

Iraqi Women in Feminism, Moralism and Urbanism

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ABSTRACT:

Iraqi women have experienced an extended history of absolute lack of willpower and dependency. Since around the year of 1850, early changes started with the development of the commercial, real estate, and industrial bourgeoisie, beginning the nucleus of the working class, with women being among its components. Hence, the subsistence economy transformed into market economy. The feminist elite came to being, benefiting from the press and the radio. Among the characteristics of this elite were the influence of television and promotion of education, and is still expanding influenced by the satellite channels and social media. The researchers believe that the year of 2050 (or around then) will witness the entrance of Iraqi women to the third stage; the stage of partnership, and that the entire feminine community will turn into an elite to attain their pursued rights.

Keywords:

The fall of Baghdad, female labor force, Bedouins, urban and country/rural women, educational status, polygamy, the most essential steps for women's empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

This part examines the situation of women in Iraq, shedding light on its most important demographic, economic, and social signposts as well as its gender related issues.

Women suffered considerably from the economic and social decline that occurred in Iraq after the fall of Baghdad by Hulago in (656 AH - 1258 AD). Thus, the time in which they lived before the Tatar invasion was the best open society to which many immigrants headed for from different countries of the then known world, especially the adjacent countries. Consequently, Baghdad has been classified as the first city in the world and was described as the global city due to its multiethnic nature. Historical references described the Baghdad society in its prime prosperity during the era of the Caliphate of Harun Al-Rashid and his two sons, Al-Amin and Al-Mamun (170 - 218 AH / 795 - 843 AD) as an ethnic mixture in which people of different nations and different races coexisted, coming to Baghdad for knowledge, work and making living, and practicing professions and crafts until the development of - what is called today- *financial economy*. The business of paymasters and cognoscente expanded, having their own markets in the western part of Baghdad (al-Doori, 1999, P.183). This economic prosperity resulted in social development and demographic growth. The population in Baghdad amounted to a level of multi-million city. The population there is estimated to be approximately 1084,435 people in 220 AH-836 AD (Al-Khaffaf, 2015, p. 41).

This prosperity in its various aspects of life has undoubtedly affected the lives of Iraqi women. A review into the references on the Abbasid Era indicates that many women had contributed to the political, economic and cultural life, including writers, poets, jurists and shopkeepers in the bazars. Reviewing the book of the late Dr. Abdel Aziz Al Doori mentioned above is of great value in this regard. After the fall of Baghdad, the Iraqi women especially, and the Iraqi society in general, entered into a historical stage which can be described as the Dark Eras, composed of four centuries; (16th, 17th, 18th and 19th) which was briefly discussed in S. H. Longrigg's *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* and translated into Arabic by Jaafar Khaiyat.

At this historical stage, women were secluded from the course of public life in the four-wall-prison; house, and the Iraqi society entered a *closed society*, i.e., a society with no migration from or to (Multilingual Demographic Dictionary, 134) meaning that it is not exposed to demographic, economic and social effects. As for Iraq at that time, it neither had immigration attractions, nor did its inhabitants know the culture of immigration.

Four dark centuries in which women were subjected to the most violent and heinous (parental) familial measures. Women wore the veil to cover their entire bodies. They were veiled from head to toe and a burqa is put on her face so that she cannot see the road she is walk on clearly. The veil is a uniform that Iraqi women have worn since the Assyrian era (2025 BC). It was dictated by the law, with the intention that distinction

could be made between free women who wore the veil and she-slaves. The purpose behind the veil was for curtaining women, which is mainly a sexual motive, since the reigns of the Mughals, the Jalayirid and Turkmen ruling, and their aggressive behavior towards women, during eras marked by immorality and libertinism (Khalil, 1983, V.10. p. 229).

In the circumstances of economic decline and social degradation, women's freedom decrease significantly, harsh (parental) methods are practiced against them, and a culture prevails whereby a woman's "chastity" is estimated by how strict that woman is in concealing and herself and her seclusion at home. Hence when a society member of the quarter is to describe a chaste woman, s/he would say that no one had seen her finger nor heard her voice. This was prevalent culture at that time, in these four dark centuries, it was said that a woman has the right to leave her home twice throughout her life; at her wedding to her husband's house and in a funeral coffin to the grave (al-Hilali, cited in al-Wardi, 2009. p. 304).

In this part, the authors attempt to answer the following questions:

- *What is the demographic weight of the Iraqi women?*
In light of the background information handy to the authors, it is estimated to be 50% of the total population.
- *How much is the contribution of Iraqi women to the manpower? It is estimated to be very low in urban areas.*
- *What is the social and cultural status of education (marriage and childbearing)?*

There are still problems that Iraqi women suffer from.

- *What are the methods to empower Iraqi women?*

The methods are known and had been outlined by the feminist literature that calls for women's rights and empowerment. Iraqi female activists had established many of these methods. However implementing the methods requires legislation and needs an organized struggle with the conventions and traditions.

The sources and references that have been adopted are documentaries; results of population censuses and population projections conducted by the Central Statistical Organization after 2000 as population censuses stopped in 1997. Moreover, research and studies on Iraq and Iraqi women in terms of sociology, economics, geography and law, particularly those issued by Iraqi feminist organizations are adopted with different ideologies and philosophies. What is important to us is to contribute to developing the status of women in the family and society.

The demographic weight of Iraqi women

This was calculated from the tables of what is termed in population studies, sex structure. The projections of Central Statistical Organization indicate that the number of females, which is a broader term than women, as it includes all ages (0 - 85 +), amounts to 19.865.351 people (Central Statistical Organization - Statistical Abstract - 2020 Table 7/2). With this number, females constitute 49.5% of the total population of 40150147 people, according to the projection indicated.

This percentage is expected by the researchers, as it dominated the results of the actual population censuses, which appears in the table below.

Table (1): Demographic weight of Iraqi women

Year	Total Population	Female Percentage
1890	1838000	----
1932	2824000	----
1947	4816000	53.0
1957	6339000	49.0
1965	8261000	47.7
1977	12129000	47.9
1987	16335000	48.6
1997	22046244	50.2

2020	40150174	49.5
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- *Salnamah Baghdad (1890)- Baghdad State Press*
- *Ernest Dawson - 1932 - Research on how to deal with lands – Proposals on initiating reform - Iraqi Government Publications.*
- *Ministry of Social Affairs - General Directorate of Population - Population Census of 1947.*
- *Ministry of Interior - General Population Directorate - Population Census of 1957 - Civil Status Directorate - Population Census in 1965.*
- *Ministry of Planning - Central of Statistics Organization (censuses - 1977 - 1987 - 1997 - 2020 projections).*

In general, the table reflects an important fact that Iraq did not undergo any migration movement that could have a demographic impact.

The data referred to provide the answer for the question about the demographic weight of women, and it shows that the hypothesis presented in this matter was clearly accurate. There is no doubt that this hypothesis was placed according to premise analyzed population censuses in several previous studies.

How much is the contribution of Iraqi women to the manpower?

Today, Iraqi women are diversified into two environments: urban and rural. As for the desert and semi-desert environments, where the Bedouins and semi-nomads live in continuous movement, their numbers have decreased significantly since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century.

Female-Bedouins and Bedouin Society:

The published literature of the Central Statistical Organization did not include the Bedouins in the 1977 census and the following censuses. Hence, they were not referred to in the annual statistical abstracts, and data about them may be available and kept in the secret state agency; the General Security Directorate.

The Bedouin were among the social components of Iraq. Their geographic location on the edge of the Arabian Desert made it a spatial aim that the Bedouin longed for to make use of its assets, especially in conditions of aridity and severe drought.

It is difficult to pinpoint the history of Beduinism in Iraq due to the lack of sources on Arab Beduinism in general and Iraqi Beduinism in particular (Al-Fawal, 1968, p.18 & Al-Tahir, 1955, p.34-40). Researchers summarize their opinion on this date to be traced back to ancient historical eras. Thus, the migrations of the Bedouins from the Arabian Peninsula to Iraq took place successively due to climate, religion, and conflicts between the tribes themselves (Al-Barrazi, 1996, p.121).

The number of Bedouins decreased significantly in the first half of the twentieth century. They composed 35% of the population in 1867. They decreased to 5%, then to 1% in the years 1947-1957 (Hassan - 1966, p.53), due to the establishment of the army on January 6, 1921, and the establishment of the Iraqi police on January 9, 1922. As a result, large numbers of them recruited in these two establishments. Also, many of them were employed as guards in the extension of oil pipelines in the middle of the desert. In addition, there was the effect of the agricultural land settlement law in 1931, well drilling projects, and then the agricultural reform law in 1958. Some of them obtained agricultural lands which encouraged them to settle down and work in agriculture and animal husbandry (Areem, 1965, p. 27).

The Bedouin woman who has faded away from the Iraqi scene, according to the researchers, had not lived the conditions of gender neither within the family nor in the tribe. Although the authority is parental, it is moral rather than economic. The liberty of the Bedouin woman, her participation in decision-making, and not wearing the veil in the sense usual in the cities indicates the fact that women are not seen as a female sexually, but rather as a woman in a family and tribe, according to the researchers.

Urban and rural women:

In the Central Statistical Organization projections of the Iraqi population in 2020, which we referred to their number and sexual distribution, this projection leads to determine their distribution according to the habitats to urban and rural.

According to this projection, the number of women in urban areas reached 13895039 people, constituting 34.6% of the total population, while the number of women in the rural area reached 5970312 people, constituting 14.9% of the total population. According to these data, the female community in Iraq is described as an urban society, due to the majority.

In light of these data, what is the percentage of the (theoretical) female demographic labor in both urban and rural areas?

The following table data provide the answer to this question.

Table (2): Demographic Female Labor force in Iraq in 2020

	Women number	Labor force	Women %
Urban	13895039	8156268	58.7
Rural	5970312	3176314	53.2
Urban and rural	19865351	11332582	56.9

- Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Organization (preliminary estimations)
- Labor force was calculated by the researchers

The data in this table indicate a female population that is ready to work and engage in the labor market, since women range in age from (15-65) years.

This community is estimated be more than (11) millions, distributed by (8156268) from urban areas and (3176314) from the rural area.

How many of these demographic or theoretical labor forces engage the actual labor market?

The statistics published by the Central Statistical Organization on the website of the Ministry of Planning (cosit.gov.iq), which is taken from the 2016 survey of nutritional status and vulnerability assessment of families in Iraq, indicate that the participation percentage of women aged 15 years or above was 18.04%, going down to 15.84% among rural women (Annual Statistical Abstract, 2014-2016 - Table 2/9A). In general, the rate of Iraqi women's participation in economic activity is almost very close to what it is in the Arab world, and it is significantly below the global average of 48.7%. (Al-Qizani – al-Arab website).

According to the rate of these data, the number of women participating in economic activity is 1984400, which is a small number of the (theoretical) female demographic labor force that the researchers calculated to be (11) million women.

The participation rate of women in rural areas, referred to as 24.53%, is inaccurate. Work in the rural area, in agricultural fields and animal husbandry, is mostly family work. It is an unpaid work involving young people who are under 15, as well as elders who are over 65. It is thought that this percentage referred to by the Central Organization is low according to women's

answers to surveys in the work field as homemakers. The researchers do not consider women in the Iraqi rural areas as homemakers, as is the case for women in cities. The woman in the rural areas is neither a homemaker nor a (full-time) worker. Hence, the female demographic (theoretical) labor forces are all actual even if she is working part-time.

According to our point of view, the number of participants in economic activity is 6459700 women, of whom 3176314 are urban workers, and the remainder of 3283386 represent women working in agricultural activity in the rural area, which is manifested in the service of the family mostly is part-time job.

The following table highlights the distribution of economic activities on the three main sectors of the Iraqi economy.

Table (3): Number of economically active women according to sector

Sector	Number of active women	Percentage
Agriculture	3283386	50.8
Industry	200260	3.1
Services	2976054	46.1
Total	6459700	100

- Based on earlier studies by the researchers

The results in this table indicate that 57% of the female demographic (theoretical) labor force is actual participating in economic activity. This means that 43% of these forces could not be contained by the Iraqi economy with its current structure.

The educational, cultural and social status of Iraqi women:

In the introduction, a question in this regard was brought up. Let's start with the educational and cultural status. Over four dark centuries, Iraqi women have suffered from complete illiteracy. The rate of illiteracy among males and females was less than 99% (Al-Jumail, 1976, p.37). Literacy was limited to some clerics, including some who could only read.

This situation has changed, but at a slow pace, since the reform movement adopted by the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. In Iraq many development projects have been accomplished, including the establishment of (civil) schools during the reign of the governor (Midhat Pasha, 1869-1872). This tendency continued, as the Ministry of Public Instruction established three schools for girls in Baghdad in 1908. In 1918, Mrs. Zahra Khuder overcame obstacles and difficulties to open a school in which 40 female students enrolled. A few months later, the (Official Female School) was inaugurated, and the staff of Zahra School joined it. However, it was closed.

In 1920 similar schools were established in Mosul, Diwaniyah, and Baghdad on the Karkh side. As for the secondary school stage, the first secondary school for girls was established in the academic year 1929-1930, with only 11 students enrolled in it. From these beginnings, it is possible to identify the gender gap in education, and culture. Eighty five primary schools for males and only five schools for females were established during the British occupation (1920). Thus, it seems that female education was affected by such factors as religion, norms, traditions and politics.

In general, there was mass illiteracy all over the Iraqi people, both men and women. The percentage of those who could read and write did not exceed 1%, unsurprisingly most of them were men (Al-Jumail, 1976, p. 37). Illiteracy decreased gradually and slowly, in favor of males rather than females. The results of the census in 1947 indicate a decline in the illiteracy rate to 89.1%, distributed to 95.8% among females and to 81.2% among males (Census, 1947, Table 1).

Iraqi women were liberated from illiteracy due to the adoption of illiteracy eradication by political leaders of the country. Literacy campaigns began since the 14th of July revolution in 1958, and political parties adopted this issue as part of their political programs. In the seventies, the government had almost completely eliminated illiteracy among men and women due to illiteracy eradication campaigns and the compulsory education act No. 118 of 1976, which criminalizes the head of the family when children, both males and females, did not enroll in school.

The government's interest in education declined as a result of wars. The results of the 1997 census, the last in Iraq, indicate that the illiteracy rate rose to 23.4% of the total population of 22046244, falling among males to 14.9% of 10987252, and rising among females to 31.6% of 11058992 people (General Census Results for 1997, Table 29).

Based on these statistics, the gender gap is evident. This gap is limited in kindergartens and primary schools, but it widens in secondary and university education. This is because some families believe that the point of educating females is the ability to read and write only. Moreover, some families marry their daughters in the first opportunity, even if they were underage. The following table shows this qualitative gap.

year	Students' numbers (000)							
	kindergarten		primary		secondary		university	
	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f
1994 - 1995	47	45	16	12	62	3	4	25
			14	98	5	8	5	
						3		
2000 - 2001	34	33	18	14	65	4	5	27
			88	96	1	1	1	
						2		
2005 - 2006	44	42	22	17	82	5	6	46
			02	38	0	6	2	
						8		
2010 - 2011	71	69	26	22	11	8	8	70
			47	16	49	0	7	
						4		
2014 - 2015	76	73	22	19	11	8	8	73
			90	92	73	5	6	
						9		

Table (4): Number of students in education stages according to gender

- Ministry of Planning - Central Statistical Organization - Annual Statistical Abstract (2014-2016) (Section Nine - Education Statistics).

Despite the gender gap in education which began early in the mid-nineteenth century, Iraqi women did not tolerate this gap. They went down the arenas of struggle demanding their rights and they participated in all the national fields where Iraqis, men and women, fought for the liberation and independence of their homeland.

Since then, an educated, cultured and political feminist elite was formed.

Iraqi women carried on challenging the social situation. Today, they mark 154,646 female teachers in primary education, out of a total of 222,877 male and female teachers. And 74,205 teachers are employed in secondary education from a total of 128,667 male and female teachers. Moreover, there are 12,723 female professors in universities and institutes out of a total of 35,319 male and female teachers in 2015 (Annual Statistical Abstract 2014-2016). Iraqi women in the education sector hold a good and acceptable role, as their participation in primary and secondary education exceeded the number of males working in that sector, and their percentage in teaching in universities and higher institutes, both government and private, reached 26.5%, constituting 12,723 female teachers, out of a total of 35,319 male and female professors.

In general, female holders of doctorate and master's degrees, working in universities, institutes, and other ministries, and those who are not employed, are not less than 15,000 women. This is a significant positive indicator of women's status in the education sector.

As for the social situation of women inside and outside the family, they have suffered a lot from parental authority in the family over the past four dark centuries, and the remnants of this arbitrary past towards women persist in many rural and urban families.

Age of marriage and childbearing:

The mainstream culture in the Iraqi society dictated the necessity of marrying girls at puberty and menstruation, which is considered a clue to the Iraqi family to look for a husband, increase their control and buy a veil for them. The occurrence of the menstrual period means that she moved from a girl to a woman

and a symbol of honor or shame. It meant that she transformed from a woman to a "problem"!

According to this social perspective, it is not surprising that the results of the census in 1957 indicated statistics that were not in favor of Iraqi women. In Hilla Brigade (Babil Governorate) this census recorded (305) married women under the age of (15), of whom (8) had (3) sons each, which means that they were married at an age of no older than (12) years. (6) of these women had (2) sons each and (26), had one child each, male or female. The table indicates (3935) women had married at the age of (15-20) years, which are considered cases of early marriage.

This census also indicates similar cases in the district of Hilla, provided that the number of married women in the Hilla Brigade was 62,772.

The large number of children (offspring) increases the status of man in the local community. Woman who are unable to conceive have no status in this life and sterility may cause her to divorce. Women are required to be a "factory" of human beings, even at the expense of their health and youth.

The population census of 1957 indicates that (100) women gave birth to (10) sons or more in Hilla Brigade, and (11464) women gave birth to (5) children in the same district (General Directorate of Civil Affairs, Population Statistics of 1957, Hilla Brigade, table 37) .

Marriage to young girls continued and did not completely disappear. A study of the 1997 data indicated that there was 5% of married women at the age of 19 years in Mansour quarter, which is one of the most urban parts of Baghdad. It is a percentage of the married community of 656,552 married women (Al Mino, 2012, p.73- 196). The percentage indicates a slight decline compared to the previous percentage of 6.9% in 1957 in Hilla Brigade, which had a rural nature at that time. The decline in the marriage of young girls is said to be slight because the researchers compared the aforementioned percentage to a percentage dating back to 1997 to Mansour quarter, which is considered one of the finest social parts in Baghdad. This temporal and spatial difference was expected to show significant decline rather than an insignificant decline.

In Mansour quarter of Baghdad, the prevalent and largest percentage, which amounted to 66% of the married community, was between (30-50) years, and this is what is called a late marriage (Al-Mino, 2012, p. 73). The researchers think that Iraqi girls share decision regarding their marriage today, because each

of them today, especially urban girls, delay their marriage until graduation from university or higher institute. Of this, a large percentage of them do not get married until they pass 25 years or so. As a result, the Central Statistical Organization indices point to the stability of women's fertility at number (4) in 2017 and previous years (Central Statistical Organization, Department of Human Development, 2018, 25).

The civil feminist organizations engaged in a conflict with the authorities, which tried to abolish Personal Status Law No. 188 of 1959, amended, and adopt a law that complies with Shiite jurisprudence and another with Sunni jurisprudence.

The Personal Status Law referred to in Article (7) Item (1) stipulates that males and females should be (18) years old in order to be able to get married. The amendments to the law occurred in 1978 and they were all in favor of women. However, it seems that rural families did not show commitment to the articles of the law, as well as some rural families who had recently migrated to cities. They abide by some legislations of Shiite and Sunni jurisprudence that allow girls to marry upon puberty, represented by the menstrual cycle, which occurs before the age of ten.

Despite the legal legislations were in favor of women, and despite the efforts made by women's organizations, children marriage still exists. The *Survey of Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health (I-WISH)* in 2011 indicated that 11.4% of young married women (under 15 years) of the married community were included in this survey. This percentage rises to 29.1% in Maysan Governorate and falls to 4.6% in the Governorates of the Kurdistan region (Annual Statistical Abstract, 2014-2016, Table 19/40).

Researchers believe that divorce, which was uncommon and very limited, is now reaching its highest levels in the social history of Iraq. This is due to youth marriage, marriage to minors and adolescents, deterioration of economic conditions and the decline of cultural reality. Court records have documented thousands of divorce cases of married people between the ages of (15-18) years. The statistics of the Supreme Judicial Council indicated 65,868 cases of divorce in 2017 (Central Statistical Organization, Department of Human Development Statistics, 2018.25). This is a large number, which equals 180 divorce cases per day and more than 7 cases per hour.

The suffering of Iraqi young women today can be summed up by the fact that some of them drop out of different stages of school for various reasons. Hence, marriage and divorce take place between due to lack of adequate knowledge and awareness.

As for the contraceptive use index, which measures the cultural and civil level of women and families, the Survey of Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health revealed 39.8% of the total number of women in the survey, which is 9,495 women, practicing one of the birth control methods (abstaining, spacing, contraceptives such as condoms, IUD and sterilizations, etc.) (Annual Statistical Abstract 2014-2016, Table 19/42). It is definitely a good percentage, close to half of the married women community, and it is below the global percentage of 57.0% set by the World Health Organization - Family Planning (www.who.int).

Empowerment of Iraqi women:

The question on this topic was brought up in the introduction to the part as follows: What are the methods to empower Iraqi women?

So far, all the indicators considered indicate a state of progress for Iraqi women over the years of the twentieth century, but it was an elitist progress that did not include everyone in urban and rural areas.

This stage, which extended until the forties of the last century, was the stage of the liberation of Iraqi women. It was a difficult battle between the female and male elites and the society that is difficult to change due to the stalemate it has lived for centuries. Her liberation from the home prison, she is forbidden from leaving the house walls except in necessity and accompanied by a family guardian, her liberation from the veil that the battle of veil and unveiling has become one of the fierce battles in the history of Iraqi women, and finally her liberation from illiteracy and allowing her to enroll in schools.

At this stage, women had their contributions to the 1920 Revolution, especially the rural women. In the midst of the battles, groups of women established (Feminist Renaissance Association) in 1924, which called for girls' rights for education and women's rights for liberation in general. In the 1930s, feminist elites established child welfare charities, which later developed into semi-formal associations. At the beginning of the forties, a group of educated women established an association that combined women's liberation and freedom from fascism, called (Women's Committee to Combat Fascism). After the end of war, the committee was transformed to the (Iraqi Women's League) which obtained a work permit and held its first conference, attended by (400) members.

The decades of 1940-2000 were the equality stage, and it was undoubtedly the most difficult stage, because it required challenging the prevailing traditional culture.

Hence, establishing a culture of equality between males and females is a more difficult task than the issue of women's freedom of going out and liberation of women from illiteracy and unveiling.

In 1948, women participated in the people's demonstrations against the Portsmouth Treaty. In 1949 Iraq was prevailed by terrorism and martial law was declared. Dozens of women were arrested and sentenced heavily. In 1952 a secret women's organization was established in Baghdad, and branches were opened in Kurdistan and in central and southern Iraq. It participated in the November 1952 popular uprising and dozens of its members were arrested.

After the July 14th revolution, 1958, the association was announced and its work became public. Its branches were opened in every brigade center and district. In the third Republic, at the beginning of the seventh decade of the last century, the General Union of Iraqi Women was established.

Iraqi women achieved many gains at this stage. For instance, they benefited from the state's plan to eradicate illiteracy and engaged in the industrial sector strongly after the explosive plan, the increase in factories and the expansion of industrial activity. Their numbers doubled in the public and private service sector. Their numbers also doubled in primary, secondary and university education stages. They obtained (quota) (25%) in the National Council seats.

After 2003, and the fall of the third Republic, overwhelming chaos engulfed the country. The majority of Iraqi women believed it to be the vast freedom. As a result, more than 200 feminist organizations were initiated.

We call this stage the *empowerment and partnership stage*. It is a stage that needs to establish a culture based on that women and men are partners within the family and in society. It is a new culture for Iraqi society that should break its link with its traditional culture that had spanned centuries, considering women as subordinate only to men.

What facilitates the spread of this new culture today are the various means of communication and social media. Hence, the researchers think that these means will shorten the path of accepting this culture and conserve it overtime.

We confirm the concept mentioned earlier that Iraqi women have made a lot of progress and changed their economic and social reality. However, this progress has occurred and is still occurring since the middle of the nineteenth century in a way that changes the elite

at the first phase, and the society as a whole at the second phase.

Thus, the characterization of the elite may not apply to the whole Iraqi society. Women empowerment projects have an associative relationship with the status of women that affects and is affected, whether this position is within the family or outside it in society.

Women in the rural and marsh society are different from women in the urban society. In the rural areas and the marshes, women experience a position within the family, and in the village and community society, which varies according to the stages of life. She comes to life as an unwanted baby even until she passes (7) years old and goes out to work in the fields and in the barn, she becomes part of the economic family, participating in the production process and income of the family. She works without a hijab and without regulation, but after the age of (10) and the age of puberty, she is treated with caution. At that time, she is a woman who is targeted by others sexually, and if her hand is asked for with the father's approval, she has no choice for objection or argument. Then, the stage of persecution and domestic violence against her begins. When she passes (50) years, her status changes; she may sit with men in the guest room, and the family may seek her consultation. Thus, we see that sex plays an important role in the rural and marsh societies.

As for urban women, their position in the family and society is not related to age, but rather to the look to women, i.e. it is related to the mainstream culture. Christian women are liberated and enjoy a good family status, which is observed in the local communities where Christians are concentrated: Karrada al-Sharqiya, Karrada of Maryam, Arssat al-Hindiya, Baghdad al-Jadida (New Baghdad) and Tal Muhammad, and Quarters of Christians in Mosul, Kirkuk, the Kurdistan Region, and the villages surrounding them. Their culture is based on what the Bible says, {a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh}(Bible, Old Testament, 2:24, Translation by New International Version), and it also says { and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh., Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate} (Bible, New Testament, Matthew Gospel, 19:6, Translation by New International Version). The issue of sin is no longer on the woman and man's mind and with these teachings, with no divorce or polygamy.

As for Iraqi Muslim women, they fell under the umbrella of the culture whose foundations were based on the verse that says, " And abide in your houses" (Holy Quran, Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 33, Translation by Sahih International) and other verses that affirm the veil and the isolation of women from men, which gave birth to the culture of (woman is a whole private part).

The government played an important role in separating males from females when it initiated the establishment of elementary schools for girls, and other schools for boys since the twenties of the last century. After the social openness that occurred in the beginning of the second half of the last century, some groups of the civilian elite took the initiative to establish private mixed schools, which prompted the Ministry of Education to establish public mixed schools in many quarters characterized by high socioeconomic level in Baghdad, Basrah, Mosul and then the centers of all administrative cities.

It is worth referring to the rise of some voices calling for the prohibition of co-education and the opening of private colleges for girls. However, these voices were ignored.

Empowering Iraqi women is a strategic goal required by sustainable development. Today, data indicate 10.5% of families headed by women, and they are distributed according to environment to 11.4% in urban areas and 7.6% in rural areas (Central Statistical Organization, Department of Human Development Statistics, 2018, 7). These percentages mean that the loss of supportive men to their families in the rural area is less than in the urban Iraqi cities. From 2003 forward, it is Iraqi cities that suffer from terrorism, chaos and human losses. These percentages were calculated by the *survey of nutritional status and vulnerability assessment of families in Iraq* in 2016.

The number of families in which a woman is (the head of family) may increase in the future for various reasons. Therefore, women must be empowered.

Sustainable development does not cease with the advancement of social elites, but rather works for the progress of all. Iraqi women still live in a gap of education, employment, male preference within the family, and limited opportunities in higher authorities and political decision-making. The following table summarizes some of these realities of Iraqi women.

Positions	M	F
High and medium administrative leaderships in local governments	93.4	6.6
High and medium administrative leaderships in governorate councils	77.9	22.1
Parliament seats	74.3	74.3
Employees number in ministries and non-affiliated authorities	63.6	36.4

Table (5): Iraqi women participation in essential positions -Annual Statistical Abstract (2014-2016) (Central Statistical Organization, Ministry of Planning) Human Development Statistics, several tables.

Procedure	%
Enacting restraint acts	50.0
Establishing protection establishments	30.3
Protecting abused women	12.6
Rehabilitation programs for abused women	5.6
Other	1.5

Hence, Iraqi women still have a long way to go in the struggle for equality, human dignity, and the abolition of the subordinate culture. The Iraqi constitution stipulated in Articles 14,15,16, 20, 22, 29, first and second, everything that could enhance the economic and social position of women, and what enhances programs that adapt them cognitively, scientifically and economically, all the way to senior administrative

leaderships according to their qualifications. In the results of the Survey of *Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health* (I-WISH) of 2011, appointed women (15-45) years old for the important steps that must be taken by the government and the Parliament Council to support women's empowerment and protection from violence. These are:

Table 6): The proportional distribution of the integrated survey sample of women (15-45) according to the most important step required of the government and parliament to support women's empowerment and protection from violence:

- Annual Statistical Abstract 2014-2016 Table 19/50
In total, these requirements are not difficult and their implementation should help alleviate the suffering of women. This is something we noticed when we visited Minnesota in 2008.

Conclusion:

The situation of women differed significantly between 1850 and 1950. In these hundred years, a feminist elite

was established benefiting greatly from the press and radio. It worked on reaching the society as a whole. Between 1950 and 2020, the economic and social reality of women changed at a faster pace. The feminist elite expanded, benefiting from television, then satellite channels, and finally social media. The researchers estimate that the year 2050 will witness the situation where the feminist elite be the entire community of women in Iraq, enjoying their full rights without discrimination against them. They are expected to enter the arena of competition with men according to their qualifications.

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