip	None	None
5	Gaza University	6 Colleges	Two	Two

**Note: The table above shows the number of female academics in decision-making positions inside universities' administrations according to the latest statistics for 2019/2020.<sup>4</sup>**

The table indicates that there are no female academics in decision-making positions and that they are completely excluded with the exception of Gaza University, which, although is a new and private university, has the highest representation for female academics in decision-making positions within the study sample, the five universities. This is attributed to the existence of a policy from university administration that supports and empowers female academics as well as promote their access to decision-making positions. Exclusion of female academics from decision-making positions confirms their

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: the right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings; the right to the same employment opportunities; the right to promotion and job security; the right to receive vocational training; the right to equal wage; and the right to social security."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Annual Statistical Book of Education in Gaza Governorates 2019/2020, General Administration of Planning, Ministry of Higher Education, December 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Worker's Manual, Article 11 of CEDAW, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, 2002



claim that academic institutions adherence to the Palestinian Law is a mere formality, as a lot of female academics did not have access to their rights, and were not given the chance to participate in the decision-making process inside the academic institutions.

As a result, they are prevented from contributing to shaping the next generation that will lead the society through all its governmental and private institutions. This would instill the patriarchal culture in the mindset of the next generations, which, in turn, would increase women's inability to lead and limit their role to teaching academic subjects only.

### **Second: Gender-based Discriminatory Policies Against Female Academics:**

Through our interviews with regularized female academics, most of them unanimously agreed that they do not face discrimination on the administrative level in their departments and colleges. Still, gender-based prejudice and discrimination are evident in the distribution of academic courses. Whereas the main courses are distributed among male academics, and terms with high numbers of students are allocated to female academics. Female scholars are underestimated, and courses and schedules of some of them are taken away in favor of male academics due to social considerations, nepotism, and interceding. When some of these female academics complained to the administration, they were not done justice; others preferred to remain silent as they knew the outcome. On the other hand, university administrations do not dare to take away courses or schedules of male academics for the same reasons mentioned above. Moreover, many deans with stringent ideological backgrounds in all academic institutions often declare their unwillingness to work with women, especially if they require part-time academics; they prefer to work with male scholars.

Some female academics suffer from discrimination within their departments, mainly when they become Head of Department. Their male counterparts refuse to deal with her or abide by her instructions as Head of Department merely for being a woman. They even intentionally try to obstruct and hinder their work. Despite all the obstacles these female academics face as Heads of Departments, they have proven their competence in holding their positions and have achieved a score of successes for their colleges, as stated by the administrations in their universities.

Similarly, female academics chairing committees, such as the examination committee or committee of scientific conferences, face difficulties that hinder their work and the cooperation with them. These difficulties are a direct result of the patriarchal culture of many male academics who refuse to cooperate with these female academics and even some have submitted complaints against them. However, there are some male academics who believe in their competences and support them and their success. Yet, they remain the minority in a male-dominated academic community.

As for the non-regularized female academics, the majority confirmed that they face gender-based discrimination and exclusion, and that most universities prefer to employ male academics rather than females on hourly basis on the pretext that female academics usually have other obligations.

One of the universities adopts a religious ideology that promotes separation of genders and prevents co-education; they follow a policy where male academics teach female students yet prevent female academics from teaching male students. This gives the opportunity for male academics to teach both genders and reduces the opportunities of non-regularized female academics working on an hourly basis to get job opportunities in their academic discipline. Some female academics revealed that they are completely excluded from some faculties in some universities and are only employed in the event that male academics with the same discipline are not available.

### Third: Influence of Political Affiliation on Employment Process and Appointment for Senior Positions:

Discrimination in employment due to political affiliation is common practice in the third world countries, where members of the ruling party dominate most public jobs, expressly senior public jobs. This form of discrimination occurs inside the academic institutions as they are part of this overall system that inherits this discrimination with all its forms.

Throughout conducting the study, it became obvious that both female and male academics suffer from a certain problem equally; nonetheless, it seems much more difficult for female academics. The majority of regularized and non-regularized female academics agreed that political

affiliation plays a fundamental role in the appointment process and distribution of administrative positions, and given that most female academics are politically independent and are not affiliated to any Palestinian political party, we have unveiled another reason for the marginalization female academics suffer from inside most academic institutions. Politically driven favoritism affects decision-making, and many appointments are based on political affiliations in these institutions, which significantly affects the opportunities of female academics in employment and in attaining academic positions. In this regard, some female academics attribute the exclusion, discriminatory policies, and lack of opportunities to access leadership positions in the universities they face inside their universities to the fact that they are politically independent and that most of them do not belong to any political party that could defend and support them. In some universities, where more than one political affiliation is dominant, the appointment process and distribution of leadership positions in the university are carried out through quotas to ensure all parties' satisfaction.

These parties often prefer to appoint male academics as they are influenced by cultural heritage, social norms, and traditions that believe men have better leadership abilities than women. Thus, female academics' opportunities to access leadership positions in these academic institutions are scarce. This is something that we witness in all the academic institutions and is reflected in the statistics and figures attached to this study.

A more dangerous form of discrimination against female academics that is incompatible with all international laws, charters, and conventions, became evident; female academics are entirely excluded from decision-making positions. Looking at the history of all universities in the Gaza Strip, we notice that no female academics have held the position of University President or Director of University Branch or any higher positions such as a Vice President or Dean of any major college Medicine, Engineering, or Pharmacy. However, in the Faculty of Human Sciences, they access such positions even to a small scale. In most cases, it does not exceed one female academic in the whole university. The same applies to the Boards of Trustees, which do not include female academics, and if they did, it does not exceed one female academic in any way. Some universities even refuse the inclusion of any female academics in the Board of Trustees because meetings are held at late hours or after working hours, which, as

“One of the female academics spoke heatedly during the interview that one of her students became Head of her department shortly after his graduation through nepotism and interceding although his skills and competence do not qualify him to assume the position.”<sup>5</sup>

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

5 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2

they claim, constitutes an obstacle to female academics due to their family obligations, and thus it is difficult to appoint them. Similarly, there are no female academics included in University Councils even though these female academics hold professorship degrees and academic awards from prestigious universities and have an academic history full of achievements. Still, the patriarchal mentality controlling the decision-making process remains a stumbling hindrance to their progress towards these positions.

#### Fourth: Gender Related Challenges Facing Female Academics:

The principle of gender equality in employment opportunities is considered as one of the most important aspects of civilization in any society that seeks to keep pace with other civilizations and advance the status of its citizens. These societies are keen to abide by the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination as these principles have great benefits for the societies and their citizens. They also exert great efforts to overcome the challenges

“Despite all the efforts exerted by the United Nations to advance human rights and gender equality, discrimination against women is still widespread, and this discrimination constitutes a violation of the principles of equal rights and respect for human dignity, as well as an obstacle to the participation of women, on an equal basis with men, in Political, economic and social life.”<sup>6</sup>

women face in appreciation of their great roles in their societies. Yet, it came apparent to us during the interviews that female academics encounter many challenges in their work at the academic institutions; most notably, being females in a male-dominated academic community.

Most often, female academics lack the supportive environment that could support and help them to carry out their dual tasks at the university and their homes since they exert double the efforts inside and outside the university to accomplish the tasks assigned to them from academic and research responsibilities to life responsibilities relating to raising their children and managing their homes.

Some female academics complain about the universities' lack of commitment to providing them with private offices with computers and internet access inside the universities.

They often have to share the same office with other female

academics, which denies them their privacy and hinders their ability to focus on their work. As for the non-regularized female academics, the universities do not provide them with any spaces to take their breaks, prepare for their academic tasks, or meet their students to follow-up with them.

Sometimes, they use empty classrooms to complete their tasks or meet with their students who want to ask them about academic or research issues; this embarrasses them and denies them privacy. The majority of female academics working on an hourly basis in all educational institutions complained about this.

#### Fifth: Forms of Gender-based Violence and Their Increase During Coronavirus Pandemic:

Combating Coronavirus pandemic, which has spread across the globe and caused massive losses in all sectors, is similar to fighting with an unknown enemy whose shape and features have not been identified yet. Hence, all segments of the society must bear the consequences of this health struggle. Thus, both genders must be provided with equal opportunities to participate in the decision-making process on their own protection and life management issues.

"Resolution 1325 urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution."<sup>7</sup>

6 Discrimination in Public Job, Analytical Legal Study on the Reality in Palestine, Democracy and Workers' Rights Center, 2007

7 United Nations Resolutions, Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, 2000

All universities complied to the decision of President Mahmoud Abbas to suspend and close all public organizations and universities to prevent the spread of Coronavirus in Palestine.

But, in order to complete the semester and stand by the students' best interest, the universities launched the remote education or what is now called electronic or digital education/learning, through which both female and male academics work and teach via electronic programs or platforms selected by the universities. Academics institutions disregarded involving female academics in the management of the crisis, especially since they are already excluded from decision-making positions. They just received instructions to launch the e-learning system without being consulted on whether they would be able to work on this system from home or not. The academic institutions trained all the academic staff on the use of e-learning programs through carrying out only one workshop, in which they explained how to use these new teaching methods.

However, this pattern of education puts an additional burden on female academics who are working from home during the Coronavirus pandemic since they have to prepare the lecture, record its audio, and then upload it to the electronic program used by the university. Before the upload, they need to merge the audio with the video. It is worth mentioning that the universities oblige female academics to upload the video with the audio, which requires editing skills as well as a multimedia equipment. The universities have ignored the fact that these female academics are working from their houses and thus have additional obligations as wives and mothers, not to mention that many female academics do not have the technical skills in the use of technology for e-learning or remote education, especially that some universities have not endorsed this approach previously unlike some other universities that have previous experience in this modality, and did not face a lot of problems.


It is worth noting that this experience is novel for both female and male academics; that is, they are all facing this problem, yet in such circumstances, violence increases on the female academics since they work from home in exceptional circumstances across the world, and the tasks required of them are doubled as they are mothers, wives, and housewives. They are expected to do their duties as wives, protect and reassure their children during the Coronavirus pandemic, provide an appropriate atmosphere for the family to cope with the new reality that has forced everyone to take shelter in-home, and in addition to all this, she must achieve all her academic obligations.

#### Sixth: Female Academics Communication with NGOs:

Palestinian NGOs have contributed to spreading awareness among different segments of women and have focused on different aspects via conducting focused studies and researches on women's issues, drawing from the belief that although women's social and cultural statuses may differ, they all work towards one goal, which is eliminating all forms of discrimination, exclusion, and social persecution that limit and hinder their access to decision-making positions and to their rights according to their competences.

During the interviews, we noted that majority of female academics do not communicate with NGOs and do not take part in their activities; they also did not receive any invitations to participate in workshops, trainings, or women's events carried out by these organizations.

Some of them attribute this to their constant preoccupation with academic tasks, which do not leave them sufficient time to take part in civil society activities. Others hold NGOs responsible for not communicating with them, especially that the majority of female academics lack information on Labor Law and the conventions endorsed by the PNA that guarantee their rights inside their



“Awareness of rights is more important than demanding them.”

academic institutions. Some of the non-regularized female academics have limited communication with WROs, but it does not rise to the required level to enable them to play their social role.

## **Part Two: Conclusions Related to the Academic Institutions:**

### **First: Acceptability of Female Academics by the Academic Institutions:**

Palestinian Law did not include any articles that discriminate between men and women, rather, it stipulated that equality should be ensured in appointments, promotions, and incentives for both genders according to individual competence, in addition to other legal articles that guarantee the principle of gender equality and equal opportunities for both; these articles are evidence that the Palestinian law criminalize gender discrimination.<sup>8</sup>

The findings from the focus groups, especially with the non-regularized female academics, showed that their suffering is doubled since the patriarchal culture still dominates the mindset of many male scholars who believe that female academics are incompetent, unable to develop curricula, or participate in the administrative level; they believe that their role is limited to giving the lecture only. Many administrators in these academic institutions pay attention to these details; that is, they do not prefer to employ female academics to work at the universities. If applicants from both genders apply to a vacancy and their qualifications are similar, male applicants are preferred over females; however, in the absence of male applicants, academic institutions are obliged to hire female academics until male academics become available. Some of them believe that female academics are competitors to them who could take their positions. Moreover, many believe that female academics should not even work; instead, they should be satisfied with their husband's or fathers' support since the man is the head of the family, and therefore, is more entitled to work than female academics. In this sense, female scholars are excluded and marginalized. Many female academics have suffered and still do this discriminatory policy. Such an approach is a severe violation of the human rights of female scholars.

Additionally, freedom of opinion and speech is not ensured in the academic institutions; many female scholars who have tried to raise their voices to express their views or objections were excluded. Their voices are not heard. On top of that, they are forced to teach the existing curricula even if they are outdated. The majority of the study sample confirmed the prevalence of favoritisms and interceding in distributing and assigning academic courses and hours to non-regularized female academics, particularly for the relative of academic staff. It is a standard policy practiced in most universities to give classes or hours to people who may not have enough experience, but personal interests outweigh the public interest of the academic institution and students.

### **Second: Absence of Female Academics from Leadership Positions from the Academic Institutions' Perspective:**

This legal article stipulates that everyone is equal before Law and that gender-based discrimination is not permissible. Assignment to and access of leadership positions should be following the principle of equal opportunities, which means that everyone should be given equal opportunities, and all positions should be selected according to criteria and conditions specified by Law. The focus group discussions indicated that the main reason for the weak presence of female academics in the academic institutions and their absence from leadership positions is a lack of community awareness of the importance of women and their role in society.

“Holding public offices and positions should be in accordance with the principle of equal opportunities.”<sup>9</sup>

8 A Study on “Women in Senior Management levels” Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute- MAS, 2005

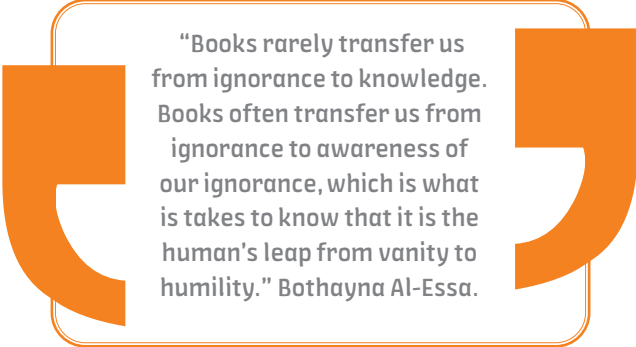
9 Amended Palestinian Basic Law of 2005

Some people attribute the absence of female academics from leadership positions in the academic institution, mainly the position of University President, to present-day to two reasons:

First: The patriarchal mentality undermines female academics, although they have proven their academic field competence. And through their accomplishment to their academic and administrative tasks, not to mention the social and cultural heritage and norms that underestimate female academics' capabilities and regard women unfit to lead the academic institutions as their emotions control them. Second: The political parties that dominate the universities. These political parties constitute a significant obstacle for female academics assuming such positions as they usually prefer male academics in these senior positions to implement their partisan political agenda. Some male academics referred to the absence of female academics from decision-making positions to the low numbers of female academics with a professorship degree, which entitles them to assume senior positions. However, after looking into those universities' statistics, we found many female academics who have professorship degrees and whose faculties are headed by those who have lower academic degrees than them yet have affiliations to political parties that support them. The mentioned applies to all academic institutions, and the Higher Education and Universities Guide confirm this fact.

### Third: Impact of Female Academics' Lack of Knowledge on Their Rights on Claiming These Rights:<sup>10</sup>

Through the focus groups, many female academics do not possess adequate knowledge of the Palestinian Labour Law. And the international conventions endorsed by the State of Palestine, which guaranteed their rights and which the academic institutions are obliged to abide by as they work under the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education.



“Books rarely transfer us from ignorance to knowledge. Books often transfer us from ignorance to awareness of our ignorance, which is what it takes to know that it is the human's leap from vanity to humility.” Bothayna Al-Essa.

We have noticed that some female academics are satisfied with the academic work only and are reluctant to take on any administrative work for fear of assuming these positions and going through this experience and the influence of the cultural heritage, social norms, and traditions on their lives.

In contrast, we noticed that many regularized female academics who face exclusion and gender discrimination are claiming their rights and have the willingness and ability to go through the experience of assuming senior positions.

The focus groups attribute the inadequate level of awareness on the Laws and international conventions to the female academics themselves who do not possess the required legal knowledge on their economic rights as guaranteed by Law and endorsed conventions and the lack of communication between WROs and HROs and female academics. These organizations have ignored female academics' participation in workshops to raise their awareness of their rights and duties, which created a gap between those organizations and female academics.

### Fourth: Female Academics' Concerns in General, and During Coronavirus Pandemic in Particular:

We realized that many female academics have fears and are satisfied with performing the tasks required of them and that none of them are willing to go through confrontations to claim their rights because they feel that they are alone and have no support. They consider their work at the university a job to perform what is required of them without feeling the importance of their social role.

Female academics confirmed that most universities do not pay immense importance to scientific research; they do not allocate budget cuts to encourage female academics to conduct scientific research. Also, university

libraries lack many scientific references, sources, and modern scientific journals that female academics need for scientific research.<sup>11</sup>

“Palestinians shall be equal before the law and the judiciary, without distinction based upon race, sex, color, religion, or political views.”



Furthermore, most female academics stressed that they are not supported in any activities or courses they might seek to implement with their students inside or outside university campuses. On the pretext, universities are undergoing a dire financial situation, which reduced training and animation activities for the students.

Non-regularized female academics confirmed that although most of them have been working at the universities for several semesters, they do not have a sense of job security because their universities have made no assurances for them regarding the possibility

of regularizing them. Now and then, female academics are shocked when relatives of senior staff at their universities get regularized. At the same time, they are left working on an hourly basis, which, according to them, does not cover their transportation since, in many cases, they are not assigned enough teaching hours either.

Regarding what the universities have provided to female academics during the Coronavirus pandemic, we note that universities have not provided anything exclusively for female academics; they provided facilitations regarding both genders' private education. They also submitted to the internet companies lists of names for all academic staff to increase the internet speed and facilitate the communication process in the virtual classes and with the students. The universities did not discriminate between male and female academics during the Coronavirus pandemic; they provided all electronic means and tools necessary for interacting with the students. In some cases, female academics with particular circumstances or excuses were exempted from some tasks such as reporting to the university campus in emergencies. However, there is great fear and concern regarding the size of academic tasks required from female academics in the remote education system. It has different impacts on them the family and the academic level.

#### **Fifth: Absence of Rights Due to Absence of Accountability:**

When accountability and liability are absent, violation of any human rights becomes part of the society's culture; a culture people can coexist with, adapt to, and take no action to change.

Also, forms of discrimination, exclusion, marginalization, exploitation, and gender-based violence increase in the absence of accountability and liability for these practices. Therefore, it is imperative to call for the activation of laws and endorsed international conventions as holding those who commit these violations accountable.

The focus groups revealed that academic institutions do not sign contracts with non-regularized female academics, depriving them of their rights. The mentioned allows universities to evade fulfilling the financial rights of these academics immediately after the end of the semester, equally to the regularized male academics. Several semesters may pass before the non-regularized female academics receive their financial entitlements on the pretext of the university's poor financial situation and students' lack of commitment to pay university fees. Sometimes, female academics resort to interceding or too well-connected acquaintances to expedite receiving their financial entitlements. It is worth mentioning that female academics, like all women working in all other sectors, have been suffering from the same pattern of discrimination for years. Yet the universities do not sign contracts with them to guarantee their economic and legal rights and the right to resort to the judicial system. In case of any violation against them or arbitrary termination, it is palpable from the preceding that academic

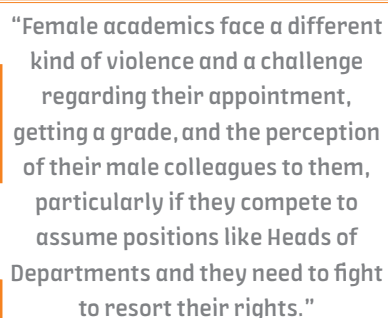
institutions in Gaza Strip have not played their primary enlightening role. And have not been able to bring about any change in the cultural heritage that contributes to excluding and marginalizing women. Instead, this cultural heritage has become rooted in these academic institutions. Here lies the gravity of the absence of its prominent role, especially that they are the most vital institutions whose primary mission is to shape the university youth's personalities.

Compared to other institutions that share the same mission, universities play a pioneering role. Thus, it would be wrong to lose or abandon this role or accept the de facto situation as a normal situation. It would gradually transform into a contributing factor in the consecration of the society's discriminatory patriarchal culture. Hence, attention must be brought to the gravity of the policy of exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization against female academics under the lack of accountability. Enlightened male academics who support their female counterparts must expose this discrimination against female academics and become advocates for them. So would pinpoint the academic decision-makers' gravity of what is happening to both the current and future generations.

### **Part Three: Conclusions on the Vision of NGOs and HROs for Female Academics:**

#### **First: Institutional Description of Female Academics' Status inside the Academic Institutions:**

The in-depth interviews indicated a consensus that female academics face gender-based violence. The decision-making is exclusively dominated by those with patriarchal mentalities controlling the academic institutions; this led to an imbalance in the employment process for female academics and their exclusion and marginalization. Viewpoints of female academics regarding the political affiliations playing a fundamental role in the academic institutions were confirmed in these interviews. They also confirmed that this leads to negligence towards female academics and discrimination against them regarding providing equal opportunities.



“Female academics face a different kind of violence and a challenge regarding their appointment, getting a grade, and the perception of their male colleagues to them, particularly if they compete to assume positions like Heads of Departments and they need to fight to resort their rights.”

Society believes that men are heads of families, and therefore, they are more entitled to work than women. In this sense, men are hired at a more significant percentage than women. In consideration, a form of gender-based discrimination against women. The same applies to discrimination in assignments, which are as crucial as appointment since, through these assignments, academics can assume a significant senior position inside the academic institutions. These are not assigned according to competence or quality of performance as applied in all fields of work. Therefore, female academics have to exert double the effort to prove themselves; despite the bullying and exclusion they face, they can earn higher academic degrees and diverse professional experiences.

#### **Second: Challenges Facing Female Academic from the Viewpoints of NGOs and HROs:**

Findings from the in-depth interviews with NGOs and HROs indicate that female academics face various forms of GBV and are subjected to discrimination in some academic institutions due to their external appearance, religious belief, or social class. Civil society organizations also confirm the absence of female academics from leadership positions. Some female academics complained that work meetings are inappropriate for their circumstances, which constitutes a violation of the female academics' rights as guaranteed in all local and international laws. Because the Palestinian Labour Law governs universities, and under this law, all employers are required to respect women's privacy; nevertheless, these laws are not applied in reality. There is no oversight over the practices and performance of the academic institutions.





**Accordingly, we conclude that violence is connected to two issues: the first is the social culture and the second is the special laws. Some laws are unjust and partial, but they are applied to all women in the society.**

### **Third: Relationship of Female Academics with NGOs and HROs:**

One of the most important findings of this study is that female academics do not communicate or resort to NGOs and HROs for help, advice, or participation in awareness meetings or seminars. There is no cooperation of any sort between female academics and WRO's working in the Gaza Strip. After reviewing the statistics, we detected only one female academic case who resorted to the Independent Commission for Human Rights, one of the HROs in the Gaza Strip. She took her case to the judiciary and won the lawsuit by a court decision, but the university did not enforce the court decision until the present day

Furthermore, there is an evident absence of female academics from WROs; there is no communication of any sort between them. The reason for this absence could hide a form of violence against these academics. The complaining female academics might be afraid of being held accountable by their academic institutions for no other reason but complaining; that is, they fear that they might lose their jobs and be excluded entirely if they sought help from these WROs. Also, it is reported that women do not trust the judicial system and do not resort to any judicial bodies regarding employment, promotion, or otherwise. They only complain to people in their surroundings.

On the other hand, NGOs, especially WROs, bear more significant responsibility for this estrangement between them and the female academics.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important reasons for this estrangement is the prevailing misconception in WROs that many female academics have a condescending attitude towards WROs as they possess the required knowledge and scientific skills and that WROs could offer nothing new to them in this field.

Even if this was a misconception, it might involve a great deal of logic as it reflects upon an essential part of the shortcomings in the work of these WROs. They were supposed to monitor women's status in society impartially and professionally, and away from any prejudgments, which reflects the need for professional and objective research on the reality of female academics.

Hypothetically speaking, if the misconception mentioned above is correct, does this exempt WROs from the responsibility of communicating with female academics to benefit from their academic successes and shed light on their experiences and disseminate them into society? Because this inevitably contributes to empowering and supporting the role of women in society and mobilizing social forces in their struggle against discrimination and exclusion. Still, this does not mean that female academics are not to blame for this estrangement. They should bear some responsibility in this respect

WROs focused their work and attention on marginalized women's groups like divorced women, widows, youth, graduates, and other groups. They did not tackle the issues of female academics, their numbers, percentage of their presence and participation in the different universities, the obstacles they face, or the level of discrimination and violence they are subjected to inside the academic institutions.

WROs did not provide any legal consultations regarding female academics' rights as stipulated in the Palestinian Law; neither did they attempt to organize any training programs; nor did they conduct any studies addressing their reality, challenges, and obstacles that could provide a solid base to build future researches on, except this study, conducted by CMC, which is the first NGO to take the initiative to work with female academics.

In reality, this state of estrangement between female academics and WROs reflects women's failure to identify and comprehend the issue of discrimination against them in the first place, Delays women's comprehension of the problem facing them until they are suddenly facing a certain procedure. They notice discrimination against them for merely being women because, most often, female academics are not aware that there is extensive gender-based discrimination targeting them. One might think that her problem is personal. This state of absence of women's solidarity is, in fact, a reflection of a lack of comprehension of the concept of gender-based discrimination. Perhaps this is mainly attributed to the nature of the prevailing social culture that is heaving with a lot of patterns of societal discrimination at all levels.

This discriminates in general, and discrimination against women is a natural issue that calls for neither surprise nor condemnation, especially that discrimination against women is often justified with ideological interpretations that strongly influence the cultural and religious heritage in the society. This could make any woman unable to realize what kind of discrimination calls for her rejection and rebellion. The differentiation between discrimination and what is expected in our Arab societies, which are characterized by their cultural heritage, seems like a challenging task.

The responsibility of creating communication channels between female academics and NGOs, particularly WROs, lies on both parties equally to deepen the cooperation and establish a women's academic body or framework that would support these organizations to play a vital role in supporting women and other bodies in their struggle against discrimination in all fields in the society.

#### **Part Four: Forms of Gender-based Discrimination and Exclusion:**

This section presents real cases of female academics who have suffered from discrimination and exclusion in their academic institutions. The study used the case study tool from an analytical perspective since it is the most comprehensive research tool to shed light on all aspects of the case; employs the historical and descriptive approaches, interviews, questionnaire, and rating scales; and helps develop the ideas that lead to results and answers to the raised questions.

##### **First: Gender-based Exclusion:**

Employees in any institution, be it public or private, may encounter problems that can be solved according to the law in force, but the case at hand was different.

(A. Z.), a female academic, has been working at the university's Bachelor and Master's programs for twenty years and has written two books, one of which has been taught at the university for eleven years, with no other book comparable to its scientific value. (A.Z.) applied for a promotion, which one of its conditions was to submit several types of research to earn an academic degree. To get the promotion, she agreed with a male colleague to submit joint research, and they agreed that her colleague would add a chapter from her book after translating it to their joint research. Indeed, after submitting nine pieces of research and a book to complete the promotion procedures, she earned an Associate Professor's grade. Two years later, she was referred to appear before an investigation committee, where she was told that her joint research with her colleague and was translated into English, was stolen.

The investigation session with her took only ten minutes, during which she was not allowed to defend herself. The

following day, she went to the university and learned that the committee had decided to take action against her by demoted her and ending her service.

She sought help at the Independent Commission for Human Rights, where she was advised to take her case to the judiciary. Indeed, she filed a lawsuit against the university. Her colleague, who participated in the research, appeared before the court and testified that (A.Z.) had no knowledge of what had happened and that he had sent the research for translation and arbitration abroad.

It is vital here to point out that it is accustomed to joint research at universities that the first researcher has the right to rephrase with maintaining the content. In this research with her colleague, (A.Z.) was a second researcher. In other words, legally, she is less responsible for the research's scientific accuracy than her colleague and cannot be held accountable for the research's scientific accuracy.

After her colleague acquitted her before the court, as did the investigation committee, which was also summoned to testify, she won the lawsuit. The court acquitted her of the accusation against her. Nonetheless, the university did not abide by the court decision and refused to take action. Then, (A.Z.) complained to the Attorney General, demanding that the university restore her promotion and grade. But, the university was procrastinating and refused to abide by the judiciary decision. The university did not stop at that; they filed a complaint to the Public Prosecutor, who proved their falsification, and their complaint was dismissed.

The university tried to put pressure on the female academic to prevent her from resorting to court. To our present day, (A.Z.) is still looking for legal channels to restore her rights and receive compensations for the defamation and psychological violence she was subjected to.

It is worth mentioning that (A.Z.) stated in her testimony that she had faced a score of problems with the university administration owing to their disagreement on ideological and intellectual issues and that she never agreed with their directions and patriarchal views of women. She added that there had been accusations against male academics of stealing researches and committing administrative and academic offenses, and the university did not take any punitive actions against them. On the contrary, they were rewarded by promotions for partisan reasons and because these male academics have people supporting them inside and outside the university.

"I will restore my right regardless of what happened. My case is still unresolved despite the fact that I received a court decision. I blame HROs that I resorted to for help but did not support me as required," (A.Z.)

### **Second: Political Affiliation Discrimination:**

Some academic institutions practice discrimination based on political affiliation and ideological belief; they try to marginalize and exclude all those who do not share the same political and ideological agenda. In this section, we will present two cases of two female academics subjected to this form of discrimination in two different universities.

**1. (L.Z.) Case:** She is an exceptional female academic who worked for four years on an hourly basis and then one semester with a fixed-term contract in an academic institution that is well-known for a specific political ideology. She was not affiliated with that ideology, but the institution needed her discipline. When the Ministry of Education announced scholarships for PhDs and realized that she met all the selection criteria, she submitted her application to the academic institution where she worked, which was supposed to send her application to the Ministry of Education. But the university acted differently; they believed that that opportunity should be given to a male academic who is affiliated with their partisan ideology, rather than a female academic who does not share their affiliation. Knowing that the scholarship would be given to only one candidate, the university sent the application of the male academic and not (L.Z.). She complained to the Deanship office at the university and demanded to claim her right. The university then retracted for fear that the female academic

would complain to the Ministry of Higher Education, and thus sent her application. The Ministry selected her application, and she traveled to Egypt to finish her Ph.D., with the university's approval. (L.Z) complied with the legally permitted period, which is three years, and then returned to the university. Her contract was not renewed on the pretext of the financial crisis the university had been going through, although several male academics from the same political party were appointed instead of her when she was excluded.

**2. (A.S.) Case:** She holds the grade of Professor Doctor and has worked in the academic institution for more than 25 years. During this time, she contributed to developing the institution and raising its status. She received a lot of praise from the university to perform the many administrative tasks assigned to her. She was involved in many committees at the university like committees on examination, curricula, and scientific conferences; she also held the position of Head of Department for many rounds. However, every time the University Council is formed, she got surprised that her colleagues who got appointed Deans for various colleges hold lower academic degrees.

In the last round, the male academic who was appointed Dean for her College had not been working at the university for long, but due to his affiliation with a certain political party he was appointed as Dean. In another incident, she mentioned that one of students became Head of her department shortly after his graduation although he was one of the weakest students, but his affiliation with a certain political party enabled him to assume the position.

### Third: Discrimination Due to Favouritism and Interceding:

Interceding or nepotism are widespread in many institutions, but its spread in the educational institutions is a dangerous indicator as these institutions play a fundamental role in shaping the mindset of the young people who will be in charge of leading the society.

**We will shed light here on cases of female academics who were subjected to this form of Discrimination:**

**1. (S.T.) Case:** She has worked at the university for six years on an hourly basis. She and other female academics are obliged to bring new students to enroll at the university, which is a procedure that contradicts all academic and ethical laws. Nevertheless, she complied with the conditions and policies of the university. She did not seek employment at any other university to give all her time to this university. However, in appointment and regularization procedures, she and her fellow female academics were always excluded, and relatives and friends of senior or influential staff members in the university are selected without regard to professionalism and competence standards. Most importantly, the President of the university branch, where she worked, did not hold a higher academic degree, but he had relatives inside the academic institution. She filed a lot of complaints against him until his services at the university were eventually terminated.

**2. (N. A.) Case:** She is the only female academic in her discipline. She came from the United States of America, where she refused a job opportunity to return and serve her country. She applied for employment opportunities in several universities.

She worked in the Faculty of Medicine is one of the five universities, on an hourly basis. According to her, she faced a lot of pejorative and interference in her personal affairs and external appearance, not to mention that some of them saw her as a threat to them, to the point that they intentionally stirred up problems for her until she was excluded. One of the most critical challenges she faced was the constant suppression of her opinions and ridiculing her ideas and suggestions to develop the teaching methods according to the international standards. They always pointed out that the United States was different than Gaza and that she should not compare between the two systems. As a result, she refrained from proposing ideas or suggestions that could advance the university's teaching methods.

Meanwhile, as she mentioned, male academics do not get suppressed when they present their opinions. The university did not sign a contract with her. Instead, they delayed fulfilling her financial entitlements on the

pretext of the financial crisis the university had been undergoing.

**3.(M. S.) Case:** She has worked as an administrative employee in one of the universities for fifteen years. During that time, she finished her postgraduate studies and earned a Ph.D. in her major, which she teaches at the same university. Since she earned her Ph.D. six years ago, she has been demanding to be included in the academic staff and transferred from her administrative position like her colleagues who were administrative employees but were transferred to the academic staff after earning their Ph.D. degrees after she did. Despite the university's repeated promises to transfer her to the academic staff like her male colleagues, she has not been transferred until the date of this study. She filed a lot of complaints during that time to the university administration and Presidents, but no avail.





# Chapter 3



## **Analysis of Questionnaire Data and Interpretation of its Results:**

This chapter of the study addresses the most significant findings concluded from the field study, whereas study questions were answered and results from each question were analyzed and interpreted.

**First: Results of the First Question:**

The first: question states, "What is the reality of the functional distribution for female academics inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip?"

**Table (1) Statements of Field One "Functional Distribution"**

No.	Statement	Relative Weight
1	Employment process is based on political affiliation	87.44
2	The university prefers to employ male academics rather than females on hourly basis	71.42
3	The university discriminates in the distribution of academic courses by gender	64.74
4	Employment priority is given to single female academics over married female academics.	62.44
5	Female academics are excluded from some colleges.	55.52
6	The university appoints female academics to head examination committees	50.26
7	The university ensures equal employment procedures for men and women	47.30
8	The female academics contact women's rights' organizations to claim their rights.	31.02

Table (1) shows that the statement (employment process is based on political affiliation) received a relative weight of (87.44%), and this indicates that academic institutions take into consideration the political affiliation in the employment and functional distribution processes. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that academic institutions are politicized. Also, the circumstances resulting from the Palestinian internal division have affected these institutions' nature and made them tend to employ people affiliated with certain political parties rather than others. Also, the statement: (the university prefers to employ male academics rather than females on an hourly basis) received a relative weight of (71.42), which is attributed to the patriarchal culture in the Palestinian society and other factors. The most crucial factor is that employment on an hourly basis is more profitable for the university since the lecturer has the same loads and academic tasks and responsibilities as the regularized lecturer but does not enjoy the rights, financial entitlements, and privileges. Thus, universities resort to employment on an hourly basis to ensure all possible efforts from the lecturer for the least wage possible. That being said, employing female academics in this system would be beset with many possibilities that could hinder the equation, as mentioned above, given the nature of women and their physical composition.

In contrast, the university may have to grant her leave due to pregnancy or maternity, which means the morally unbalanced equation would collapse. Work on an hourly basis is one of the exhausting academic types of work. The fact that 71% of female academics stated that discrimination against women in selection between male and



female academics reflects that this phenomenon has become evident for all female academics. This reveals that this phenomenon has turned into a systemic policy for academic institutions.

The statement (the university discriminates in the distribution of academic courses by gender) received a relative weight of 64%, which shows that most female academics feel they are subjected to gender-based discrimination by the Heads of Departments. Most of them feel this discrimination in the mechanism of distributing academic courses in their science departments. The statement (Employment priority is given to single female academics over married female academics) received a relative weight of 62%, which shows that majority of female academics agree that universities try as much as possible to evade fulfilling entitlements and rights guaranteed by laws to women, such as paid maternity and pregnancy leaves. This leads academic institutions to prefer single female academics over their married counterparts. This is considered discrimination and disregard of laws that guarantee women the right to employment regardless of their marital status. The statement (Female academics are excluded from some faculties.) received 55% agreement, which is not a small percentage. This confirms that there is discrimination that could amount to exclusion. It is one of the most dangerous types of discrimination to deprive a qualified female academic of doing academic work in a major she studied for years and obtained the highest certificates just because she is female.

The statement (The university appoints female academics to head examination committees) received an average relative weight of 50.26 %. The study explains this result based on the requirements for heading examination committees, which involves many efforts and tasks that the university administration could be unconvinced a woman can handle. The statement (The university ensures equal employment procedures for men and women) received 47% agreement. In this section, a good percentage of female academics confirmed that the university does not discriminate between men and women. In contrast, in the next seven sections, they confirmed outrageous discrimination against them in the universities. This reflects a state of vague understanding of the meaning of discrimination against them and reflects that they are not aware of their rights as guaranteed by national and international laws and regulations. This could reflect a state of university oppression for those female academics who are afraid of expressing themselves freely and answering with an affirmation to questions openly accusing the university of following a systemic discriminatory policy against female academics for fear of consequences of such freedom of expression. The price they could pay for this could be losing their job at the university. In both cases, whether the female academics are unaware of the discrimination against them or afraid of the consequences of freedom of opinion, we face open discrimination supported by policies confirmed by the more significant majority of female academics. The statement (The female academics contact women's rights' organizations to claim their rights) received a relative weight of 31.02%. Due to several factors, the most important of which is the weakness of human rights-based culture among members of the Palestinian community and lack of awareness on means to demand rights. The study also shows that demanding rights could expose female academics to the risk of losing their jobs or being excluded from employment. This small percentage, which is less than the third of female academics, actually represents the lack of knowledge of many female academics about their rights guaranteed by the law.

In conclusion, it is clear from the previous results that functional distribution is biased in favor of men in academic institutions. This includes several considerations, the most important of which is related to the Palestinian community's customs and traditions and the patriarchal mentality and culture. In addition to that, most academic leaders are men, and they tend to distribute jobs among themselves.

The study also puts some blame on the female academics themselves, for, despite their abilities, skills, and qualifications, they do not take the initiative to demand justice and balance in job distribution from universities' administrations.

## Second: Results of the Second Question:

The second: question states, "What is the reality of academic tasks assigned to the female academics by the universities in Gaza Strip?"

In order to answer this questions, the researcher used proper descriptive statistics.

Table (2) Statements of Field Two "Academic Tasks"

No.	Statement	Relative Weight
1	The university excludes female academics from appointment for positions of faculty deans and department heads.	71.54
2	The university trusts in the abilities of female academics to perform the tasks assigned to them.	70.38
3	The university grants female academics full authority to perform their tasks without interference from the administration.	64.48
4	The university assigns different administrative tasks to female academics.	61.28
5	Female academics receive invitations to participate in activities held by women's centers and NGOs	55.00
6	Female academics are involved in curricula planning and development activities.	49.36
7	Presidency of University opportunities are available to everyone based on academic competence.	31.66

Table no. (2) shows that the reality of job tasks for the female academics inside the academic institution has the following results:

The statement (The university excludes female academics from appointment for faculty deans and department heads) received a relative weight of 71.54%. This result can be explained in light of several considerations. The college deanship and heading of departments are of the highest supervisory positions in the academic institutions, and most of these institutions prefer to give them to men. The administrations of universities are convinced that these are difficult academic tasks, and this pretext is used to justify this discrimination. This transforms the discrimination into a favor the university is doing for the female academics to spare them a considerable burden they cannot bear. But the truth of the matter is that the academic administration is not convinced that female academics can handle the burden of leadership, resulting from a rooted collective social culture

The statement (The university trusts in the abilities of female academics to perform the tasks assigned to them) received a relative weight of 70.38%, which is higher than average and is consistent with the researchers' belief that the female academics have capacities and abilities which qualify them to lead in academic work and that their abilities are trusted. However, the administrations of academic institutions avoid assigning them some tasks, which is explained by the researcher that academic institutions invest the energies and abilities of female academics in implementing academic work. At the same time, they exclude them from administrative and supervisory tasks and responsibilities. In other words, the academic institution trusts female academics' scientific abilities but not in their administrative abilities. This reflects a massive contradiction in the administrative mentality of universities.

The statement (Female academics are involved in curricula planning and development activities) received a relative weight of 49.36%, which is a low percentage, and indicates that universities use the energies and abilities of female academics in academic work only and do not give them tasks related to planning and curricula development activities. This kind of discrimination does harm not only the female academics but also the educational process and its development, and deprives the educational career of a vital resource, especially if the female academic deprived of participating in curricula development holds a high scientific degree, which is the actual case in the academic institutions in Gaza Strip.

The statement (Presidency of University opportunities are available to everyone based on academic competence) got a relative weight of 31.66%, which is a low percentage but a real result that confirms the discrimination against female academics. This low percentage, which does not exceed the third, represent the ones who see that the opportunity of University Presidency is available for everyone based on their competency despite the reality that shows the opposite as no female academic has ever been appointed in the position of President of University in all the history of universities of Gaza Strip.

The statistical table of academic tasks indicates that there is blatant discrimination for interviewed female academics in the distribution of administrative job tasks. Still, on the other hand, this discrimination decreases in distributing other academic tasks related to the education process and research.

### Third: Results of the Third Question:

The third: question states, "What is the reality of bylaws and regulations to which female academics adhere inside the academic institutions in Gaza Strip?"

Table (3): Statements of Field Three: "Bylaws"

No.	Statement	Relative Weight
1	The university guarantees the right of female academics to paid maternity leaves and lactation hours.	82.70
2	Female academics receive equal pay based on competence and degree.	82.30
3	Female academics equally benefit from retirement law like their male counterparts.	78.20
4	Female academics receive annual bonuses and promotions progressively according to their academic evaluation without discrimination.	75.52
5	Female academics are held accountable for any mistake according to an administrative policy that does not differentiate between genders.	70.12
6	Female academics' families benefit from health insurance similarly to male academics.	68.34
7	The university makes available means/channels for female academics to submit their various complaints.	44.10
8	Female academics have ample knowledge on the International Conventions on women and their rights.	39.48

Table no. (3) shows the results of the legal field, which came as follows:

The statement (The university guarantees the right of female academics to paid maternity leaves and lactation

hours) received a relative weight of 82.70 %, which has to the commitment of academic institutions to some agreements related to labor law and agreements endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education which forces them to commit to granting female academics their maternal and care rights. Therefore, the commitment of academic institutions gives female academics one of their most fundamental rights.

The statement (Female academics receive equal pay based on competence and degree) received a relative weight of 82.30 % since academic work in the academic institutions is suitably paid. Compared to the local community in general and salary scales, a female academic finds her salary better than others' salaries and wages.

The statement (The university makes available means/channels for female academics to submit their various complaints) received a relative weight of 44.10 %. Researchers see that this represents a fault in administering academic institutions of Gaza Strip as they do not care about their employees' complaints, predominantly female academics.

The statement (Female academics have ample knowledge of the International Conventions on women and their rights) received a relative weight of 39.48%. Researchers see that this shows negligence on the part of the female academics NGOs, HROs. This calls for directing awareness-raising programs towards the female academics in both the public and private sectors to raise their awareness of their rights and professional duties.

In conclusion, the statistics in the legal field and according to the opinions of respondents, female academics, show that a good percentage of them have confirmed that laws applied in universities do not discriminate between the two genders in payment, financial entitlements, retirement, and other laws that guarantee the rights of female academics. This reflects that the discrimination against women in universities is not, in reality, visible, discernible discrimination. Instead, disguised discrimination finds an easy way to deceive applied laws to take away its essence, taking advantage of legal loopholes and the lack of knowledge of the female academics about laws and regulations that protect them from gender-based discrimination.

#### Fourth: Results of the Fourth Question:

**The fourth: question states, "What is the level of commitment of the academic institutions in Gaza Strip to provide opportunities for training and out of country mission?"**

In order to answer these questions, the researcher used proper descriptive statistics, and the table below illustrates the findings.

**Table (4): Statements of Field Four "Out of Country Missions and Training"**

No.	Statement	Relative Weight
1	The university prefers to send male academics on out of country missions.	72.44
2	The university encourages female academics to conduct research work and participate in conferences.	61.54
3	The university provides opportunities for female academics to develop their academic skills.	56.66
4	The university provides capacity building and training opportunities to female academics.	53.84
5	The university sends female academics on out of country missions.	47.44
6	The university covers the necessary expenses for the training courses and conferences attended by female academics.	35.40

Table no. (4) shows how female academics evaluate universities' policies in training and out of country missions. The statement (The university provides capacity building and training opportunities to female academics) received an acceptable percentage of more than 50%, which means that there is an acceptable percentage of the female academic who are satisfied with what the universities provide in terms of development courses for them. But on the other hand, the level of this satisfaction does not necessarily reflect quality or gender equity as much as it reflects a feeling of half of the respondents about what the university provides them with according to considerations of reality full of discrimination against them.

The statement (The university sends female academics on out of country missions) received a relative weight of 47.44 %, which is a low percentage that reflects the discriminatory reality against female academics in general.

The statement (The university prefers to send male academics on out of country missions) received a relative weight of 72.44%, confirming that this discrimination against them is in-country missions' policies. This explains the reality of out of country missions and that academic institutions tend to send male academics rather than females ones. Even though that this discrimination is closely related to the common social culture, which is a patriarchal culture, but there is also a very strong relationship between women's exclusion from opportunities of out of country missions and the lack of transparency in the mechanisms of nomination and selection. There are also accusations of interference of favoritism and nepotism based on familial relations, political affiliations, and mutual interest relations in those mechanisms. The matter that eventually leads to excluding female academics from the competition in the first place.

The statement (The university provides opportunities for female academics to develop their academic skills) received an acceptable percentage of over 50%, reflecting satisfaction similar to the first statement.

The statement (The university encourages female academics to conduct research work and participate in conferences) received 61.54 %, which is an average percentage.

The statement (The university covers the necessary expenses for the training courses and conferences attended by female academics) received only 35%. Universities that do encourage female academics to participate in conferences do not cover the costs of these conferences and academic courses, which means that the university is following unfair policy towards the female academics, because while that experience, they will gain from these courses and conferences will be in favor of developing the educational and research career of the university. Still, the university, in turn, will not cover any financial costs related to it. The female academics have to cover the expenses of her development.

The question remains: do universities follow the same policy with male academics?

Academic institutions must provide well developed educational and research services in pace with the knowledge and information revolution, but this will not happen as supposed if the universities do not cover the expenses related to sending female academics out of country missions. This is also considered a fault in academic institutions' performance, which needs a conscious review of the patterns of academic work. It can also be said that female academics can perform such tasks without the encouragement of universities. They have strong human motivation towards scientific research as a call of their patriotic and moral commitment.

### Fifth: Results of the Fifth Question:

The fifth question states, "What is the reality of general policies towards female academics inside academic institutions in Gaza Strip?"

Table (5): Statements of Field Five: "General Policies towards Female Academics"

No.	Statement	Relative Weight
1	Female academics work in a working environment filled with tension and psychological stress during Coronavirus pandemic.	84.10
2	University policies favor male academics at the expense of female academics.	76.02
3	Female academics suffer from discrimination, exclusion, and lack of opportunities especially during Coronavirus pandemic.	75.26
4	Coronavirus pandemic has affected the job security of female academics.	68.08
5	Female academics seek employment opportunities outside the universities to prove themselves.	66.54
6	Female academics have full space to participate in academic decision making on remote education during Coronavirus pandemic	50.12
7	The university provides means of protection for female academics during Coronavirus pandemic.	55.52
8	Female academics are involved in the discussion and making of important decisions at the universities.	42.18

Table (5) reflects on the reality of public policies toward female academics.

The statement "Female academics work in a working environment filled with tension and psychological stress during Coronavirus pandemic) received a relative weight of 84.10%. This is attributed to several factors, including coronavirus pandemic, which is one of the most critical conditions that face the whole world, going toward electronic work, which is a new approach that female academics are not familiar with.

Therefore, their keenness to exert all efforts to ensure the proper application and success of the idea of remote learning puts them under immense pressure as they have to do so from home, which means that female academics should do their duties as mothers and wives in addition to their academic work at the same time.

Thus, this constitutes a material and psychological pressure that is hard to bear, especially in our eastern communities where patriarchal culture is common and obliges women to do their domestic works without men's help because men in our eastern culture are not obligated to help in doing domestic chores. This means that women will do all these duties alone.

The statement (University policies favor male academics at the expense of female academics) received a relative weight of 76.02%, which can be attributed to the Palestinian society's patriarchal culture and institutions. This can be considered a summary of all above and a clear indicator that female academics feel discriminated against by the academic institution's administration.

The statement (Female academics have full space to participate in academic decision making on remote education

during Coronavirus pandemic) received a relative weight of 50.12%. In comparison, the statement (Female academics are involved in the discussion and making of important decisions at the universities.) received a relative weight of 42.18%. These results can be interpreted in light of the academic institutions' direction to depend only on male academics to hold Faculty Deans and Heads of Departments positions. Accordingly, they solely participate in formulating policies, programs, and activities, whereas the universities exclude female academics from senior or supervisory positions. Hence, their viewpoints are ignored in policymaking and sensitive decision-making, whether under all circumstances, be they normal or exceptional, as is the case in the Coronavirus pandemic, although the most affected by this pandemic, as we explained above, are the female academic in academic institutions.

In light of all the above, researchers believe that female academics are put in charge of academic tasks and do not participate in administrative activities and the decision-making process. Also, female academics live a reality that forces them to receive instructions, laws, systems, and regulations for implementation without discussing them or participating in making them. This is how university administrations control female academics through the discriminatory policies that have made female academics lose a huge part of their influential academic personalities in the university and society. The expected impact of all this is delaying the normal development of academic institutions and society's civilized progress.

### Sixth: Results of the Sixth Question:

The sixth question states, "What are the common forms of violence female academics face in the academic institutions?"

Table (6): Statements of Field Six: "Violence against Female Academics"

No.	Statement	Relative Weight
1	Presence of political affiliations in the universities leads to increased level of violence against female academics	80.00
2	Society's patriarchal culture is one of the reasons of violence at the university.	78.84
3	Violence affects the performance of female academics negatively.	78.60
4	Working from home due to Coronavirus pandemic has increased the level of violence against female academics.	71.28
5	Online learning has increased violence against female academics.	69.24
6	Coronavirus pandemic has led to an increased level of violence against female academics in the university.	64.62
7	Female academics face a form of violence during their work at the university.	61.80
8	Female academics are involved in the discussion of the educational plan during Coronavirus pandemic.	45.38

Table (6) shows forms of violence against female academics in the Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip. The questionnaire results indicate that a lot of female academics confirmed that they encounter some forms of violence inside academic institutions. This is indicated in their answers to the statement (Female academics face violence during their work at the university), as %61 of them say that they face violence during their work at the university. In contrast, in the statement (Violence affects female academics' performance negatively), 78%

of them confirmed that they psychologically suffer due to the violence they are subjected to. Such psychological status may force the female academic to choose one of two options only: either leave the academic institution, give up her academic duty, accept reality, and try to tolerate that widespread patriarchal culture. This dominating patriarchal culture is referred to by 78% of female academics in the statement on (Society's patriarchal culture is one reason for violence at the university). They believe that forms of violence are widespread in all institutions to the social factors related to society's customs and traditions and some to women's perspective. Yet, it is worth mentioning that all forms of violence recently are practiced against women in general.

The statement (Presence of political affiliations in the universities leads to an increased level of violence against female academics) received a relative weight of 80%. This is a result of the politicalized social culture of the Palestinian society. People practice violence to defend their ideological affiliations or views. Here, we can imagine the extent of violence that a man can practice against a female academic if she opposed the political ideology that he is affiliated with. In addition to the main form of violence practiced against her as a woman, she undergoes another form of violence that is more difficult due to political differences.

The statement (Coronavirus pandemic has led to an increased level of violence against female academics in the university), (Online learning has increased violence against female academics), and (Working from home due to Coronavirus pandemic has increased the level of violence against female academics) with relative weights 64.62%, 69.24%, and 71.28% respectively reflect that the rate of violence against them has been increasing. The state of tension created by the Coronavirus pandemic and the protective measures taken by the PNA to stop the spread of the virus through restricting people's movements as well as the frequent news on the speedy spread of the virus have all affected the general mood and the collective psychological status, creating a general state of tension in all communities.

This could be acceptable and justified, but it is unacceptable and unjustified to turn this tension in the eastern societies, including our Palestinian society, to a form of violence practiced by men to lessen their stress and tension through abusing women as they are always regarded as the weakest link in the society and violating them would not subject men to any form of accountability.

Hence, a large percentage of female academics who responded to the questionnaire confirmed an increased rate in the forms of violence against them by academic institutions through the academic work in the academic institution or electronic work modality, and the matter may be more complex than that with the increase of violence against them by their families at home.

In conclusion, we find that the results of the questionnaire are fully consistent with all results of other research tools, which all confirm that female academics encounter many issues that need to be highlighted and revealed, and solutions to address these issues need to be outlined, so that female academics can play their roles properly to contribute to serving the Palestinian society.





# FE



# Chapter 4



## **Strategic Suggestions to Reduce Discrimination against Female Academics**

**This** chapter provides focused suggestions to reduce discrimination against female academics and implementable recommendations and procedures for decision-makers in the PNA, the administration of academic institutions, female academics themselves, as well as HROs and WROs who are working on empowering women in order to reach decision making positions.

We provide this because female academics are one of the most important segments of women that contribute to the upbringing of Palestinian youths through participating in shaping and improving their personalities through the academic institution. Also, the organizations that are exerting all efforts to eliminate violence against women in the Gaza strip, but did not pay attention to issues of female academics who face double violence from the community and university, except CMC, which is considered as the first organization to pay such great attention and efforts to highlight the issue of female academics in order to explain their reality and the obstacles they face as well as present means to overcome these obstacles.

These suggestions are based on the main results of the study by using different research tools in order to promote the important role of female academics in the community, improve their conditions in academic institutions, and motivate them to go forward in their academic careers. The suggestions were formulated in statements that could serve as a basis for relevant stakeholders who are concerned with women's issues in general and female academics in academic institutions in the Gaza strip in particular.

These focused suggestions attempt to provide initial recommendations to help female academics to claim their rights, provide them with a real opportunity to prove their capacity in leadership, and address the obstacles they face inside their academic institutions as follows:

1. Suggestions related to the required procedures from PNA.
2. Suggestions related to the required behaviors from academic institutions.
3. Suggestions related to the required roles from civil society organizations
4. Suggestions related to required tasks form female academics.

We tried to present recommendations and procedures to reduce or end discrimination and GBV that female academics are subjected to through these suggestions. We also tried to draft a deep vision to improve the relationship between female academics and NGOs by developing a plan to support WROs' efforts, create more bridges between the and the female academics, and identify the possible cooperation channels between them. Besides, WROs and HROs can shed light on the conditions of female academics. These suggestions include ideas to increase the female academics knowledge on laws, resolutions, and conventions that guarantee their rights and give them legal immunity against academic institutions' exclusionary policy.

These focused suggestions formulate visions on the required procedures to advance the status of female academics and eliminate all forms of GBV. they also introduce visions to benefit from female academics' scientific abilities and their long experience in the academic institutions, in addition to providing mechanisms to implement these strategies appropriately and in line with their needs.

#### **First: Suggestions Related to the Procedures Required from PNA:**

One of the most important steps required form the PNA, as the responsible entity for making public policies for the country, is developing a long term strategic plan to change the culture of the Palestinian society regarding its perspective towards women in general since what women in general and female academics, in particular, are facing from gender-based discrimination reflects the setback of the society at all levels.

This culture setback increases when it includes female academics. The academic segment is responsible for building and improving society's culture in all human societies and keeping pace with human civilization

development.

This apparent discrimination in the academic institutions we can consider it as a systematic discrimination that is implicitly agreed upon and widespread in all academic institutions which are supposed to endorse within its laws the principle of compliance to the Palestinian Labor Law, which states: "Work is a right for each citizen who is capable thereof. The PNA shall provide it on the basis of equal opportunities and without any kind of discrimination whatsoever."

These academic institutions' discriminatory policies toward female academics have transformed into a self-evident phenomenon that is not submitted to criticism or debate. Instead, some justify those policies by saying they serve the academic institutions' work, although the Palestinian Basic Law emphasizes gender equality. However, in its explicit and implicit concepts, the social culture is a discriminatory patriarchal culture that is most of the time practiced against women. In contrast, this discrimination has shifted into a normal behavior that is rooted in cultural heritage. Thus, PNA should institutionalize strategic directions to change many of the prevailing cultural values and deepen the values of justice and gender equality. In order to prepare such plan, several steps can be proposed as the following:

### **1. Reformulating Educational Curricula to Promote Gender Equality Concepts.**

It is essential to work on mainstreaming gender equality concepts in the curricula of different educational levels to enhance the acceptance of future generations to hold leadership positions and reduce the domination of patriarchal culture in society, which is considered a significant obstacle to the progress of female academic. Also, it is imperative to include articles from Palestinian laws such as the Labor Law, Palestinian Basic Law, and the international conventions endorsed by PNA in the curricula of all educational levels to promote principles and concepts of equality, respect of human and women's rights, and reduce GBV to eventually achieve the social justice female academics seek.

### **2. Re-identifying the Role of the Ministry of Women's Affairs**

PNA endorsed several international conventions; the most important of these is CEDAW, which is considered as one of the most important conventions that guarantee all women's rights and calls for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. But, due to a lack of national mechanisms to implement this convention, the academic institutions are not abiding by women's rights. Hence, academic institutions must be obligated to ensure the application of conventions' articles and considering them as binding laws in order to enable female academics to access their rights.

It is worth mentioning that the problem here is that not all women's rights violations in general and female academics, in particular, are overt and obvious, whereas many of these violations are inaudible, hidden, and individualistic; these are not considered as collective violations, and the targeted woman's rights are violated individually. So, we demand the Ministry of Women Affairs play a fundamental role in combating discrimination against female academics and reformulate the laws that would activate the mechanisms of combating discrimination against women in general and exclude the possibility of circumvention though supporting the law with different binding legislations.

This would give the Ministry of Women's Affairs an active, binding, and regulatory role in detecting women's conditions in all aspects of the society, particularly female academics. Also, it is required to prepare periodic reports in this regard as well as create a national indicator that reflects the extent of the commitment of academic institutions to the legislations that criminalize discrimination against female academics. This matter needs strenuous efforts on the part of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to change the prevailing intellectual stereotype towards female academics, and that will create a real revolution in the conditions of female academics in particular and women in general.

### **3. Adopting a Strategic Instrument to Activate Accountability in Academic Institutions Regarding their Practices Toward Female Academics**

The Lack of oversight and accountability principles in academic institutions regarding female academics' rights steered these institutions to underestimate female academics' rights. The most important step required from the relevant authorities in PNA is monitoring the academic institutions' performance and holding them accountable in case they committed a violation against the female academics, especially that all academic institutions in the Gaza Strip abide by PNA policy and is committed to all its laws and regulations.

### **4. Developing the Communication Process between Ministry of Higher Education and Academic Institutions regarding Female Academics' Issues.**

The importance of developing the communication process between the Ministry of Higher Education and academic institutions is designing interventions programs related to exclusion, discrimination, and GBV against female academics. It also may reduce the causes of discrimination against female academics, make more effective and appropriate efforts to eliminate exclusion and marginalization of female academics, and enable them to access decision-making positions in the academic institutions where they work.

### **5. Neutralizing the Role of Political Parties in Administrations of Academic Institutions.**

Political parties play a significant role in the appointment, promotion, and assignment processes in academic institutions because most of our academic institutions are partisan and politicized, which affects access to opportunities of appointment, promotions, and so on for female academics general. In this context, the academic institutions' academic and administrative process should be neutralized, free of the disputes and conflicts of political life; they must abide by standards of professionalism and legal commitment in managing academic institutions.

### **6. Forming a Committee Affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education to Receive Female Academics Complaints**

Many of the female academics feel that the official authorities ignore them, and thus we propose to form a select committee to receive female academics complaints. The committee may include relevant parties in PNA, such as represented by the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Women's Affairs, to receive female academics complaints and hear their opinions on giving them their rightful role in the academic institutions.

### **7. Addressing the Absence of Female Academics in Decision Making Positions**

Female Academics are visibly absent from decision-making positions in academic institutions due to the prevalence of the patriarchal culture in those institutions, which are supposed to be a role-model for gender equality and justice. After identifying the reasons for this issue in our study, this issue should be addressed to provide female academics real opportunities to perform their leadership duties in line with their competence and disciplines, whereas many female academics are known by their unique and varied disciplines.

### **8. Urging PNA to Harmonize its Internal Laws with the International Conventions on Women's Rights Endorsed by Palestine:**

It is important to work on harmonizing Palestinian internal laws with the articles of the international convention on women's rights and endorsed by PNA. By achieving this, the laws, legislation, and policies will be changed to become appropriate and supportive for female academics' rights, as well as a practical legislative treatment that will be provided to bridge the gap between the capacities of female academics and their exclusion. That would, in turn, raise confidence among female academics and motivate them to claim their rights without fear or intimidation.

### **9. Preparing Programs for Capacity Building, Raising Awareness, and Empowering Female Academics**

That will be implemented through the cooperation between PNA authorities represented by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and HROs, WROs, and academic institutions. Through these programs, female academics will be trained and empowered. Their capabilities will be built, and their knowledge of all laws and resolutions related to their rights as guaranteed by the Palestinian Basic Law and international agreements will be deepened.

### **Second: Suggestions for Academic Institution on Methods and Mechanisms of Dealing with Female Academics**

This can be achieved by developing a long-term strategic plan that we mentioned in the PNA suggestion. It should be formulated in partnership and consultations with all academic institutions. The female academics face a direct result of the prevailing patriarchal culture in the academic institution's administrations. We notice this culture in the practices of these academic institutions towards female academics. In contrast, many of them consider this culture as normal measures to improve academic institutions' status.

### **Accordingly, the following steps must be considered:**

#### **1- Take Action to Change the Female Academics Reality and Improve it**

The study indicated that gender-based discrimination and violence are practiced against female academics in most academic institutions' administrations in the Gaza Strip in different forms. Despite the higher degrees the officials in administrative positions hold, where most of them have contact with the developed world, they still consider that female academics have limited capacities and are not suitable to assume decision-making positions regardless of what the female academics have achieved and still achieving in their work and the tasks assigned to them. This may require the academic institutions to work hard towards changing the reality of the female academic and trying to remove and end any discriminatory or exclusionary measures against them and provide an environment free from any form of GBV against female academics.

#### **2- Amending Administrative Laws that Directly and Indirectly Promote Patriarchal Culture in Academic Institutions**

There are no articles in any laws in force at the university that directly call for gender-based discrimination against female academics. There are implicit laws governed by cultural heritage that limit female academics' status and put them in a pre-determined stereotype, which they could not escape. Thus, it is essential to enact new laws that ensure equal opportunities in promotions and administrative assignments between the two gender-based on competence only to advance the education path and scientific research correctly.

#### **3- Achieving Equality in Appointment and Assignment for Leadership Positions**

The study showed that most often, female academics do not enjoy their rights equally to male academics in academic and administrative positions. This discrimination requires us to go more deeply into lots of details to detect it. Meanwhile, there is a clearer form of discrimination that exists in a codified and documented methodology in a package of laws related to the evaluation of appointment contracts with female academics. Within this declared and documented discrimination, the scale of inequality and discrimination appears in appointment contracts of female academics and their male counterparts. At the same time, the percentage of female academics in academic institutions in the Gaza Strip is estimated at 13.8% of the total number of female and male academics working in universities in Gaza Strip. Therefore, it was clear that female academics are excluded from drafting plans for the academic process, where this is clear evidence for a clear form of discrimination against women, which could be easily detected if we go into details. As it is illogic that more than 144 female academics with permanent contracts in the five academic institutions (the study sample) were not qualified to be part of the university administrations or hold the positions of Head of Faculty or University President.

#### **4- Providing Administrative and Academic Facilitations for Female Academics Working on Hourly Basis.**

We highlight the necessity to sign contracts for female academic on an hourly basis in the event they were selected to guarantee all their rights, particularly financial rights; it is important to provide places for female academics who are working on an hourly basis to have rest, meet their students, and to complete their required academic tasks.

#### **5- Ensuring that the Privacy and Personal Rights of Female Academics Are Respected**

Some academic institutions oblige female academics and students to wear a uniform as It is forbidden for any female academic who does not comply with wearing this specific uniform to work at that academic institution regardless of her qualifications and capacities. However, that same institution does not impose any obligations on male academics in this regard. This is a form of gender-based violence and a violation of the female academics' rights and freedom.

#### **6- Complying to the Palestinian Labor Law and International Conventions Endorsed by PNA that Prohibit Discrimination against Women.**

Private academic institutions should abide by the provisions of the Palestinian Labor Law and international conventions endorsed by the PNA, and thus, work accordingly to eliminate discrimination, exclusion, or violence against female academics. The same applies to the governmental, academic institutions; they are obligated to abide by all international conventions endorsed by PNA and prohibit discrimination against women and grant women their rights on an equal basis to men.

#### **7- Lobbying and Mobilizing Male Academics to Advocate the Issues of their Female Colleagues**

Male academics could have an important role in advocating the issues of their female colleagues and supporting them to share their issues, claim their rights, take their opportunity in empowerment, as well as access decision-making positions. Providing a supportive environment by male academics is an important issue and all parties should exert serious efforts to achieve this.

#### **Third: Suggestions Related to the Required Role from Civil Society Organizations**

HROs and WROs are among the essential actors responsible for defending female academics' rights. The discriminatory culture that undermines Palestinian women, in general, is the same that undermines female academics; there are no differences in this regard. Therefore, HROs and WROs should realize that female academics suffer from the consequences of the patriarchal culture that enfolds discriminatory attitudes against women. Thus, several steps should be taken to advocate female academics' rights in academic institutions.

#### **1- Paying Special Attention to Female Academics' Issues**

HROs and WROs defenders of human rights should dedicate a sufficient part of their work to highlight female academics' issues at universities especially that gender-based discrimination and violence issues against female academics are not highlighted adequately by NGOs defending women's rights.

#### **2- Creating Channels of Communication with Female Academics**

It is necessary to create channels of communication between NGOs and female academics, where NGOs should take the initiative and contact female academics, communicate with them, and involve them in their activities, initiatives, and programs so as to enhance the cooperation between them.

#### **3- Designing Programs for Capacity Building and Awareness Raising for Female Academics**

HROs and WROs should design special capacity-building and awareness-raising programs for female academics to raise their awareness and knowledge on their rights and ensure equality in appointment, assignments, and other



procedures as stipulated by the Palestinian Law. These organizations could sign memorandum of understanding and cooperation with the academic institutions administrations to implement these programs, on equal basis, for female and male academics so as to urge male academics to be supporters for all female academics' issues and demands.

#### **4- Activating Community Debate on Female Academics' Issues**

It is vital to adopt the issues of female academics and activate community debate regarding these issues since the academic field is one of the most important and appropriate fields for NGOs defending women's rights, calling for justice, equality and elimination of discrimination. Also, these organizations are the most capable players to realize achievements in eliminating discriminatory policies against women.

#### **5- Documenting the Violations Female Academics Are Subjected to.**

NGOs and HROs should work closely with female academics to identify their conditions inside their academic institutions and the extent of discrimination and violence they are subjected to as well as document these violations. In addition, they should encourage female academics to raise their voices where many of them have lost confidence in the justice system and feel afraid of reporting their complaints and problems.

#### **6- Conducting In-depth Studies on the Challenges Female Academics Face inside Academic Institutions.**

There is an urgent need to conduct extensive scientific surveys and investigative reports to address the challenges that female academics face. This role is mainly for WROs concerned with supporting women and enhancing their role in the society especially that female academics are among the most marginalized groups of women in this aspect.

#### **7- Integrating Female Academics into WROs and Benefiting from their Experiences to Serves the Whole Community**

It is necessary to integrate female academics at WROs, especially in organizations that fight all forms of discrimination. Within this framework, the organizations should move their work outside the walls of their halls and go to streets to reach the highest number of people within new well-planned and codified working mechanisms under a more comprehensive national strategy in order to change the discriminatory patriarchal culture against women in general, and female academics in particular.

#### **Fourth: Suggestions Related to the Required Tasks from Female Academics**

The most important steps female academics should take to improve their conditions and access their rights inside academic institutions are as follows:

##### **1- Establish Women's Academic Body to Defend their Rights**

The main suggestion in this regard that was unanimously agreed upon is the necessity of establishing a women's academic body to defend their rights and combat discrimination, marginalization, exclusion, and violence against them as female academics in particular, and women in academic institutions in general. This is the first step to overcome the problem because overcoming this problem lies in the female academics themselves as the right holders. They are the real spearhead in the march to restoring their rights, eliminating discrimination, and instilling justice and equal rights between men and women.

##### **2- Coordinating and Cooperating with HROs and WROs:**

The issue of establishing coordination and cooperation between female academics and HROs and WROs is vastly required in order to reduce the discriminatory policies against female academics in particular and women in general, achieve the desired cultural change in the society, and end all forms of discrimination against all women.

### 3- Developing and Improving Female Academics' Capacities.

Female academics need to continuously focus on improving themselves, acquiring new skills, increasing their capacities, and raising their awareness that hinder their contribution and participation in scientific research. Also, they have to engage in public affairs rather than only perform their traditional role inside the university or the academic institutions.

### 4- Drafting a Unified Strategy Aiming at Bringing Social Cultural Change

There is an urging necessity to formulate a unified national strategy in which female academics participate with the country, civil society organizations, and academic institutions in order to bring about a social cultural change through replacing the patriarchal discriminatory culture with a broad-minded humane culture which believes in protecting human rights rather than exposing them to discrimination based on gender, color, or belief. It also grants equal rights for all men and women.



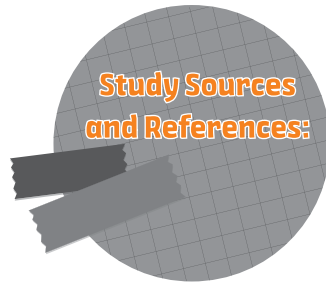
## Conclusion:

Based on the preceding, we could conclude several facts, the most important of which is that female academics in the academic institutions in Gaza Strip are still unable to join the march of women's struggle. This could be attributed to many factors, like the low number of female academics than the number of male academics, weak or lack of communication between female academics in the university and civil society organizations. As a result, each female academic face discrimination in her academic institution alone, without any support from her peers who could be facing the same discrimination in another academic institution or even in the same institution. This calls for putting the foundation to establish a women's academic body or framework, whose primary task is to combat discrimination against female academics in the Gaza strip's academic institutions.

This step requires intensifying communication between female academics to eventually conduct workshops to discuss the idea, holding the first conference to discuss discrimination against female academics, and then launching the women's academic body that will support female academics at the academic institutions. The body will serve as a new base for justice, freedom, and non-discrimination in society. Furthermore, it will be a qualitative addition for all organizations combating discrimination.

Also, the Ministry of Women's Affairs should have a tremendous governmental role to oversee academic institutions' oversight. This role should be supported by legal legislation that protects female academics rights. In addition to that, the Ministry should coordinate with WROs to formulate a national strategy to defend women, victims of discrimination, support all women in general and female academics in particular, and hold meetings and conferences to discuss women's issues with the inclusion of female academics to benefit from their suggestions in this field.

All relevant stakeholders should exert all efforts to eliminate discrimination against women, support them to gain their rights, and empower them to play their role in society to instill social justice, equality, and freedom. This would strengthen the internal fabric of any society, especially a society that has been fighting for nearly a century to instill those values in an independent country free of occupation such as the Palestinian society.



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# Annexes



No	Institution	Enrolled Students		Regularized Academic		Regularized Non-academic		Non-regularized Academic		Non-regularized non-		buildings	m
		F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T		
1	Al Aqsa University	10206	14,681	70	450	88	330					31	10
2	Islamic University-Gaza	9173	15,821	38	400	87	599	20	119	91	188	16	11
3	Al Azhar University	7222	12,448	19	226	18	83	9	106	9	33		12
4	Al-Quds Open University	4739	8878	6	68	26	200	53	236			6	7
5	Ummath University	99	398		12			28	152			4	5
6	University of Palestine	3365	7011	37	136			35	138			2	7
7	Gaza University	877	1758	11	41	8	41	25	108			3	6
8	Israa University	1697	2560	21	79	4	9	17	82		1	3	6
9	University College of Science and Technology /Khan Younis	928	2176	12	130	18	98			7	4	13	11
10	Palestinian Technical College	775	1900	1	21	25	106	16	62			5	5
11	University College of Applied Science	1958	4692	27	118	43	236	5	53	37	191	12	9
12	Arab College of Applied Science	474	866	3	31	4	15	2	28			4	5
13	Palestinian College of Nursing-Gaza	597	870	19	46	2	12					3	1
14	Faculty of Dawqa	265	348	12	46	5	18					1	1
15	Ribat University College	0	271		21		110		2		5	11	1
16	Al-Awda University College	59	393		6		1		38			2	1
17	Zaytona College University	6	8	2	9		4	1	5			1	1
18	Sahaba College University	67	121		8		2		6			1	1
19	Al Aqsa Community & Intermediate College	260	476	13	81			21	57			2	1
20	College of Intermediate Studies	0	106		22	1	14	16	89	2	8	6	4
21	Gaza Community College for Tourist and Applied Science	1259	2343	9	18	3	12	1	5		1	1	7
22	Gaza Community /training College	687	1700	17	55	8	60	3	4		1	12	1
23	Khan Younis Training College	140	298	7	28	2	6					6	2
24	University College for Ability Development	505	664	4	21	6	9	2	7			2	1
25	Al Nahda College	194	548		6				1			1	1
26	Namaa for College Science & Technology	47	103	1	5		1	3	26	4	4	1	1
TOTAL		45599	8447	329	2084	348	1966	257	1325	150	476	118	107

Source: Annual Statistical Book of Education in Gaza Governorates 2019/2020, General Administration of Planning, Ministry of Higher Education, December 2019.

## University Councils of the Five Academic Institutions:

### 1. Al Azhar University Council 2019-2020

No.	Name	Position
1	Prof. Dr. Ahmed A. El Tayyan	President, Al Azhar University - Gaza (AUG)
2	Prof Dr. Omar K. A. Melad	Vice President for Academic Affairs
3	Dr. Mazen S S Hamada	Vice President for Admin. & Fin. Affairs
4	Dr. Khaled M A Abu Shab	Dean of Applied Medical Sciences Faculty
5	Prof. Dr. Husain M. H. Al Hendawi	Dean of Scientific Research and Libraries
6	Prof. Dr. Atta A. A. Abu Hany	Dean of Science Faculty
7	Prof. Dr. Hassan S. M. Ashour	Dean of Planning & Quality Assurance Office
8	Dr. Mazen R. A. Abu Amro	Dean of Engineering & Information Technology Faculty
9	Dr. Samir M. A. Abu Mudalla	Dean of Economics and Admin. Sciences Faculty
10	Prof. Dr. Mazen M. M. Sabbah	Dean of Sharia Faculty
11	Dr. Osama S. A. Hamdouna	Dean of Education Faculty
12	Prof. Dr. Mansour N. A. Allouh	Dean of Admission & Registration Deanship
13	Dr. Abedallah Kh. H. Al Farra	Dean of Law Faculty
14	Dr. Mahmoud H. M. Taleb	Acting Dean of Pharmacy Faculty
15	Dr. Hazem A. Kh. Melad	Acting Dean of Dentistry faculty
16	Dr. Sohail A. J. Al-Madbak	Acting Dean of Medicine Faculty
17	Dr. Abedel Razeq A .M. Salama	Acting Dean of Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine
18	Dr. Zohair I.A. Al. Massri	Acting Dean of Arts and Human Sciences Faculty
19	Dr. Abed Rabo A.H. Al-Anazi	Acting Dean of Student Affairs Deanship

Source: Official Website of Al-Azahr University

## 2. Council of Islamic University 2019-2020

No.	Name	Position
1	Prof. Dr. Nasser Ismail Farahat	President of the Islamic University- Gaza
2	Prof. Dr. Elian A. S. Al Howla	Vice President for Academic Affairs
3	Prof. Dr. Ahmed S. H. Muhaissen	Vice President for Administrative Affairs
4	Dr. Khaled A. m. Al Halaq	Dean of External Affairs
5	Prof. Dr. Asaad V. A. Asa'd	Dean of South Campus
6	Prof. Dr. Bassam H. R. Al Saqa	Dean of Research and Postgraduate Affairs
7	Dr. Mohammed A. M. Al Hanjouri	Dean of Quality and Development Deanship
8	Dr. Wael A. I. Tabaza	Dean of Admission & Registration Deanship
9	Dr. Said S. S AL Ghoura	Dean of Student Affairs
10	Dr. Alaa Aldeen D. Al Jemmasi	Dean of Community and Continuing Education
11	Dr. Tayseer K. I. Ibraheem	Dean of Sharia & Law Faculty
12	Prof. Dr. Reyad M. j. Qassem	Dean of Osoul Eddin Faculty
13	Dr. Raed A. T. Salha	Dean of Arts Faculty
14	Prof. Dr. Ibraheem H. H. Alastal	Dean of Education Faculty
15	Prof. Dr. Hamdi Sh. M. Zo'rboub	Dean of Economy and Administrative Science Faculty
16	Dr. Ayman H. D. Al Saqa	Dean of Science Faculty
17	Prof. Dr. Mazen M. M. Al Zaharna	Dean of Health Science Faculty
18	Dr. Khalil M. Kh. Alastal	Dean of Engineering Faculty
19	Dr. Fadel N. M. Na'im	Dean of Medicine Faculty
20	Dr. Ashraf V. A. Aljedi	Dean of Nursing Faculty
21	Dr. Eyad M. Q. Al Agha	Dean Information Technology Faculty

Source: Official Website of the Islamic University- Gaza



### 3. Council of Al Aqsa University 2019-2020

No.	Name	Position
1	Prof. Dr. Ayamn Sobeh	Acting President
2	Dr. Raed Al Hajjar	Dean of Academic Affairs
3	Dr. Fayeq Al Naouq	Dean of Administrative Affairs
4	Dr. Mohammed Abo Owda	Dean of Community Service Faculty
5	Dr. Omar Meqdad	Dean of Planning and Development
6	D. Ali Al Astal	Dean of Science Faculty
7	Dr. Abed Nasser Srouf	Dean of Art Faculty
8	Dr. Mohammed Salman	Dean of Postgraduate Studies
9	Dr. Majdi Hamada	Dean of Scientific Research Faculty
10	Dr. Ahmed Al Mghari	Dean of Media Faculty
11	Dr. Tayseer Nashwan	Dean of Al Al-aqsa Community & Intermediate College Faculty
12	Dr. Omar Keshta	Faculty of Physical Education and Sport
13	Dr. Nasser Abu Al Atta	Dean of Student Affairs
14	Dr. Khaled Abu Nada	Dean of Admission and Registration
15	Dr. Emad Al Sharif	Dean of Libraries
16	Dr. Ahed Hilles	Dean of Fine Art Faculty
17	Dr. Mansour Al Vazji	Dean of Medical Professions Faculty
18	Dr. Alaa Al Sayed	Dean of Administration Faculty

Source: Updated member list of Al Aqsa university council which was announced in 19/12/2019 and was published on the websites.

#### 4. Council of Gaza University

No.	Name	Position
1	Prof. Dr. Farid S. Al Qaik	University President
2	Dr. Zeyad Al Damagh	Vice President for Academic Affairs
3	Dr. TariK Abu Hujair	Dean of Administrative and Financial Science Faculty
4	Eng. Ihab F. Al Aloul	Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs
5	Dr. Siham A. abu Al Amrain	Dean of Scientific Research and Postgraduates Studies
6	Dr. Bahaa Abed Al Dayem	Director of University Branch in Northern Governorate of Gaza
7	Dr. Kholoud K. Sh. Al Batsh	Dean of Computer and Information Technology
8	Salam Z. Al Agha	Director of University Branch in Southern Gaza
9	Prof. Dr. Saif Aldeen Al Balaawy	Dean of Law Faculty

Source: Official Website of Gaza University 2019-2020.

#### 5. Council of Al-Quds Open University

No.	Name	Position
1	Prof. Dr. Mohammed Al Kahlout	Vice President for Gaza Strip Affairs
2	Dr. Nader Hellis	Director of Gaza Branch
3	Dr. Ra'fat Jouda	Director of North Gaza Branch
4	Dr. Hazem Al Shaikh Ahmed	Director of Al-Wusta Branch
5	Dr. Jaber Abu Shawish	Director of Khan Younis Branch
6	Dr. Suliman Al Dirawi	Director of Rafah Branch

Source: Official Website of the University 2019-2020

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

### **Study Questionnaire**

Esteemed Academic,  
Best greetings.

We present to you a questionnaire vital to conduct a study on:

“The status of female academics in the academic institutions in the Gaza Strip”

Kindly, carefully answer the set of questions included in this questionnaire by placing a (☉) in the filed correspondent to the appropriate answer in the box designated for that.

The researcher confirms that the information collected via this questionnaire will be confidential and will be used for scientific research purpose merely.

**Kindly accept the assurance of our highest consideration.**

The Researcher

**Preliminary Data:**

**1- Age:**

- 30 years or less       31 to 40 years  
 41 to 50 years       Above 50 years

**2- Educational Qualifications:**

- Master Degree       PhD       Post Doctorate

**3- Nature of Employment:**

- Regularized Faculty Member       Non-regularized Faculty Member

**4- Job Title:**

- Faculty Member       Head of Department  
 Faculty Dean       University President

**5- Years of Experience:**

- Less than 5 years       5 – 10 years  
 11 – 15 years       Above 15 years

**6- Marital Status:**

- Married       Single  
 Divorced       Widowed

**7- University:**

- Al Azhar University       Islamic University       Al Aqsa University  
 Al Quds Open University       Gaza University

Part One: Employment and Academic Tasks

**First: Functional Distribution**

No	Statements	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	The university ensures equal employment procedures for men and women					
2	The university prefers to employ male academics rather than females on hourly basis					
3	The university discriminates in the distribution of academic courses by gender					
4	The university appoints female academics to head examination committees					
5	Female academics are excluded from some colleges.					
6	Employment priority is given to single female academics over married female academics.					
7	The female academics contact women's rights' organizations to claim their rights.					
8	Political affiliation is taken into consideration in employment.					

**Second: Tasks Assigned to Female Academics**

No	Statements	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	The university grants female academics full authority to perform their tasks without interference from the administration					
2	The university trusts in the abilities of female academics to perform the tasks assigned to them					
3	The university assigns different administrative tasks to female academics					
4	Presidency of University opportunities are available to everyone based on academic competency.					
5	Female academics are involved in curricula planning and development activities.					
6	The university excludes female academics from appointment for positions of faculty deans and department heads.					
7	Female academics receive invitations to participate in activities held by women's centers and NGOs					

Part Two: Bylaws and Rights of Female Academics:

**First: Bylaws and Female Academics:**

No	Statements	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	Female academics receive equal pay based on competence and degree					
2	Female academics receive annual bonuses and promotions progressively according to their academic evaluation without discrimination.					
3	Female academics are held accountable for any mistake according to an administrative policy that does not differentiate between genders.					
4	Female academics' families benefit from health insurance similarly to male academics.					
5	Female academics equally benefit from retirement law like their male counterparts					
6	The university guarantees the right of female academics to paid maternity leaves and lactation hours.					
7	The university makes available means/channels for female academics to submit their various complaints.					
8	Female academics have ample knowledge on the International Conventions on women and their rights.					

**Second: Out of Country Missions and Training:**

No	Statements	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	The university provides capacity building and training opportunities to female academics.					
2	The university sends female academics on out of country missions.					
3	The university prefers to send male academics on out of country missions.					
4	The university provides opportunities for female academics to develop their academic skills.					
5	The university encourages female academics to conduct research work and participate in conferences.					
6	The university covers the necessary expenses for the training courses and conferences attended by female academics.					

**Part Three: General Policies towards Female Academics:**

No	Statements	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	Universities favor male academics at the expense of female academics.					
2	The university provides means of protection for female academics during Coronavirus pandemic.					
3	Coronavirus pandemic has affected the job security of female academics.					
4	Female academics suffer from discrimination, exclusion, and lack of opportunities especially during Coronavirus pandemic.					
5	Female academics work in a working environment filled with tension and psychological stress during Coronavirus pandemic.					
6	Female academics have full space to participate in academic decision making on remote education during Coronavirus pandemic.					
7	Female academics seek employment opportunities outside the universities to prove themselves.					
8	Female academics are involved in the discussion and making of important decisions at the universities.					



**Part Four: Violence against Female Academics:**

No	Statements	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1	Female academics face a form of violence during their work at the university.					
2	Violence affects the performance of female academics negatively.					
3	Society's patriarchal culture is one of the reasons of violence at the university.					
4	Presence of political affiliations in the universities leads to increased level of violence against female academics.					
5	Coronavirus pandemic has led to an increased level of violence against female academics in the university.					
6	Online learning has increased violence against female academics.					
7	Working from home due to Coronavirus pandemic has increased the level of violence against female academics.					
8	Female academics are involved in the discussion of the educational plan during Coronavirus pandemic.					

## **Code of Ethics and Conduct** **To Protect and Promote Women's Rights in the Palestinian Academic Institutions**

This code is one of the important outputs of "Ambassador for Women's Rights" project, implemented by Community Media Center (CMC) in partnership with Heinrich Böll Foundation- Germany. The project goal is to raise awareness on women's rights inside the Palestinian academic institutions and activate the role of university students in raising and enhancing awareness on women's rights to act as ambassadors among their peers in order to disseminate a culture of respecting women's rights. Also the project aims at mobilizing efforts to advocate, support, and respect women's rights in the Palestinian society.

### **Article (1)**

#### **Introduction**

In light of the Palestinian universities emphasis on the importance of women's rights and endorsing them as they are an integral part in all international human rights instruments, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women with its Optional Protocol, not to mention all other Palestinian laws related to women's rights, which are part of human rights that are the inalienable, interrelated and indivisible, this unique code of conduct "Protecting and Promoting Women's Rights in Palestinian Universities" was developed to function as a guideline for women on work and leadership at work in their area of influence based on the applied laws, regulations, and values.

The Palestinian universities believe in the importance of underlining women's rights and their leading role in achieving development in the Palestinian society; in addition, universities stress on women's leading role in promoting gender equality as a step towards ensuring effective and influential participation of women without discrimination. They believe this can be achieved by eliminating all obstacles and restrictions that hinder women's access to university education, jobs, leadership and academic positions at universities based on the basis of equality and equity with men.

#### **Basic Principles of the Code:**

The code of ethics and conduct on protecting women's rights in the Palestinian universities is based on five basic principles related to main duties, roles, and powers.

1. Women's human rights: Adopting human rights principles, respecting women's dignity, combating all forms of discrimination against women, and raising awareness on gender based - violence (GBV) and all its forms and in all fields.
2. Inclusion: The goal should not be signing the code merely, but, most importantly, the code's articles should be included in the policies, procedures, and regulations governing the university's work. Also, the gaps in the plan for providing various educational services should be reviewed in order to overcome the gap related to women's rights in the university environment.
3. Commitment: The signatories of the code should abide by following up the commitment of all parties with the articles of the code, provide oversight on their implementation, and transfer the articles to practical steps and procedures.
4. Motivation: The signatories should take all motivational measures and procedures for all committed parties to the articles of the code.
5. Activation: The signatories should endorse and promote the code of conduct, and provide training for female and male employees, members, students in the Palestinian universities on commitment to the code's principals in different positions.

#### **The Code of Conduct Confirms the Following:**

1. Female and male workers, academics, employees, presidents, members of board of trustee, deans of colleges, heads of departments, and students want to protect women's rights in the university.

2. Female and male workers, academics, employees, presidents, members of board of trustee, deans of colleges, heads of departments, and students are willing to fulfill their duties and assume their responsibilities efficiently, impartially, and without discrimination between the two genders.
3. Female and male workers, academics, employees, presidents, members of board of trustee, deans of colleges, heads of departments, and students want to act according to the best practices towards protecting women's rights and gain the highest level of respect from beneficiaries of both genders.

#### **The Goals Code of Conduct:**

1. Raising awareness for all parties, officials, and female and male students on the importance of respecting and promoting women's rights at university within the framework of providing an appropriate environment for women in order to enable them to enjoy the right to education.
2. Defining the standards for the desired and expected behaviors and morals from the code's target groups regarding women's rights in Palestinian universities.
3. Raising male and female students' awareness on the best and ideal behaviors towards protecting women's rights in Palestinian universities.
4. Developing a specific framework to contextualize the ideal professional behavior that is responsible of protecting women's rights, instead of leaving it to personal efforts of female and male employees or university administration.
5. Reducing the gap of discrimination and inequality between the two genders inside the Palestinian universities.
6. Contributing to making the work environment of the Palestinian universities more appropriate for women's rights.

#### **Article (2)**

##### **Code of Conduct Toward Women's Right to Dignity and Protection from Humiliation or Degrading Conduct**

1. Adopting policies and procedures that guarantee respect of and protection to women's human rights.
2. Taking all appropriate measures to prevent exploitation or humiliation of female employees and students in Palestinian universities and put those measures under effective implementation.
3. Adopting appropriate procedures and measures to ensure the protection of women's right to respect of their human dignity.
4. Taking all measures that guarantee protection for women's right to dignity when receiving university aid (university scholarships, exemptions, university loans ... etc).
5. Taking all necessary measures and procedures to protect women in Palestinian universities from and humiliation or degrading conduct.

#### **Article (3)**

##### **Code of Conduct Towards Women's Rights to Privacy and Personal Security**

1. Ensuring that every woman, whether an employee or a student, enjoys the right to respect for her life and personal security. Also, ensuring that all forms of exploitation, ill-treatment, and cruel and inhumane punishment that violate woman's human dignity are prohibited.
2. Taking all effective and appropriate procedures toward protecting women's right to privacy and personal security through the following:
  - Including the articles that prohibit all forms of violence against women in the executive regulations and administrative and academic work procedures in the Palestinian universities; whereas these articles become under effective implementation with ensuring accountability for perpetrators of violence against women.
  - Adapting all facilities of the university for the needs of women in order to guarantee their privacy and personal security where these facilities become friendly to women's rights (such as: 1. Admission and registration areas are appropriate, that is, they can accommodate large numbers of female students at the same time, similar to spaces specialized for male students; 2. Courtyard spaces are appropriate to

women's needs and privacy; 3. Sports spaces are appropriate for female students, that is, they include dressing rooms that ensure students' privacy; and 4. Health facilities have adequate health care potentials and provide the emergency medical care .. Etc.)

- Developing an effective and free system to report any practices that are considered as any form of violence against women in the Palestinian universities.
- Allocating adequate budgets and other resources to ensure the implementation and monitoring the measures aiming at preventing and eliminating violence against women at universities.
- Taking all necessary measures to ensure protection of female students and workers from direct or electronic bullying within the university environment.

#### **Article (4)**

##### **Code of Conduct for Presidents and Directors of the Palestinian Universities**

1. Committing to holding all Board of Trustees or academic bodies' meetings at times and conditions that are socially acceptable and appropriate for women.
2. Providing adequate spaces for women, on an equal basis with men, to express their views freely without imposing any moral or material authority or control on them.
3. Taking all necessary measures to inform female members about meetings' agendas within enough time in advance.
4. Assigning female members / academics / workers tasks within the specialized committees based on the principle of equality in rights and duties.
5. Providing female members / academics / workers equal opportunity to appear in media and represent the university before the public.
6. Attaching huge importance to measuring the impact of any decision on gender before taking it.
7. Reviewing the university's budgets and identifying gender gaps as well as expenses allocations whereas a special part of the budget is allocated for gender needs and gender mainstreaming annually.
8. Promoting a participatory approach by the university to ensure women's participation in all stages related to policies, planning, and decision-making.
9. Ensuring gender mainstreaming in the university work and program plans to be gender responsive.
10. Allocating material and moral resources to support gender equality within the university's leadership bodies and frameworks as well as within its provided educational services.
11. Ensuring principles of eligibility, qualifications, competitiveness and equal opportunities in dealing with female and male employees, workers, students in all matters related to their employment and educational status.
12. Providing male and female employees, female workers, and female academics an appropriate and continuous training program to improve their qualifications and develop their career path according to the applied provisions of the employees system at the university as appropriate.
13. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality for any personal information related to women by the female and male workers, academics, and employees in the university that they knew during their work, whereas they should not release this information unless it is required by formal procedures.
14. Refraining from conducting any behavior that may violate any of women's rights in the university environment.

#### **Article (5)**

##### **Code of Conduct Toward Eliminating all Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Palestinian Universities**

- 1- Taking all necessary measures to promote equality between women and men in the university, whereas each of them has the right to access and obtain opportunities, services, available resources, and equal participation through the following:
  - Ensuring actual benefit from various university services based on gender equality.
  - Ensuring equal participation and representation of women in all leadership positions and administrative,

academic and bodies syndicates.

- Reviewing and updating the in force regulations, procedures, systems, policies, and practices as well as remove all forms of discrimination from them to ensure the promotion of equality and protection for women's rights.
- Supporting all initiatives and activities that aim at reducing discrimination gap and promoting gender equality at the university
- Taking all necessary constructive procedures to increase women's representation in trade union and student bodies through using women's quota.
- Taking all measure and procedures that guarantee women's participation in all elections without discrimination.
- Supporting women's representation, equally to men, in all stages of electoral process.
- Considering women as equal partners to men in all the levels of developing and implementing the university policies and its programs.

**2- Taking all necessary procedures to overcome the discrimination gap between women and men in the right to work through the following:**

- Taking all necessary measures to increase the number of women employees in the academic and administrative bodies at the university, equally to men employees in the university.
- Considering all required measures to remove obstacles that restrict women from occupying leadership positions related to decision-making in all administrative and organizational structure of the university as well as providing them with opportunities to occupy positions such as university president, dean of colleges, head of department, etc.
- Promoting the right to equal payment for the work of equal value for women and men through taking all necessary measures to provide women with equal salaries and wages to men working in the university.
- Ensuring women's right to paid employment and receiving the same bonuses and entitlements granted to wage-earning men in addition to allowances for the wife and children, and taking necessary measure to ensure implementation of this right.
- Paying high attention to provide gender- responsive work environment in the working or academic environment.
- Considering gender sensitivity in regular and emergency leaves and lactations hours for women working in academic or administrative bodies.
- Ensuring providing a paid maternity leave for female employees before and after childbirth.
- Promoting gender equality in accessing employment opportunities.
- Promoting the right to equal payment for the work of equal value for women and men.
- Ensuring transparency in employment, promotion and service termination for women.
- Taking all necessary measures that combat sexual harassment in the workplace and punish the perpetrators.
- Providing an appropriate and suitable environment for women with disabilities or special needs whether they are students or employees in the academic or administrative bodies.
- Establishing kindergarten for female married employees and students who spend long hours at the university.

**3- Taking all necessary procedures to bridge the gap of discrimination between women and men in the right to education and self-development through the following:**

- Providing equal opportunities for women and men to benefit and access opportunities for out of country missions and to represent the university in Arab and international forums.
- Providing equal opportunities for men and women to earn scholarships, exemptions, and university loans.
- Providing equal educational facilities for male and female students with same efficiency and quality.

- Providing qualified academic cadres for female students equally to male students, especially in the case of universities that do not allow co-education.
- Considering the suitable schedules of lectures for female students and respecting the female students' privacy via avoiding giving lectures at late times as this hinders following up their lectures.
- Affording equal and sufficient time for female student to use educational facilities, such as the public library, scientific laboratories, computer laboratories, etc, especially in the case of universities that do not allow co-education.

4- Developing sports and cultural facilities for female students that allow them to practice sports and recreational activities inside the university based on principle of equality to male students.

#### **Article (6)**

##### **Code of Conduct for Male Workers, Academics, and Employees in the University toward Women**

1. Respecting the rights and interests of female workers, academics, employees, and students without exception and treating them with respect without discrimination based on gender or any other form of discrimination.
2. Completing women's transactions or paper work (female workers, academics, employees, and students) quickly and accurately, taking into consideration limits related to specialization as well as answering their inquiries and responding to their complaints accurately, objectively and promptly.
3. Ensuring privacy and confidentiality of women's documents and personal information according to applied laws and regulations. Also ensuring that this information is not used for personal purposes.
4. Working devotedly to develop women's capacities and help and motivate them to improve their performance and set a good role-model for them through committing to the existing laws, regulations and instructions.
5. Transferring the acquired knowledge and experiences to them and encouraging them to exchanging information and knowledge increasingly.
6. Evaluating women's performance objectively and seeking to provide them with opportunities in order to develop their capabilities in accordance with the in force regulations and instructions in case they are under supervision as students or workers.
7. Respecting women's rights and cooperating with them professionally without favouritism or discrimination.

#### **Article (7)**

##### **Code of Conduct toward Women's Right to Protection from Violence, Sexual Harassment and Electronic Extortion**

1. Taking all necessary measures to protect female workers, academics, employees and students from violence, sexual harassment and electronic extortion, including regulatory and punitive procedures.
2. Establishing a system for reporting issues and practices of sexual harassment or electronic extortion, so this system could ensure the protection for women who report these incidents and the confidentiality of their information.
3. Dealing with seriousness and honestly in the event of detecting sexual harassment or gender-based violence cases, so that the available data and explanations are submitted in credibility and transparency to the concerned authorities without misinformation, deception, or favouritism.
4. Receiving women's complaints and seriously investigating them in accordance with rules mentioned in the code of conduct. The employee responsible for receiving complaints should inform the complainant about the findings of the investigation process conducted by the competent authority.