

Chapter 12

The Role of Governance in Providing Services for Egyptian Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

2020, which celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, was expected to be a decisive year for achieving gender equality. Instead, as the pandemic spreads (COVID-19), even the limited earnings achieved in the past decades are liable to relapse. The chapter peruses the role of state institutions represented by the National Council for Women and the legislations that were issued to confront this crisis in light of global movements. These global efforts to confront COVID-19 are reflected in ESCWA, UN, OIC, and the procedures of the Egyptian government. It is noted that the National Council for Women, during its work, is considered an example of implementing “governance.”

INTRODUCTION

The notion of risk society clarifies a world characterized by the loss of a clear distinction between nature and culture. Today, if we talk about nature we talk about culture and if we talk about culture we talk about nature. When we think of global warming, the hole in the ozone layer, pollution or food scares, nature is inescapably contaminated by human activity. This common risk has a leveling effect that whittles away some of the carefully erected boundaries between classes, nations, humans and the rest of nature, between creators of culture and creatures of instinct, or to use an earlier distinction, between beings with and those without a soul. (Revill. *et al*, 2003. p. 257)

Ulrich Beck’s Global Risk Society theory supposes that: the patterns of modern risks have activated global anticipation of global catastrophe and have shaken the foundations of modern societies. Such perceptions of global risk are characterized by three features:

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1. De-localization: Its causes and consequences are not limited to one geographical location or space; they are in principle omnipresent.
2. Incalculableness: Its consequences are in principle incalculable; at bottom it's a matter of "hypothetical" risks, which, not least, are based on science-induced not-knowing and normative dissent.
3. Non-compensability: The security dream of first modernity was based on the scientific utopia of making the unsafe consequences and risks of decisions ever more controllable; accidents could occur, as long and because they were considered compensable. If the climate has changed irreversibly, if progress in human genetics makes irreversible interventions in human existence possible, if terrorist groups already have weapons of mass destruction available to them, then it's too late. Given this new quality of "threats to humanity" – argues François Ewald – the logic of compensation breaks down and is replaced by the principle of precaution through prevention. We are also trying to anticipate and prevent risks whose existence has not been proven. (*Beck. 2006. p. 104*)

COVID-19 is considered an embodiment of those global risks explained by Ulrich Beck, especially the de-localization and being in-compensable.

COVID-19 risks are de-localized in terms of three scales: The spatial scale where COVID-19 transcends nation-state and continental boundaries; the temporal scale in which the risks of Coronavirus have such a long incubation period that their further consequences cannot be reliably determined. Additionally, change in knowledge and lack of knowledge, so that the question of the number of infections shall remain temporally open and controversial as well whereas, the virus mutated and its symptoms changed from time to time; and The social scale, where the risks of Coronavirus arise from complex pathways consisting of long chains of results, as it has become impossible to identify its causes and consequences with satisfactory accuracy, as the economic consequences of the spread of the pandemic are the most prominent example.

The Corona pandemic has resulted in 3,916,328 deaths, 189,779,194 infections, and 65,430,621 recoveries globally, according to the State Information Service on June 26, 2021 quoted from Worldometers.info. (State Information Service, 2021)

The virus was first identified and reported from Wuhan city of China in December, 2019. The SARS-CoV-2 is highly contagious, spread globally in a short period of time, and was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. As of 18th April, 2020, 10:00 am CEST; WHO reported more than 2.1 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 142,229 deaths in 213 countries, areas or territories. However, the number of cases continues to rise throughout the globe and became a serious menace to public health. (*Lone. Shabir Ahmad & Ahmad. Aijaz, 2020, p. 1300*). Among the affected countries by COVID-19, members of The Organization of Islamic Cooperation] OIC [of 56 countries. (*OIC*)

Public health emergencies may affect the health, safety, and well-being of both individuals (causing, for example, insecurity, confusion, emotional isolation, and stigma) and communities (owing to economic loss, work and school closures, inadequate resources for medical response, and deficient distribution of necessities). These effects may translate into a range of emotional reactions (such as distress or psychiatric conditions), unhealthy behaviors (such as excessive substance use), and noncompliance with public health directives (such as home confinement and vaccination) in people who contract the disease and in the general population. Extensive research in disaster mental health has established that emotional distress is ubiquitous in affected populations — a finding certain to be echoed in populations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. (*Pfefferbaum. & North. 2020, p. 510-512*)

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