

10 Facts You Probably Didn't Know About Women in Israel (2014)

1

POPULATION

The population of Israel (end of 2013) is about 8 million. While the majority of Israeli citizens are Jewish, Israel has a large Arab minority. Out of approximately 2.9 million females aged 15 or older living in Israel, about 2.4 million are Jewish (82%) and 534,000 are Arab.

2

POLITICAL POWER

Israeli women have yet to achieve political power: 27 out of 120 legislators (22%) are women – the highest percentage ever; however, only one is an Arab woman. Four out of 23 Cabinet members are women. Only 367 out of 2423 (15%) of local council members (elected officials) are women.

3

EMPLOYMENT

Employment rates are high for Jewish women but low for Arab women, due to lack of local development, jobs and public transportation in Arab localities: 65% of Jewish women but only 26% of Arab women aged 15 and over are in the labor force. The percentage of Israeli working women employed in part-time jobs is 33%, compared with 13.5% for men.

4

CHILDCARE

Israel has a system of day care centers and family day care that receives public subsidies. However, the facilities are much more accessible to Jewish women than to Arab women: 24% of Jewish children under the age of 3 are in approved day care frameworks, compared with 10.6% of Arab children. The public protest of 2011 led to the development of free public day care for 3 year-olds, in addition to the free kindergartens for 4-5 year olds.

5

WAGES

There is a wage gap in Israel similar to that in other developed countries. Jewish women's hourly pay is, on average, 85% of Jewish men's. Arab women's hourly pay is 8% higher than Arab men's hourly pay, due to the fact that most Arab women in the labor force are college-educated, and most Arab men in the labor force are not.

6

INCOME

There is still a huge gap between women's and men's income. Women constitute about 23% of employed persons in the top income bracket (10th decile) but 68% of employed persons in the bottom income bracket (1st decile). Arab women's average income is lower than Jewish women's average income.

7

TAXATION

As women earn less than men, they pay less in income taxes. Women pay 20% of total income tax revenues. No breakdown is available for Jewish and Arab women.

8

MARRIAGE AGE

Women's marriage age is on the rise. The average marriage age (first marriage) for Jewish women is 25.9, for Christian women, 25.4; for Druze women, 23.2; and for Moslem women, 22.

9

DIVORCE

The fact that in Israel personal status matters are relegated to the religious rather than the civil courts results in divorce being a serious problem for women of all religious denominations.

10

EDUCATION

Over half of Jewish girls (65.5%) and Arab girls (61.7%) in twelfth grade graduate high school with a matriculation certificate (bagrut). When it comes to college study, 42% of Jewish women begin college studies within 8 years of high school graduation, compared with 33% of Jewish men. For Arab youngsters, the comparable figures are 20% for women and 16% for men.