

Social and Economical Characteristics of Poor Families in Jordan

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating social and economical characteristics of poor families in Jordan; by analyzing the characteristics of the poverty pockets population in Jordan, for recognizing the difference between poor and non-poor families from the perspective of economic, social in order to develop proposals and solutions to alleviate the problem of poverty in the poor areas through the design of preventive programs and early intervention and subsequent to the problem of poverty and improve the performance of existing ones.

A random representative sample of poor and non-poor families in the poverty pockets spreading over three regions in Jordan (north, central, and south) was chosen, and by taking into account the rate of poverty in the three regions, reaching a size of (265) poor families, and (229) non-poor families

1.1 Introduction

Millions of people across the world are trying to move away out of poverty through the simple command of go to work, but for many of them; their efforts are not considered sufficient to escape from the trap of poverty. People need jobs, a fair opportunity to get a decent job. This has urged the International Labor Organization in the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, to take the necessary steps to address the problem of poverty in the world. (World of Work, No. 58, August / 2007: 4).

With regard to Jordan, poverty as a problem has emerged to plague the community after the mid-eighties, and as a result of the disruption of economic conditions, which led to high unemployment and poverty rates, as we find that nearly 13% of Jordan's population are below the poverty line in 2006, compared with (14.2 %) in 2002. Jordan efforts in fighting poverty as a national issue and its priorities, had led to the development of a national strategy to combat poverty through anti-poverty program in involving many parties, such as the public sector, private sector, civil society organizations, international organizations and donors (Anti-poverty program in Jordan, 2006: 9-16).

Studies in Jordan also showed that poverty is widespread in all the twelve governorates of Jordan, and that a higher proportion of households of families with a large number of children, and it represent the phenomenon of low-wage employers charged for poor families rather than the phenomenon of unemployment.

1.2 Importance of the study

Highlighting the importance of the study upon the available information of the socio-economic characteristics of the poverty pockets population in Jordan, will assess decision-makers for the development vision of the appropriate future, policy-making and design appropriate interventions in which they can take out of this category for poverty that prevailed. The need for such a study is necessary in terms of:

1. Recognizing the difference between poor and non-poor families from the perspective of economic, social in order to the cripple of negative indicators of these communities.
2. Developing proposals and solutions to alleviate the problem of poverty in the poor areas through the design of preventive programs and early intervention and subsequent to the problem of poverty and improve the performance of existing ones.
3. Establishing mechanisms for coordination and cooperation between the various institutions working in the field of social solidarity and targeting pockets of poverty to ensure that no duplication and waste of resources.
4. The need to develop a methodology to target the poor in pockets of poverty and access better results.

1.3 Study Questions

Are there any differences in the social characteristics between poor and non-poor families located together in the poverty pockets in Jordan?

Are there any differences in the economical characteristics of poor and non-poor families in the poverty pockets in Jordan?

Is there a relationship between social and economical characteristics and poverty in the poor and non-poor families in the pockets of poverty?

What are the proposals to reduce the problem of poverty from the perspective of poor families in the poor and non-poor areas to cope with reducing poverty?

1.4 Study Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to identify the social and economical characteristics of the poor families in poverty pockets compared with the characteristics of non-poor families, and the difficulties faced by these families in the cause of poverty, in addition to proposing solutions to the problem of reducing poverty in these areas by analyzing the followings:

1. Recognizing the reality of economical and social conditions of the poor and the non-poor families in the poverty pockets.
2. Identifying the relationship between demographic characteristics and socio-economical characteristics and poverty.
3. Developing proposals to alleviate the problem of poverty.

1.5 Literature Review

Jordan did not stand out for the phenomenon of poverty until the mid-eighties; Jordan has witnessed a revival in the seventies reflected in the rise in the standard of living of the population and the distribution of income. But the economic situation differed clearly after the mid-eighties, which has resulted because the lower oil prices, and the decline in Jordanian exports, and lower demand for manpower abroad to exacerbate poverty and unemployment.

The number of poor have increased (6) times during the period (1987-1992), as it increased from about 85 thousand to about 554 thousand in 1992, and remained stable without change until 1997, and evidences suggest a decline during the period (2000-2004), which confirms that rising inequality and the rising of gini-coefficient from (0.36) to (0.40), and then falling to (0.36) in 1997, and remained at a standstill until 2001, falling to (0.33) in 2004. The poverty gap has increased from 0.3% of the poverty line in 1987 to 3.6% in 1992, then decreased to 2.5% in 1997 (Haider, 2009).

1.6 Previous studies

Haider (2009) study entitled "Analysis of regional variation of the phenomenon of poverty in Jordan and the impact of development projects facing this phenomenon" which aimed to analyze the demographic, social and economical development of the population in Jordan, and to assess the level of poverty in Jordan and clarify the distributed spatial, and to review the experiences of the governmental and non- governmental organizations in the fight against poverty, and to propose programs that can contribute to the fight against poverty in Jordan. The study adopted the findings of the Department of Statistics for the Income and Expenditure Family Survey in 2006, which has revealed the large size of families in the Jordanian society that reaches on the average of (6.1) born during the period of women's reproductive, also revealed a low level of income of the majority of families due to the low payments and limited sources of income, as the percentage of the monthly income is less than 500 Jordanian Dinars for (95.2 %) of the working proportion, in addition to the high rate of unemployment (14.8 %) and low levels of education and high illiteracy rates, especially among females in Jordan.

also AL-Halaq et al (2008) study entitled "the phenomenon of poverty in Irbid Governorate: reality and the possibility of the solution", which aimed to identify the reality of economical and social conditions of the poor families in the governorate of Irbid, in order to assist decision-makers in the development of the appropriate future vision, and policy-making design of the appropriate interventions.

The study found a range of results with respect to demographic characteristics of the families of the study sample, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The percentage of poor families headed by women is (57.3 %).
2. The proportion of poor families headed with men or women with no degree is (0.6%) of the total study sample families.
3. Percentage of married poor families heads (44.9 %), while the proportion of widows is (31.4%), and the proportion of divorced and singles (12.4 %, 11.4 %), respectively.

1.7 The Study Methodology

The study has adopted the descriptive qualitative and quantitative approaches, besides using the descriptive analytical and comparative methods; using methods of field survey on a sample of the poor and non-poor families in poverty pockets, through the application of a special questionnaire as the study tool, which includes closed and open questions prepared in a manner consistent with the objectives and the question of the study.

1.7.1 The study sample

Study population includes all families in the poverty pockets in Jordan. The poor and non-poor defined by the results of the survey data of population and income for the 2012 report of the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Planning.

A random representative sample of poor and non-poor families in the poverty pockets spreading over three regions in Jordan (north, central, and south) was chosen, and by taking into account the rate of poverty in the three regions, reaching a size of (265) poor families, and (229) non-poor families. The study has been relying on the level of per capita income (46.5 dinars) or approximately (556 dinars) per year. The following is the distribution of the sample of poor families by province and region as shown in table (1), and table (2).

Table (1): Distribution of the study population from poor families and non-poor by Province

Region	Province	Poverty Percentage	Population 2007	Families 2007	Poor individuals	Poor families	Non-poor families
Ajloun North	Kofranja	36.9	30050	5008	11088	1848	3160
Amman Centre	Om Alrasas	26.2	7650	1275	2004	334	941
Aqapa South	Qwera	46.6	15600	2600	7270	1212	1388
Total		-	53300	8883	20362	3394	5489

Table (2): Distribution of the study sample from poor families and non-poor by Province

Region	Province	Poor families		Non-poor families	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Ajloun North	Kofranja	137	7.4	108	3.4
Amman Centre	Om Alrasas	26	7.8	36	3.8
Aqapa South	Qwera	102	8.4	85	6.1
Total		265	5.1	229	3.0

1.7.2 The study tool

A questionnaire is designed in reference to the literature and previous studies, and included three dimensions, the first is related to the demographic characteristics and the educational level of the head of the family, and the family members; while the second dimension covers the characteristics of the housing and health of the poor family members; and the third dimension covers economical characteristics and the sources of income, showing the point of view of the respondents about the causes of poverty and the proposed solutions to reduce it.

1.8 Results of the study and its implications

1.8.1 Social characteristics of poor and non-poor families in poverty pockets

Table (3): Distribution of the poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Head of the family	Father	108	78.8	17	65.4	94	92.2	219	82.6
	Mother	26	19.0	8	30.8	5	4.9	39	14.7
	Brother	3	2.2	1	3.8	3	2.9	7	2.6
	Sister	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Chi-square: (4.362). In terms of statistical (0.359)

Table (4): Distribution of the non-poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Head of the family	Father	89	83.2	33	91.7	76	89.4	198	86.8
	Mother	15	14.0	3	8.3	6	7.1	24	10.5
	Brother	3	2.8	-	-	3	3.5	6	2.6
	Sister	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.4

Chi-square: (4.362). In terms of statistical (0.359)

Table (5): Distribution of the poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Head of the family age	Older than 60	9	6.6	2	7.7	7	6.9	18	21.1
	59-50	29	21.2	7	26.9	26	25.5	62	23.4
	49-40	54	39.4	12	46.2	40	39.2	106	40.0
	39-30	18	13.1	1	3.8	17	16.7	36	13.6
	Less than 30	27	19.7	4	15.4	12	11.8	43	16.2
Age average		46.21		43.96		45.25		-	

Chi-square: (28.667). In terms of statistical significance (0.000)

Table (6): Distribution of the non-poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Head of the family age	Older than 60	16	14.8	6	16.7	14	16.5	36	15.7
	59-50	30	27.8	14	38.9	27	31.8	71	31.0
	49-40	24	22.2	5	13.9	18	21.2	47	20.5
	39-30	21	19.4	6	16.7	15	17.6	42	18.3
	Less than 30	17	15.7	5	13.9	11	12.9	33	14.4
Age average		44.28		42.28		42.58		-	

Chi-square: (28.667). In terms of statistical significance (0.000)

Table (7): Distribution of the poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Level of education	Higher than high school	23	16.8	8	30.8	22	21.6	53	69.1
	High school	58	42.3	9	34.6	62	60.8	129	48.7
	Lower than high school	50	36.5	8	30.8	16	15.7	74	27.9
	Uneducated	6	4.4	1	3.8	2	2.0	9	3.4

Chi-square: (24.860). In terms of statistical significance (0.000)

Table (8): Distribution of the non-poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Level of education	Higher than high school	11	10.2	9	25.0	12	14.1	32	14.0
	High school	53	49.1	8	22.2	42	49.4	103	45.0
	Lower than high school	26	24.1	10	27.8	21	24.7	57	24.9
	Uneducated	18	16.7	9	25.0	10	11.8	37	16.2

Chi-square: (24.860). In terms of statistical significance (0.000)

Table (9): Distribution of the poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Number of children	Less than three	27	19.7	4	15.4	22	21.6	53	20.0
	More than three	110	80.3	22	84.6	80	78.4	212	80.0

Chi-square: (81.224). In terms of statistical significance (0.000)

Table (10): Distribution of the non-poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Number of children	Less than three	55	50.9	22	61.1	47	55.3	124	54.1
	More than three	53	49.1	14	38.9	38	44.7	105	45.9

Chi-square: (81.224). In terms of statistical significance (0.000)

The number of male children ranged between (0-9), females (0-9), and the total number of members of the family of sons and daughters (0-15).

Table (11): Distribution of the poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Presence of parents in the family	Live together	120	87.6	19	73.1	92	90.2	231	87.2
	Don't live together	17	12.4	7	26.9	10	9.8	34	12.8

Chi-square: (0.972). In terms of statistical significance (0.324)

Table (12): Distribution of the non-poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Presence of parents in the family	Live together	97	89.8	33	91.7	76	89.4	206	90.0
	Don't live together	11	10.2	3	8.3	9	10.6	23	10.0

Chi-square: (0.972). In terms of statistical significance (0.324)

Table (13): Distribution of the poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reasons of parents no presence in the family	NA	14	82.4	5	71.4	7	70.0	26	76.5
	Divorce	1	5.9	-	-	1	10.0	2	5.9
	Both are dead	1	5.9	-	-	-	-	1	2.9
	Separation	-	-	1	14.3	-	-	1	2.9
	One is dead	1	5.9	1	14.3	1	10.0	4	11.8

Table (14): Distribution of the non-poor families upon social characteristics and province

Variable		Kofranja		Om Alrasas		Qwera		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reasons of parents no presence in the family	NA	9	81.8	3	100.0	8	88.9	20	87.0
	Divorce	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Both are dead	1	9.1	-	-	-	-	1	4.3
	Separation	-	-	-	-	1	11.1	1	4.3
	One is dead	1	9.1	-	-	-	-	1	4.3

Tables (3-14) show the results of the social characteristics of the poor and non-poor families in the poverty pockets as follows:

1. The proportion of poor families heads of fathers in the non-poor were higher than the poor families with the percentages (86.8 %, 82.6 %), respectively. The results also show that the proportion of female heads of poor families is higher than the non-poor families' with percentages 14.7%, 10.5% respectively. And it can be concluded that the feminization of poverty varies from one region to another, which is not a phenomenon prevalent in pockets of poverty in Jordan. The results also showed no statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the gender of the head of poor and non-poor families and the family situation, as the value of (chi-square: 4.362 in terms of the differences at the statistically significance (0.359)).
2. The highest percentage of poor families' heads are in the age group (40-49) by (40.0%) compared to (20.5%) for the same category of non-poor families. And that the average age at the heads of poor families in all regions (Kofranja: 46.21, Om Alrasas: 43.96, Qwera: 45.25) which is higher than the average ages of the non-poor families (Kofranja: 44.28, Om Alrasas: 42.28, Qwera: 42.58), concluding that the heads of the poor families are older than the non-poor families.
3. As for the educational level of the heads of poor families compared to non-poor families, the percentage rates are (69.1 %), (14.0 %) respectively. It also shows the low level of education for those who have a chance at education, where the percentage of those who are higher than secondary level (3.4%) for the

poor families, compared to (11.8 %) of the non-poor families, which demonstrates the relationship between the level of education and poverty, clearing out a statistically significant relationship between the educational level of the heads of poor families and the situation of the families as the value (Chi-square: 28.667, and this value is statistically significant at ($\alpha = 0.000$)).

4. Poor and non-poor families in the poverty pockets are characterized by regions that the largest proportion of parents living with each other within a family rating (87.2 % , 90.0 %), respectively. Results did not show the presence of a statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) between the presence of parents in the family and the situation of the (poor and non- poor families), as the value of (chi-square: 0.972 in terms of the differences at the statistically significance $\alpha = 0.324$).
5. For couples who do not live with each other in the poor families with the reasons of: one dead, or both are dead the percentage rates are (76.5 % , 2.9 %), respectively, and because of separation or divorce rates are (5.9% , 2.9 %), respectively.
6. while the reasons for those who do not live with each other in the non-poor families due to the death of one or both, the percentage rates are: (87.0 % , 4.3%) respectively, and (4.3 %) due to divorce.

Table (15): (ANOVA) analysis of variance of the impact of demographic and educational characteristics on family's poverty

Source of change	Category	Average	Variation	Freedom Degree	Variation average	F	Significance
Head of the family	Father	1.47	1.085	4	0.271	1.089	0.361
	Mother	1.38					
	Brother	1.42					
	Sister	2.00					
Head of the family age	Older than 60	1.43	7.129	4	1.782	7.531	0.000
	59-50	1.54					
	49-40	1.31					
	39-30	1.53					
	Less than 30	*1.67					
Level of education	Uneducated	1.38	15.074	2	7.537	34.338	0.000
	Lower than high school	1.44					
	High school	1.44					
	Higher than high school	*1.80					

Results in table (15) show that there are statistically significant differences between demographic characteristics and educational level for poor or non- poor families, as the value of (F) is (7.531, 8.655, 34.338), respectively, and these values are statistically significant at the level ($\alpha = 0.000$). Specifically evidenced by the results of the (Duncan) test for comparisons dimensional differences in the age group for favor of the category (less than 30 years) means that the heads of poor families in this category is closer to the non- poor, with an average for answers (1.67), while the results of the (Duncan) test showed that the comparisons of the dimensional differences between the educational level is for favor of the higher than secondary level of education , meaning that the higher the level of education provides a chance to move away from poverty and approaching the non-poor families , where the average responses (1.8).

1.9 Conclusions

The results showed that the percentage of female heads of poor families (14.7 %), and higher than in non-poor families (10.5), and that the average age of the heads of poor families (45.46 years), and higher than the average age of the heads of non-poor families (43.33), which indicates that the age of heads of poor families living in those areas is higher than the national average. This result is consistent with the results of (Gharaibeh 1995) study.

The educational level of the heads of poor families shows that (69.1 %) were illiterate. The results also showed that most of the heads of poor and non-poor families are married, and the average age of marriage for poor families (22.90 years, compared to (23.50) for the non-poor families. This result is consistent with the results of a study (Barber et al; 2008; Gharaibeh, 1995).

1.10 Recommendations

- Educating children, with the attention of girls in poor areas, and enable them to complete their studies, and providing vocational training programs, this helps in providing better employment opportunities.
- Emplaning the private ownership of initiatives to help ease the cost of school, such as providing school supplies for children so as to help them access to education and provide favorable conditions for them to pursue their education levels.
- Highlighting the importance of activating coordination and integration between people and organizations operating in the areas of poverty.
- Opening centers for information technology to help those who missed school age, and to provide financial incentives suitable for scholars and students on an ongoing basis by the institutions of social solidarity.
- Awareness of the importance of family planning because of its results in the provision of better opportunities in the education and health of mothers and sons / where these pockets devoid of the role of civil society organizations in this regard .
- Work to provide health insurance to those who do not enjoy such insurance.

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