

The social reality of women in the marshes

Shahad Anmar asmail¹

Dr. Zainab Mohammad Saleh²

shahad.anmar2209m@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq

zainab_mohammedsalih@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq

The researcher

Assistant Professor

University of Baghdad/ College of Education for Girls/ Sociology

Abstract:

The Ahwari community is still semi-enclosed and its visitors are still viewed as strangers. In addition, the majority of families in it live in the pattern of a complex family, grandparents, children, and grandchildren. The grandfather rules the family in the patriarchal system. He is the ruler and the forbidden. Polygamy is a pattern that indicates patriarchal ability, prestige, high status, and financial possibility. The new generations and the mechanism of early marriage for the female are a continuous condition. Her marriage can occur between (10-15) years of age. As a result, the poverty rate in rural areas more than doubles in urban areas. When poor areas are classified according to the environment, data showed a high percentage of rural women aged 10 years and more illiterate women (27.3%) compared to the percentage of women in urban areas (14.7%). We also note an increase in the percentage of literate women (29.8%) in rural areas compared to urban areas (19.4%).

Keywords: (the marshes countryside, rural women, women's lives in the marshes).

the study Problem

Rural women in Iraq, including the marshes, suffer from many of the problems of life in their rural environment, and they are more affected than the problems experienced by urban women, even though they bear serious responsibilities and tasks of life distributed on agricultural and family activities in complex environmental conditions, with which it is sometimes difficult to provide the minimum required foundations for the advancement of their economic and social reality, as it is necessary for the participation of all members of society, especially those social forces represented by rural women, who have not taken their role and real position in building society, as a result of their exposure to the conditions of

oppression imposed by society due to the factors of underdevelopment and the values, traditions, and customs that affect not only the level of women's action but also the whole of society and its construction. Despite the openness of the Ahwari community to the surrounding rural and semi-urban communities in the circle of villages and sub-district centres surrounding it since the beginning of the fifties of the last century, it is still semi-enclosed and its visitors are still seen as strangers. In addition, the majority of families in it live the pattern of a complex family, grandparents, children and grandchildren. The ancestor rules the family by the patriarchal system. It is the commandant and the forbidden. Polygamy is still a pattern that indicates patriarchal ability, prestige, high status and financial possibility. However, new generations have begun to refrain from multiplying due to the difficulty of life. However, early marriage for females is an ongoing situation, so it requires intensifying efforts and attention towards integrating them into development and taking their balanced role in rights and duties with men so that they can advance the progress of the basic and vital force that rural women represent in productive and developmental processes, which are the result of economic and social progress.

The importance of studying :

Rural society has not given rural women enough attention due to the imbalanced development of rural sectors. Rural women from previous years inherit significant underdevelopment in the country's governorates in general and in the ahawar areas of southern Iraq governorates in particular due to their lack of involvement in development. Health, socio-educational agriculture, and other philosophies or policies are clear and consistent with development, Adequate attention to these services and their programs, including rural women's education as villagers and countryside, is the cornerstone of comprehensive development, the dimensions of which are complementary to the integration of rural and urban development alike. s population ", including in the south of the country, since floating villages are denied basic services, primarily education, health, and others, and security, psychological, and social stability are important in the marshland community. The establishment of realistic educational programs is necessary to eliminate underdevelopment and persecution, which is reflected in social and economic relationships.

Objectives of the study

- 1- To facilitate the work of decision makers and policymakers, recognize the social realities of women in the Iraqi marshes.
- 2- Enhance women's understanding of their significant contribution to agricultural development and their economic and social rights, such as ownership of agricultural land, the right to inheritance, education, and health.
- 3- The objective is to achieve sustainable rural development that transforms and develops women in the marshes, ensuring access to more prosperous livelihoods.
- 4- To improve their economic situation, it's important to recognize the economic realities of women living in the marshes.

The first study focused on the ecological construction of the marshes

First, the ecology of marshes (characteristics and features).

Marshlands are lowlands that are covered by water worse on all or some days of the year There is no clear difference between the marshes and the swamps, and the inhabitants of southern Iraq generally call the marshes ponds or low-lying areas filled by shallow waters in southern Iraq and the sedimentary plain. The first typewriters of clay taken from the sediments of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Al Daziye, 2020) grow cane, cold, and other swampy plants. In southern Iraq, large areas of marshlands are located, with cane and cold plants covering large bodies of water. A distinctive and unique identity can be clearly distinguished in the marshlands thanks to their urban pattern, which is characterized by distinctive urban elements. The physical environment derives its identity through a range of inputs that interact with each other and represent both cultural and social inputs from the most important inputs that affect identity formation and in the urban environment of the marshes many symbols associated with the collective memory of individuals, These symbols have value in society and therefore, the preservation of these symbols inherited from one generation to other leads to the realization of a continuous urban identity over time (Ajel and Al Rikaby, 2019) .

When looking at the map of Iraq, we note that the permanent marsh triangle extends between the two latitudes (30-30-32 30 ° N) north of the equator and the longitude (46 30-48 0) (east of the Greenwich Line). km²

It covers 9177 37 km², which is 191% of the territory of the Southern Triangle governorates (Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Basra), with a total area of 48042 km², or 8,55% of the area of administrative units and district centers. It should be emphasized that the governorates in issue cover somewhat more than half of the sedimentary plain's entire area of 132,500 km². This comprises 25% of Iraq's 435052 km² area, including 924 km² of territorial seas. It should be noted that the researchers did not determine the extent of the marshes using a single number; this disparity is the benchmark on which they rely.

The marshes are an important geomorphological manifestation with distinct geographical traits in Iraq due to their large area, diversity of sites, and scenic nature in terms of water and animals. They may have no counterparts in other countries around the world. Historically, a huge portion of the sedimentary plain ranging from the south of Kufa and Wasit to Basra was flooded with the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates floods when its banks were burst by the effect of heavy floods and their diversion in 628-629 AD (Al-Jubrawi, 2011). It is stated that the word Al-Btaiha appears in cuneiform inscriptions in many statements.

The Iraqi Marshlands, located in southern Iraq near the cities of Basra, Amarah, and Nasiriyah, are an important source of environmental and national heritage, providing a variety of ecosystem services required for the well-being and socioeconomic development of the local population as well as the rest of Iraq. These services include the provision of fresh water and food, as well as environmental protection through sediment conservation and organic waste recycling. The marshlands function as a natural system for cleaning wastewater, managing climate variability and water flow, and reducing sandstorms and their impact on agricultural soil erosion. It also moderates the climate of the wider region and reduces seasonal drought through the availability of a natural water basin (Worth et al., 2005).

In addition to their natural significance, the Marshlands have attracted a sizable group of Marsh dwellers known as Marsh Arabs or Maadan tribes, who are descended from ancient Sumerians and Akkadians stretching back thousands of years. The Marsh Arabs have a strong connection to the habitat in which they have lived for ages. Environmental knowledge is critical for increasing community resilience and preserving ecological benefits. Iraqi Marshland women, in particular, hold and distribute this traditional and environmental knowledge (Wetlands International, 2021).

The geological construction of the marshes is linked to the geological construction of Iraq and the surrounding region, hence its history is the geological history of Iraq. Geological studies indicate that the land of Iraq has gone through a long history that extends through ancient times and ages until modern times, as beneath its exposed surface are ancient igneous rocks that researchers believe belong to the remnants of the sofa continent at a time when geologists show that the rocks of modern sediments dating back to the modern era (Salim, 1970).

Overall, Iraq's geological structure was influenced by two major factors:

- 1- The presence of a solid landmass to the west and southwest of Iraq, which is the constituent mass of the Arabian Peninsula, and geological researchers believe that the solid and highly resistant to movement is part of the ancient continent of Kandwana, from which mountains are produced and formed in its vicinity (Wilfred, 1956).
- 2- The presence of the Aich Sea, which was a large sea in the area of the solid mass. According to geological studies, this sea originated in the Late Alburnian Age of the First Geological Time (covering most of Iraq's land) and the rocks produced for a less rigid hall of the Kandwana Al-Nad continent, such as that occurred under the effect of land movements (Al Khayat, 1978).
- 3- The flood plain, also known as the marshes, occupies the center and south of Iraq with a length of up to 650 km and a width of up to 250 km, from the city of Balad on the Tigris River to the city of Ramadi in the Tal Aswad region on the Euphrates River, which serves as its northern border. Its southern border terminates at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab in the Gulf, where Iraqi territory ends. This plain covers 132,500 km², accounting for up to 25% of Arab/Persian Iraq's total area. . It is bounded on the east by the Iranian heights at its upper margins, and on the west by the western plateau's edge. A study of the natural reality of the marshes reveals that the major problem is a scarcity of land, which forces man to create gheats and artificial islands in order to reside and live on them, erecting buildings and tiny communities. Ibn al-Hur typically constructs habashat in regions with shallow waterways. The absence of land islands and their distance from one another made it impossible to penetrate the marshes, keeping the population's communities tiny and isolated. They

thereby form a social image of the past, protecting them and their biotic environment, plant and animal, and mandating their preservation and development in a way that retains the unique traits of human groups as well as plant and animal groups (Wilfred, 1956).

As a result, it appears that the best months to feel comfortable in these marshes are March, April, and October, and this is what forces the Tourism Department to encourage tourism to the marshes in these months; it is supposed to provide services related to cooling in the months when it tends to rise due to high temperatures, and heating services in the months when it tends to fall due to low temperatures, in tourist facilities such as hotels, cafes, restaurants, etc.

Despite the fact that the Ahwari community has been open to the surrounding rural and semi-urban communities in the circle of villages and sub-district centers since the early 1950s, it remains semi-enclosed, and visitors are regarded as foreigners. Furthermore, the majority of its families have a complicated family structure, with grandparents, children, and grandkids. The ancestor rules the family under the patriarchal system. It's the commandant and the prohibited. Polygamy remains a pattern that implies patriarchal ability, prestige, high rank, and financial potential. However, due to life's difficulties, new generations have begun to desist from reproducing. However, early marriage for women remains an ongoing issue. Her marriage can take place between the ages of 10 and 15 years, as does the male's. His marriage can take place between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, provided he is guaranteed to live by his father or grandpa. In a systematic study to obtain a master's degree, it was discovered that the district of Chabaish recorded a rate of marriage according to the results of the population census in 1977, which amounted to (850) per thousand, at the time that the province of Dhi Qar recorded a rate of (554) per thousand and Iraq recorded (513) per thousand, and these rates indicate the tendency to marry at an early age (Al-Ta 'i, 1969).

The marriage pattern (ghasa bghsa) still exists, but it is no longer as prevalent as it was in the past, where the girl did not provide a wife to the other until after she was traded with a girl from him, and the family did not know the concept of birth control and reproductive control and methods except very rarely, so the culture of having a large number of children, especially males, is prevalent to link them to social status and strength, a situation that is consistent with If we got data from society on its qualitative structure

(males and females) and age (according to the five age categories), We can observe that the base of the newborn pyramid is extremely large.

The second section: The Social Reality of Women in the Marshes

Despite their main role in Iraqi society, at a time when they are exposed to a great danger resulting from abuse and other forms of gender-based violence, and thus they play (the social role of reproduction, education, and the productive role) in light of oppression and lack of appreciation, and if we want to clarify the living conditions of rural women, who suffer from .

Thus, it suffers as a result of the hardships of working in agriculture and at home, along with societal inequalities. According to the Ministry of Planning - Central Bureau of Statistics' research (Rural Women's Reality in Iraq 2016), a lack of education for Iraqi girls from rural regions has resulted in generations of poor Iraqi women who are among the country's most vulnerable populations. Girls' education levels are poor, and this has a negative impact on their current and future participation in the Iraqi workforce. Three out of ten rural women are illiterate, compared to one out of every ten women in cities. The success rate in delivering basic education to girls differs across the country. In the governorates of Babil, Karbala, and Diyala, three out of five Iraqi rural women did not complete their education, compared to one out of every five in other governorates (Salem, 1988).

First: Early marriage and the struggle to make a living:

Girls' marriage is a prevalent phenomenon that spreads in rural areas due to social, economic, and cultural conditions, in which they marry at the age of twelve. Due to social customs, rampant unemployment, and poverty, most people marry their relatives. The ratio of rural women who marry at the age of 12 or older is estimated to be two married women for every three. Early marriage among rural women is the first step toward dropping out of education, According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS4 2011), approximately one out of every sixteen rural women is married before the age of fifteen, while approximately one in every four rural women marry before the age of eighteen and one in every five rural women marry between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. The magnitude of this problem varies depending on the nature of the population areas (rural and urban). While we discover that our region still promotes the need for early marriage and polygamy (Salim and Muhammad 2015).

Very few rural women attend university. Basra has the highest percentage of bachelor's degree-holding rural women in the country, with one out of every twenty. One in every 500 rural women with tertiary education enters the workforce (0.2%). Few rural women with degrees reach sensitive places to lead other rural women in the labor market, despite the fact that the percentage of rural women in the labor force increased from 19.8% in 2013 to 25.4% in 2016, from about (2 out of 10 rural women aged 15 and older in 2013 to about 3 out of 10 rural women aged 15 and older in 2016) (Fischeris, 2005).

Second: poverty and unemployment

Unemployment is one of the most significant issues confronting our society today and in the future since it wastes human resources, particularly young people who can work and contribute (Abira, 2014). According to the Ministry of Planning's Central Bureau of Statistics research on the realities of rural women in Iraq, the jobless rate for rural women increased in 2014. About twice the number of urban women, whereas the percentage of rural women rose in 2016. According to statistical data, the majority of rural women live in economically vulnerable situations as a result of their loss of economic independence. Rural women's participation in paid labor is only a small percentage of the overall population of rural women, whereas urban women's participation is more than three times that of rural women (Barakat, 1981).

According to the Ministry of Planning's National Development Plan 2018-2020, indicators show that the poverty rate in rural areas is more than double that of urban areas, and when poor areas are classified by environment, the poorest are rural Maysan (73%), Muthanna (64%), Dhi Qar (61%), and Qadisiyah (60%) (Rural Women's Reality in Iraq, 2019).

Education provides avenues for women, making them more qualified and capable of leading valuable societal roles, particularly when men are unable to perform income-generating employment. The highly educated woman plays an important role here because she can protect herself and her family from the effects of economic and social shocks. As a result, focusing on women's education, particularly in rural regions, is a development building duty, as well as one of their rights, and is critical to increasing opportunities for success and growth in all aspects of human life, so contributing to poverty reduction. According to the findings of Iraq's 2016 Household Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment Survey, the illiteracy and literacy rates of women aged 15-24 years differed across urban and rural areas, with 10 rural illiterate women and 4 urban illiterate women. It

was discovered that more than half of rural women in the governorates of (Babil, Diyala, and Karbala) did not complete their education, which is a concerning indicator. Rural women who did not complete their schooling experienced a considerable fall in their previously high levels of education. On the other side, we see that the percentages of those who received a bachelor's degree were quite low, with only 5% of rural women obtaining a bachelor's degree in the province of Basra, and Baghdad, the capital, was no better. Only 2% of Iraq's governorates have rural women with a bachelor's degree, Several parties attempted to help rural women overcome their ignorance and illiteracy. According to data from the Literacy Executive Apparatus used in Iraq, hundreds of literacy centers were created, however the ratio of rural women learning in literacy centers for the basic level remained low (one rural woman for every eight urban women in Iraq, 2019). Urban Women (The Reality of Rural Women in Iraq, 2019).

Third: Education

Education provides avenues for women, making them more qualified and capable of leading valuable societal roles, particularly when men are unable to perform income-generating employment. Here, the function of the most educated woman is demonstrated, as she is able to defend herself and her family from the repercussions of economic and social shock. As a result, prioritizing women's education, particularly in rural areas, is a responsibility for developmental construction. It is one of their rights, and it is critical for women to increase their opportunities for success and advancement in all aspects of human life, thereby contributing to poverty reduction. Furthermore, rural women's education and enlightenment qualify them to benefit from human rights because their level of education and educational opportunities allow them to enjoy other rights and freedoms such as freedom of information, freedom of expression of opinion, the ability to vote and run for political office, and many other civil, political, and human rights. Furthermore, due to a lack of educational opportunities, rural women will be unable to access or claim them. Furthermore, women will be denied the economic rights represented by work opportunities and equal pay for men, as well as the benefits of scientific and technical progress. (Hamza et al., 2000)(

According to data from Iraq's poverty monitoring and assessment survey for the year 2018/2017, the percentage of illiterate rural women aged 10 and up increased by 27.3%, while the percentage of women in urban areas increased by 14.7%. We also see a 29.8% increase in the percentage of literacy declines in rural areas, compared to 19.4% in

metropolitan areas. We also examine the percentage of rural women relative to urban women in the remaining levels of educational attainment. According to statistics from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey for the year 2018, the net enrollment rate in primary education in Iraq was 91.6%, while the percentage of girls in rural areas, was low by 86.7% as opposed to urban areas by 92.2%. The net enrollment rate in intermediate education was 57.5% at the Iraqi level, and the percentage of women in rural areas was very low by 42.4% compared to urban areas by 65.2%, and the percentage of women in rural areas was very low by 26.2% in preparatory education by 34.0 compared to urban areas by 41.2% (Abdul Hussein 2005).

Fourth: climate changes

Climate change in the region poses a threat and a double burden on the lives and livelihoods of the population, given the difficult conditions and challenges faced by the inhabitants of the marshes, such as poverty, scarcity of basic services such as drinking water and electricity, as well as a lack of health and education services (according to a United Nations report).

Women in the Ahwari community differ from women in rural and urban communities in terms of daily work and contribution to family development, as women in the marshes, like men, go to the marshes daily to cut the reeds, assemble them, and use them as buffalo fodder. They also prepare buffalo milk and byproducts, manage the herd, raise children, and handle family issues.

The daily work of marsh women is extremely difficult due to the extremes of the typical Iraqi climate, which is hot, dry in the summer and cold and rainy in the winter. With the increasing negative effects of climate change, it has become clear that women in the marsh area are the first to suffer from water scarcity due to climate changes and high temperatures, as drought affects the buffalo they raise, forcing them to seek out more distant sources to provide water. It is worth noting that marsh buffalo are extremely sensitive to changes in water quality and high temperatures, therefore marsh buffalo residents are compelled to flee areas where water quality is decreasing due to scarcity and high temperatures.

According to the sources, the link between marsh dwellers, particularly women, and buffalo in the marshes has existed for thousands of years, and the marsh inhabitants

cannot live without a buffalo. The buffalo is the primary factor of their relationship with the earth.

Unfortunately, extreme weather conditions have a negative impact on Iraqi Marshland women's livelihoods, contributing to the extinction of their traditional environmental expertise. The drying out of the marshlands has dramatically altered women's connections with the environment, causing them to abandon fishing, animal husbandry, farming, and reed harvesting in favor of simply staying at home. Marsh women no longer teach their children and community members the cultural knowledge and skills required to support environmental services For their inability to apply these traditional practices (Al-Muzaffar et al., 2008).

This substantial transformation is owing to the fact that their daily activities rely heavily on water supplies. For example, the grazing of dictating buffalo extends back thousands of years. The lack of water quantity and quality has an impact not only on buffalo breeding, which serves as animal fodder, but also on milk production, which is sold in local markets as various dairy products. Because their traditional way of life and interactions with the environment are inextricably linked to water, the terrible water conditions have a direct impact on their daily activities, and thus their ability to retain traditional environmental knowledge, ensuring the preservation of the Marshland culture while also providing livelihoods for these women. The decline of the Marshes also affects ecotourism, because it is dependent on rich biodiversity and ancient Sumerian culture, which generates employment opportunities for youth and women, due to the detrimental impact of climate change (Watts, 2004).

Furthermore, it promotes women to work in traditional businesses that not only benefit their economic condition but also preserve their knowledge of the marshes. As a result, acute water scarcity undermines women's livelihoods, exacerbating the extinction of their lifestyles and traditional knowledge (UN Women, Gender Equality, 2018).

Results

1- The Awhari community remains semi-enclosed and continues to look out for foreign visitors. Furthermore, the majority of its families have a complicated family structure, with grandparents, children, and grandkids. Under the patriarchal system, the grandpa rules the family. He is both commander and banned.

- 2- Polygamy is a pattern that reflects patriarchal ability, prestige, high rank, and financial potential of the new generations.
- 3- Early marriage of the female is a continuous phenomenon, as her marriage might take place between 10 and 15 years of age.
- 4- The poverty rate in rural areas is more than double that of urban areas, especially when impoverished areas are classified according to the environment.
- 5-Climate change in the region poses a threat and a double burden on the lives and livelihoods of the population, given the difficult conditions and challenges experienced by the inhabitants of the marshes of poverty, the scarcity of basic services such as drinking water and the lack of electricity, as well as the lack of health and education services.
- 6- Data showed that the percentage of rural women aged 10 and up who were illiterate increased by 27.3%, while the percentage of women in urban regions increased by 14.7%. We also see a 29.8% increase in the proportion of literate women in rural areas, compared to 19.4% in metropolitan areas.

Recommendations

- 1- Attention to women's education, especially in rural areas, is a duty of development building and it is one of their rights. It is critical for women to enhance the opportunity for success and progress in all human life and thus contribute to reducing poverty, as well as that the education and enlightenment of rural women qualifies them to enjoy the benefits of human rights because the level of education and the opportunities available to them in the education aspect.
- 2- Women are encouraged to work in traditional businesses that not only benefit their economic condition but also maintain their knowledge of the wetlands. As a result, women's livelihoods are disrupted by a severe water deficit.

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