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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS AND FAMILY POVERTY CONDITIONS IN JORDANIAN RURAL REGIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at measuring the impact of the demographic indicators on Jordanian rural regions. To achieve its objectives, the study conducted a survey on 217 families selected randomly from eleven villages in the southern region. The study used the technique face-to-face interviews, with the aid of a questionnaire designed to collect data for this purpose. Descriptive statistical analysis and Analysis of Variance ANOVA approaches were used to measure the significant statistical differences between poor and non-poor families.

The study shows that there is a kind of similarity between the area of study and Jordan as a whole in terms of age structure, sex ratio, dependency level and fertility rate, yet, it shows a higher number of poor families in these areas compared to non-poor families. It was found that the number of females as the heads of households of poor families, in addition to their ratio in sex distribution in poor families is higher than the number of males. Moreover, poor families are characterized with a higher number of young people, higher dependency and higher fertility rate compared to the non-poor families.

Also, it was found that singles ratio among non-poor families mounted to 152%, whereas divorced, widows and separated couples ratio is higher among poor families compared to non-poor families. Though, marriage ratio increases as the rate of poverty increases, and the mean marriage age for both males and females is lower for poor families than non-poor families. This result implies an increase in marriage problems among poor families compared to the non-poor families.

Key words: demographic indicators, poverty, rural development.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a considerable evidence of a strong negative correlation between household demographic characteristics and consumption (or income) per person in developing countries. It is often concluded that people living in large and (generally) young households are typically poorer. There has been much debate on which is the "cause" and which is the "effect" in this correlation. The position one takes in that debate can have implications for policy, including the role of population policy in development, and the scope for fighting poverty using demographically contingent transfers (Lanjouw and Ravallion, 1995). UNECEF (1994) published a report about the child's conditions in the world. The report indicates the relation between poverty and population growth, as the two factors go hand-in-hand. The report indicates that abject poverty encourages population growth, simultaneously; population growth itself increases poverty. At the same time, there is an international agreement that family size, for a family whose members are living under the same roof, is inversely proportional with individual consumption and income rate in the developed countries. Moreover, population growth leads to undesirable health conditions, low standards of living, increases high crimes and violence rate, and leads women to leave because of the family big size. Therefore, as the family size increases, the family dependency rate increases and the cost of the minimum necessary life support increases too. As a result, the increase in family size puts pressure on family budget, which in turn leads to sinking below poverty line. The large rural family size compared to the urban families is explained by a set of factors. These factors are; 1) the rural cultural values, 2) the low living cost compared to the urbanized families, 3) the tendency to give birth to more children. The latter factor stems from the belief that children can help them increase their income from agriculture, which needs laborers, besides; they can support them in the different

aspects of life (Economical Committee of Africa, 1994). The widely spread view that larger families tend to be poorer in the developing countries has influenced research and policy. The scope of size economies in consumption cautions against this view. Lanjouw and Ravellion (1995) found that the correlation between poverty and size vanishes in Pakistan when the size elasticity in relation to the cost of living is about 0.6. This turns out to be the elasticity implied by a modified version of the scales set for food share method. Consideration of the value attached to child welfare versus that of the adult may help resolve the non-robustness of demographic profiles of poverty.

High population growth rate is a constraint for achieving low poverty and sustainable life (Economical Committee of Africa, 1994). The land became less productive; properties are more scattered; soil and rangeland are deteriorating.

The densely populated countries, with high childbirth and death rates, and the lowest per capita income, are the countries suffering from heavy national debt burden, and complicated financial resources for reconstruction programs. The countries are spirally loaded with debt, social priorities, and the growing social opposition because of poorness (Economical Committee of Africa, 1994). The quick increase in population sets as a burden on resources, which might leave negative effects on development patterns, at least in spending extra efforts to provide this increasing population with the necessary needs. Therefore, strategies fighting poverty should handle such problems.

The population age structure and sex differ according to people place, their social and economical level, environmental condition, occupation, cultural and educational level, costume, and habits (Arab League, 1993). This requires defining the demographic characteristics of poor and non-poor population in the area according to their sex, age, and age structure distribution. Finally, the relation with the head of the household and other demographic indicators is considered as one of the best developmental indicators for distinguishing between poor and non-poor families, upon which most international studies depend.

Results of the 1994 census indicate that the age structure of the population has changed onsiderably since 1979; this was the result of changes in fertility, mortality, and marriage dynamics. The proportion of population under the age of 15 declined from 51% in 1979 to 39% in 2002, whereas, the proportion of those aged above 65 has been rising. Fertility has been declining in Jordan since the mid 1970. Studies have found that the fertility rate has declined from 7.4 per woman in 1976 to 5.6 per woman in 1990, and to 4.4 child per woman in 1997 and finally to 3.7 child per woman in 2002 (Department of Statistics, 2002).

1.1. Justification

Jordan is currently embarking upon an ambitious program of social and economical reform with human resources development at its core on the urban and the rural levels (World Bank, 2001). Despite extensive work on welfare measurement in economics, there is still no preferred method for making inter-personal comparisons across households in relation to demographic characteristics and poverty level on Jordanian rural regions.

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1-What are the demographic and poverty indicators in the rural areas before, during and after implementing any rural development project?

2- Is it beneficial to use the Participatory Approach (Participatory monitoring & Evaluation for a result-oriented impact assessment) in order to institutionalize the community development Plans, which empower local communities and promote sustainable livelihoods?

3- What are the returns and impacts of various types of public investments on the rural areas in terms of poverty, inequality, and economic growth? Taking into consideration the importance of developing social and economic indicators of these areas and making them available to decision makers and other stakeholders utilizing the baseline information collected.

4- How demographic characteristics affect poverty different ways? And are there any fair and efficient mechanisms to alleviate poverty?

Special emphasis should be placed upon the socio-economic analysis of poverty in the south Jordanian rural including the assessment of respective trends for the near future. As the result, the analysis should serve in supporting the decision makers in the field of poverty characteristics and handling it in the rural areas. In addition, it helps to describe the basic socio economic and demographic characteristics of the rural community including population characteristics, and level of poverty.

Nevertheless, the gaps in the available information on poverty characteristics should be considered.

1.2. Study hypothesis

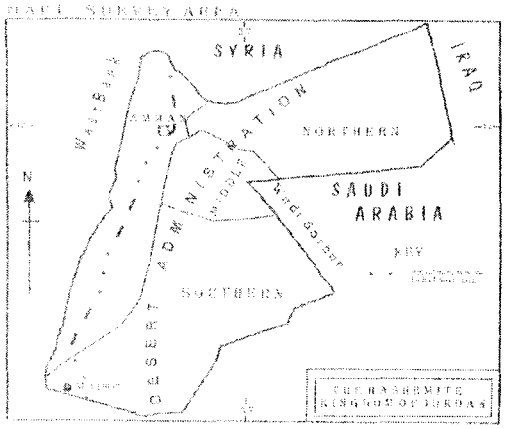
Study results reject the null hypothesis, which states that there are no statistically significant differences between family poverty level (abject poverty, absolute poverty, and non-poor) and family size, quality structure, sex ratio, population age distribution, the median age, age dependency ratio, child-woman ratio, nuptiality, marriage rate, the mean age at the first marriage, and the divorce rate.

1.3. Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to identify the demographic conditions of Jordanian rural areas, the problems and the constraints that poor people have faced which make their living areas economically and socially unattractive. This is achieved by analyzing poverty, identifying economical characteristics indicators, and profiles, that distinguish poor families from the non-poor ones, and identifying the relations between the economical characteristics (poor and non-poor), in addition to some demographic and social variables, in order to understand the factors contributing to families conditions, leading then to develop realistic policies to solve poverty.

2. STUDY METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCE

Face-to-face interviews with the heads of the households were conducted in order to collect primary data using a questionnaire designed for this purpose, which was arbitrated and modified in the field. To achieve the aim of the study, the framework of the sample covers the rural areas in the four southern governorates; Karak, Tafila, Aqaba, and Ma'an, (prepared by Department of Statistics, 2006).



Map (1): Jordan rural regions and study area.

2.1. Procedural definitions

The head of the household is defined as a person responsible for the others living with him in a separate housing unit; the house may roof persons with no relation or kinship by birth, marriage, or even by adoption. This definition is not applied to universities, hostels, prisons, or employee housings.

2.2. Identifying the sample size

The sample was selected randomly using the cluster systematic method. It consisted at the first stage of 217 families from 3686 families selected randomly from eleven villages from the southern region of Jordan, and then blocks sample was randomly selected. The used families sample was selected from the block in the third stage by the systematic random method.

2.3. Analysis method

To achieve the objectives, the descriptive statistical analyses with the aid of the Statistical Programs for Social Sciences (SPSS 15®) were used for processing the data in order to identify the social and demographic characteristics that distinguish poor families from non-poor ones. To achieve this aim, families classified in the domains of abject poverty, absolute poverty, and non-poor families were distributed on each social characteristic, according to its levels and values. Moreover, the distributions of the families were compared to identify the difference between them with respect to the demographic characteristics, depending on the method of Analysis of Variance ANOVA to measure the impact of the demographic changes on poverty level.

Poverty lines in the area were identified depending on a survey conducted by Hunaiti and Al-Tayeb (2005). The study showed that the abject poverty line is 14.9JDs (21$) a month for person, while it was 25.2 JDs (35.5$) for the absolute poverty line in the rural areas of the southern region of Jordan.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Population

3.1.1. Size of poor and non- poor families

Fig. (1) shows the results of the study sample in relation to family size. It shows that the average family size of the sample in the different villages was 7.85. This size increased among the families suffering from abject poverty to become 8.4 members (Std. Deviation is 3.8), while in the families suffering from absolute poverty, it was 8.0 members (Std. Deviation is 3.8) and 7.4 members for non-poor families (Std. Deviation is 4.72). As shown, the average family size in the

rural area in the southern region is more than the average family size in Jordan as a whole, (Department of Statistics, 2004), which is 5.7 members. Figure (1) shows the results of the analysis of Least Significant Differences (LSD) from ANOVA, which reveal that there are statistically significant differences, ($P<0.001$), between families. These differences depend on their poverty level along with their mean size. Thus, poor and rich conditions of the family are related to its size. This result does not support the previous hypothesis of the study, where the non-poor families have fewer children than their counterparts, the poor families. The reason behind this fact is that people in the remote areas have thoughts that encourage producing children, as children support them in being laborers in agriculture, which might increase their income.

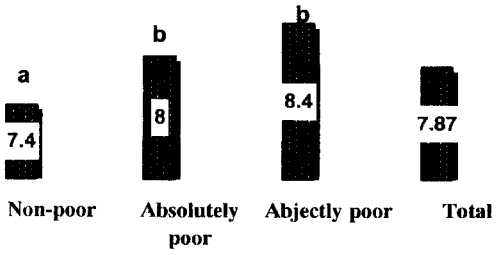


Fig. (1): Average family size

3.1.2. Gender structure

As far as gender distribution in the sample is concerned, Fig. (2) shows that male ratio is 52% and female ratio is 48%, *i.e.* 109 males against 100 females. This ratio is 97% in abjectly-poor families, while it is equal to the general ratio in absolutely-poor and non-poor families. This means that the ratio among the total abjectly-poor families is less than their counterparts in absolutely-poor and non-poor families. In Fig. (2), the LSD statistical analysis shows statistically significant differences ($P<0.05$) between abjectly-poor families and other families, in relation to gender ratio, where the female gender ratio among abjectly-poor families is increasing compared to non-poor, and absolutely-poor families. In Jordan, the ratio of females to males is 109.7 (Department of Statistics, 2004). This result is approximately similar to results of this study.

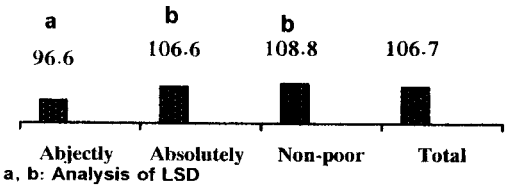


Fig. (2) : The relationship between gender ratio and poverty level.

Previous studies (Hunaiti, *et al.*, 2004) showed that poor families supported by women because of the husband death, or unemployment, or any other reason, are poorer than families who are supported by men. It is generally known that the poorer the family is; the more the working hours the women spend in it and the more the women exploited in the economical production and family well-being (Economical Committee of Africa, 1994). Fig. (3) shows that when moving from the abjectly-poor to the non-poor families, the female ratio among the heads of the households decreases. The LSD statistical analysis shows the statistically significant differences ($P<0.05$) between abjectly-poor and non-poor families in householder gender ratio, while it does not show any statistically significant differences between absolutely-poor and non-poor families in head of household gender ratio, where the female gender ratio as a head of household among abjectly-poor families is increasing compared with non-poor, and absolutely-poor families.

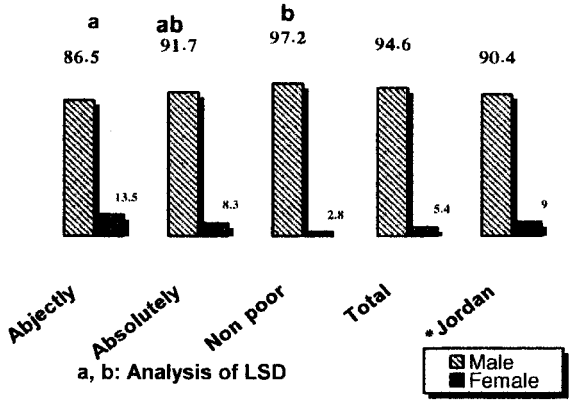


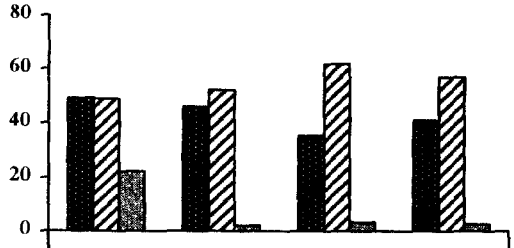
Fig. (3): Population distribution according to the householders gender ratio.

3.1.3. Population age distribution

The age structure of the population is considered as one of the significant demographic indicators that helps to identify the number of changes affecting the poverty and development of communities. The age structure is affected by a

set of demographic, economic, and social factors, which in turn affects the population community, like fertility ratio, birth and death ratios, dependency rate, and migration rate, in addition to some other factors. Therefore, the age structure is one of the most important controlling factors affecting the demographic growth. In the developed countries, high ratio of children guarantees population growth during low fertility periods (Hopt and Techen, no-date).

Field survey results of the study, presented in Fig. (4), show that rural areas communities in Jordanian southern region are relatively young societies. Percentage of people below 16 years is 41% of the total sample population, compared to 38% for Jordan as a whole. The percentage of 16-64 years old people is 57%, compared to 59% on the general level, and 3% for people above 64 years, compared with 3.5% on the general level (Department of Statistics, 2004). Fig. (4) shows poor and non-poor families members distribution, the data show that ratio of family members in the 15-64 years old category is more among non-poor compared with the poor family. It has been



	Abjectly	Absoultely	Non-poor	Total
0-15	49.1	46	35.2	40.7
16-64	48.7	52	61.7	56.8
64+	22	2	3.2	2.6

a, b: Analysis of LDS

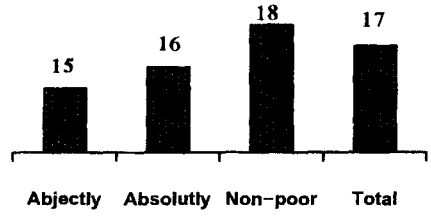
Fig. (4): Relative distribution of poor and non-poor family members.

noticed that there is a direct proportional relation between family poverty intensity and this age category, where individual ratio in this was 49% among abjectly-poor families, 52% for the absolutely-poor families, and 62% for the non-poor families. The LSD of statistical analysis indicates statistically significant differences ($P<0.001$) between abjectly- and absolutely- poor families compared with the non-poor families, but did not show any statistically significant differences between abjectly- and absolutely-poor families.

On the light of the data shown in Fig. (4), poor families are younger than non-poor families, *i.e.* the ratio of young people in poor families is more compared to non-poor families. The increase in young people ratio (below 16 years) in poor families compared to the non-poor families increases their life burden and dependency rate which might contribute to poverty conditions.

3.1.4. The median age

The median age is the age which half of the population is higher than, and the other half is lower than. It was 17 years in the area, while abjectly-poor families median age was 15 years; for absolutely-poor families median age was 16 years old; and it was 18 years for the non-poor families. Although the data (Fig. 5) indicate that poor people are younger than non-poor people, but these differences were not statistically significant.



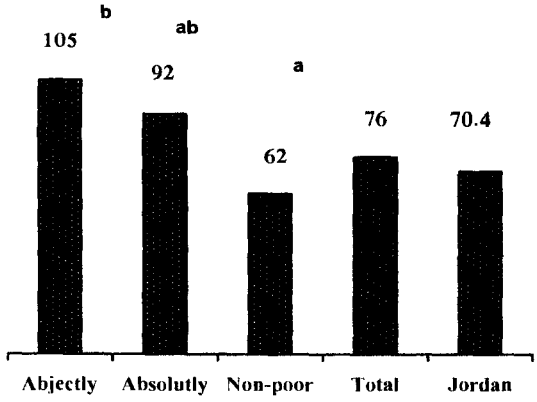
a : Analysis of LSD

Fig. (5): The relationship between median age and poverty level.

3.1.5. Age dependency ratio

Age dependency ratio; which represents the ratio of people in the dependency age (below 16 years, and more than 64 years) to people in the working age (16-64 years), is used when there are no detailed data are available as an indicator to the economical burdens that the productive part of the population must bear. Even persons who have been told that they will be supported are doing a productive job, and some of the persons in the productive age are, in fact, economically dependent (Hopt and Techen, no-date). This ratio was 76% in the area of study, 105%, 92%, and 62% among the abjectly-poor, absolutely-poor and non-poor families, respectively (Fig. 6). While in Jordan as a whole the ratio was 70.4% (Data analysis was done, using Department of Statistics data, 2004). It can be concluded that dependent poor families ratio is higher than the dependent ratio in non-poor families, and the dependency ratio in rural areas is higher than the dependency ratio in Jordan as a whole. The LSD statistical

analysis shows statistical differences (P <0.05) between abjectly-poor and non-poor families in relation to age dependency ratio, and the statistical analysis did not show any statistically significant differences between absolutely-poor and non-poor families in relation to age dependency ratio, as this ratio is increasing among abjectly-poor families compared with non-poor families.



a,b: Analysis of LSD

Fig. (6) : The relationship between dependency ratio and poverty level.

3.2. Human fertility

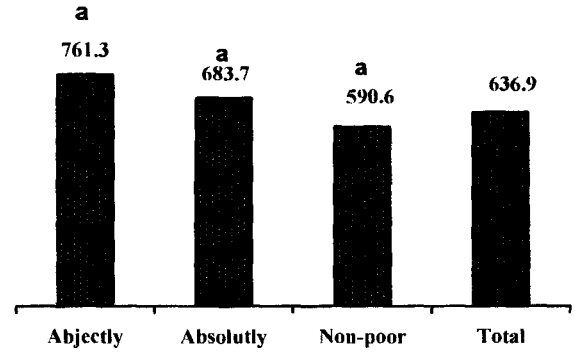
Fertility indicates the actual procreation behavior of any community, which differs from the physiological couples ability of producing children. The fertility, which can be defined as the living born infants in a given population community, is affected by several factors: the ability to procreate, the marriage age or the age of living together as couples, providing people with contraceptives, better economical conditions, better woman social standard, and by population' age and sex structure.

3.2.1. Child to woman ratio

Child-woman ratio indicates the number of children below five years per 1000 woman at the fertility, which is sometimes used as a proxy for fertility, especially when there is no detailed data about the born infants. The ratio was 636.9 per 1000 woman at the fertility age in the year 2006 in the rural areas of Jordanian southern region, (Data was analyzed by using Department of Statistics data, 2004).

The child-woman ratio distribution with respect to poverty conditions was 761.3% in abjectly-poor families, against 683.7% in absolutely-poor families, while non-poor families ratio was 590.6% (Fig.7).

This result indicates that though the mean family size is inversely related to the family poverty conditions, the child-woman ratio is directly proportional to the family poverty conditions. The family size increases as poverty increases, *i.e.*, the new families are suffering from poverty, while the big and old families could escape from poverty. The big-size family is characteristic of all families in the whole area. But there were no statistically significant differences for this hypothesis.



a: Analysis of LSD

Fig. (7): The relationship between child woman ratio and poverty level.

3.3. Nuptiality

Nuptiality identifies marriage as a population phenomenon, includes the rate at which this phenomenon takes place, and the characteristics of the people related to it. It also indicates the end of this relation by divorce, separation, death, or marriage non-validity.

Information on nuptiality is a particular interest because marriage is a primary determinant of the possibility that women are exposed to the risk of pregnancy, particularly in regions like the rural ones where premarital fertility is rare. Marriage patterns are important for an understanding of fertility, since early age at first marriage is associated with early childbearing and high fertility.

Table (1) shows that the ratio of married people among poor families is too high compared with non-poor families. Nevertheless, there were no statistically significant differences for this hypothesis.

Moreover, the ratio of divorced, widows, and separated women is higher among poor families compared to the non-poor families, but this high ratio was not statistically significant.

Table (1): Ratio of married people, divorced, widows and separated women among poor families compared with non-poor families.

Nuptiality condition	Abjectly poor	Absolutely poor	Non-poor	Total	Jordan*
Single	37.2	42.4	56.6	51.1	39.9
Married	52.2	48	39.1	42.5	55
Divorced	2.7	1.9	0.7	1.1	0.7
Widow	7.1	7.5	3.4	5	3.3
Separate	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
Others	-	-	-	-	0.9

Source: Department of Statistics (2004), Statistical Yearbook, No.54, H.K.J.

Table (2) shows the direct relation between the number of marriages for females and the family poverty conditions, *i.e.*, women in poor families get married more frequently than in non-poor families, but these results were not statistically significant.

3.3.1. Marriage rate

Marriage rate, scientifically called (Raw marriage rate), can be defined as the number of marriages which takes place per 1000 woman from the total population in a given year. This rate is based upon the number of marriages taking place, not on the number of people getting married. It includes the first, second, third, and fourth marriages. The raw marriages rate in the study area was 364.7 per 1000 capita, while it was 489.6, 405.9, and 328.7 for the abjectly, absolutely, and non-poor families, respectively (Fig. 8). Thus, increasing marriage rate among poor families compared with the non-poor families can be noticed but this difference was not statistically significant.

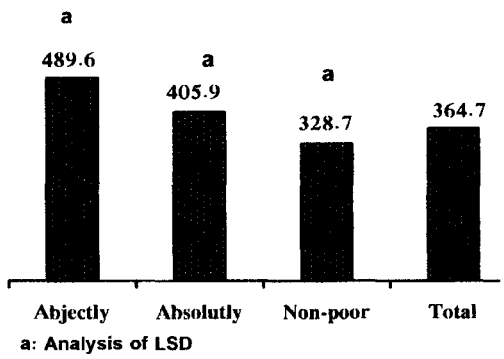


Fig. (8): The relationship between marriage rate and poverty level.

Table (2): Relative distribution of the number of marriages above 13 in the poor and non-poor families.

SEX	MALE				FEMALE			
Number of marriages	Abjectly-poor	Absolutely-poor	Non-poor	Total	Abjectly-poor	Absolutely-poor	Non-poor	Total
Once	74.2	74.7	64.9	69.6	88.2	80.0	67.6	73.6
Twice	19.4	19.5	28.9	24.5	8.8	14.7	26.5	20.8
Thrice	3.2	4.6	5.2	4.9	2.9	5.3	4.9	5.1
4times	3.2	1.1	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.5
> 4 times	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mean marriage numbers	1.42	1.34	1.42	1.39	1.15	1.25	1.39	1.32

3.3.2. Median age at first marriage

In the study area, all births occur within marriage, thus, age at first marriage is an important indicator of exposure to the risk of pregnancy and childbirth.

As far as median age of first marriage is concerned, the data show that half of the people in the area get married for the first time before the median marriage age, and the other half of people get married after this age. The median marriage age is calculated separately for males and females, because women get married at younger ages. The median age at the first marriage has an impact on population fertility (Fig. 9).

Median age of first marriages in the area of study was 25 years for males, and 20 years for females while in Jordan as a whole it was 29.8,

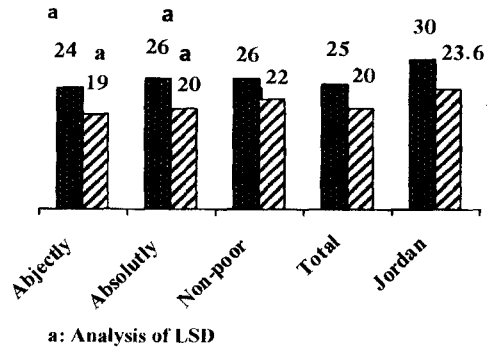


Fig. (9) : The relationship between median age at the first marriage and poverty level.

and 23.6 for males and females, respectively, according to the data which were obtained from the Jordan central statistical records (Department of Statistics, 2004). Marriage median age in abjectly poor families was 24, and 19 years for males and females, respectively, while it was 26 years for males, and 20 years for females in absolutely-poor families, while in non-poor families the rate was 26 years for males, and 22 years for females. Statistical analysis did not show any statistically significant differences between family poverty conditions and first marriage median age for each of males and females.

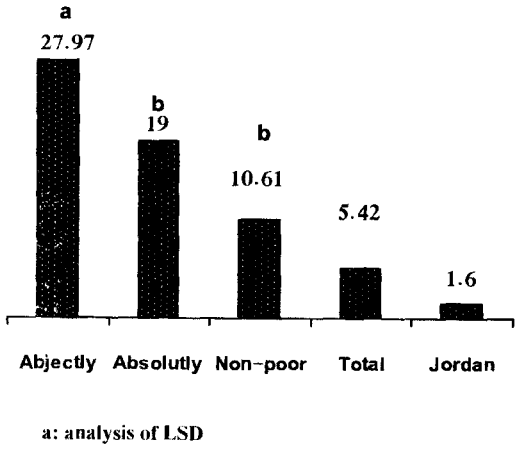


Fig. (10) : The relationship between divorce rate and poverty level

The study shows that early marriage in Arab societies has an effective role in spreading and increasing poverty. Moreover, any policy or procedure that delays marriage age will undoubtedly help in keeping a number of young females away from poverty (Sqour, 1998: 9).

3.3.3. Divorce rate

Divorce rate (or raw divorce rate) indicates the number of divorce cases per 1000 population in the area of study. This rate is calculated according to the number of divorce cases, not the number of people divorced. Divorced cases in the study area were 5.42 per 1000 capita, which is considered high compared to the Jordanian general rate which was 1.6 divorce cases per 1000 capita in 2004 (Department of Statistics, 2004). The rate was 27.97, 19.0, and 10.61 divorce cases per 1000 capita for abjectly, absolutely, and non-poor families (Fig. 10). The statistical analysis shows a statistically significant differences ($P<0.001$) between abjectly poor, non-poor, and, absolutely-poor families, which emphasizes exasperation of poverty among abjectly poor families compared to the others.

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العلاقة بين المؤشرات الديموغرافية وحالة الأسرة من الفقر في منطقة الريف الأردني

دوخي عبد الرحيم الحنيطي
قسم الإنتاج النباتي – كلـية الزراعـة– جامعـة مؤتة– الكرك – الأردن

ملخص

تهدف الدراسة إلى قياس أثر الفقر على المؤشرات الديموغرافية في مناطق الريف الأردني، ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم أجراء الدراسة على عينة قوامها ٢١٧ أسرة اختيرت بطريقة عشوائية من إحدي عشرة قرية تابعة لإقليم الجنوب، وجمعت البيانات بطريقة المقابلة الشخصية باستخدام الاستمارة التي صممت لهذا الغرض. واستخدم أسلوب التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي، وتحليل التباين ANOVA لقياس الفروق المعنوية بين الأسر الفقيرة وغير الفقيرة.

توصلت الدراسة إلى أن منطقة الدراسة متقاربة مع الأردن من حيث: التركيبة العمرية، ونسبة الجنس ونسبة الإعالة، ومعدل الخصوبة، إلا أنها كانت عند الأسر الفقيرة أكبر بالمقارنة مع الأسر غير الفقيرة، وعليه نستطيع القول أن جنس الأنوثة يغلب في رعاية الأسرة (رب الأسرة)، وفي توزيع الجنس في الأسرة عند الأسر الفقيرة، كما تمتاز الأسر الفقيرة بحداثة السن وارتفاع معدلات الإعالة والخصوبة مقارنة مع الأسر غير الفقيرة. ومنه نجد أن نسبة العزوبية في الأسر غير الفقيرة أكبر بنسبة ملحوظة بلغت ١٥٢%، كما أن معدل الطلاق ونسبة الأرامل والمنفصلين كانت مرتفعة عند الأسر الفقيرة مقارنة بغير الفقيرة، وأن معدل الزواج يزداد مع زيادة حدة الفقر، إلا أن العمر الوسيط عند الزواج في الأسر الفقيرة كان أقل منه عند الأسر غير الفقيرة للذكور والإناث، كما نلاحظ ارتفاع المشاكل الزوجية عند الأسر الفقيرة مقارنة مع الأسر غير الفقيرة.

المجلة العلمية لكلية الزراعة – جامعة القاهرة – المجلد(٥٩) العدد الثـاني (إبـريل ٢٠٠٨) :٨٧ – ٩٥.