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**Poverty of Bahraini Females:
Identification and Assessment**



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1. Introduction

Bahraini female poverty cannot be separated from the type of poverty of both gender, men and women. Bahraini females are members of Bahraini families; the state of poverty and its impact is the same for men and women. Thus, to identify and assess poverty of the Bahraini females, the nature of poverty, its relative spread, and its causes have to be identified and assessed, first, for the Bahraini family as a whole, then for the females.

Accordingly, the study will consist of five parts, including the introduction which forms **part one**. **Part two** will be on the identification of Bahraini females poverty, covering the nature of poverty of the Bahraini families, and identifying the state of female poverty. **Part three** covers the estimation and assessment of poverty of the Bahraini families, first, then the Bahraini females next. **Part four** discusses causes of poverty of the Bahraini females, which includes macro causes of poverty affecting both gender, and specific causes for female poverty. Finally, **part five** addresses the policy applied by the government and charity organizations to combat Bahrainis' poverty.

2. Identification of Bahraini Females Poverty

To identify female poverty, the nature of poverty of the Bahraini family will be identified, first, since poverty is alike for both gender. Then the state of female poverty will be examined next.

A - The Nature of Poverty of the Bahraini Family¹

The state of poverty is the same for men and women in absolute and relative terms. Being poor in absolute terms means being deprived of the satisfaction of basic needs, like food, shelter, clothes, etc. The common measure used to estimate absolute poverty in a society is to estimate the absolute poverty line, which is estimated as the amount of income (or expenditure) per family that is needed to attain the basic needs of food, clothes, etc.. This is called the national poverty line. There is also the international poverty line which is put to facilitate comparison among countries, and which has been defined as one US dollar per day, and then raised to two US dollars per day.

A household or individual can be considered not poor in absolute terms, but he can be poor in relative terms if his income (or expenditure) is low as compared to the average income (or expenditure) of the society he is living in. The norm which is commonly used to measure the relative poverty line is the average income (expenditure) on the national level. The common definition used in this context is to assume that the poor is the one whose income is a fraction of average income on the national level (e.g., half, or two thirds of per capita income). This definition used in this context is totally subjective without any conceptual basis. For example, why is the relative poverty line put as 50% of average income, and not 40% or 60%, etc.? There is no objective criteria to guide in this respect. An objec-

(1) The family referred to throughout the report may consist of one individual only.

tive norm that can be used to identify poverty and deprivation - deprivation is a wider concept of poverty- is the theoretical concept of equal distribution of income, which we shall apply below.

The Bahraini poor owe durable goods (fridge, television, and others) which imply that they have already satisfied the basic needs of food, shelter, clothes, etc, as specified by the absolute poverty line. Hence, they do not suffer from absolute poverty². On the other hand, there are Bahrainis who are poor in relative terms, since they are deprived from basic pattern of consumption as perceived by the Bahraini society. Thus, poverty for the Bahrainis is supposed to be defined according to relative poverty, and not absolute poverty. This applies to both men and women. However, in practice, poverty affects women more than men. As a wife and mother, she has the responsibility of running the financial affairs of the household, which makes her put herself the last in the satisfaction of basic needs of the family to raise their welfare as much as she could, given the relatively limited financial means available. This makes her take the least in the distribution of basic needs items of food, clothing, etc.

A sample survey conducted on a 228 social assistance recipients from the Ministry of Social Development in Bahrain defined as poor, revealed that the Bahrainis have passed the absolute poverty line requirements of the satisfaction of basic needs. This sample survey showed that the beneficiaries from the social assistance provided by the Ministry owe durable consumer goods³. According to this sample survey, all of the beneficiaries have oven and television, 99.5% of them have a fridge and a washing machine, and 93.5% of them have a car, while 22.1% of them have 2 cars or more (Table 1). This means that the Bahrainis have surpassed the satisfaction of basic needs and, hence, surpassed the state of absolute poverty. Thus, the absolute poverty line is not the appropriate indicator to measure poverty among them. Relative poverty is the appropriate concept to use and, hence, the relative poverty line should be the measure to apply to assess the spread of poverty among the Bahrainis, and the indicator to use to monitor the evolution of poverty over time.

B - The State of Female Poverty

Women are poor because of their bringing up in poor families or because of marriage to a poor man⁴, or marrying a low-income man who is living just above the poverty line; or because of the change in her social status, like becoming a widow or getting divorced.

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- (2) This conclusion has been, also, arrived at by the findings of an analytical study that used the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Survey data. See: «Millennium Development Goals,» United Nations (Kingdom of Bahrain) (October 2003).
- (3) Sherifa Alhagry and Gaafer Alsayegh, «Assessment of the Cash Social Assistance Program as a Mean to Combat Poverty and Attaining Social Security in the Kingdom of Bahrain,» Center of Bahrain for Studies and Research, Kingdom of Bahrain (May 2003), (in Arabic).
- (4) Being poor, she usually gets married to a poor man to continue living in poverty; or she can be not poor but married to a man who gets impoverished afterwards.

Accordingly, one may differentiate between three categories of female poverty:

First, women in poor households. In this case, men and women and all household's members are poor. Thus, eliminating poverty of the household implies eliminating poverty of all the household members, including females living in those households.

Second, women in low-income households (just above the poverty line). Women in those households are most probably living in poverty, although other family members (husband and children) are living above the poverty line. She can be poor (i.e., her basic needs of food, clothes, etc.) are not met, although the basic needs of the other household members are met. This is attributed to two factors: Her responsibility as a wife and a mother to provide good life to her family as much as she could within her husband's limited income and, also, because of the social traditions prevailing mostly in the low-income group of people which makes the distribution rules applied work in favor of men and against women⁵. Both factors result in the unequal distribution of the household's expenditure in favor of meeting the basic needs of men, and not equally distributed to meet the basic needs of men and women (e.g., distributing food, clothing, etc. in favor of men, and so the basic needs of men are met while the basic needs of women are not). So, women will be poor, i.e., living below the poverty line, as measured by the satisfaction of basic needs, while men in the same households are not poor (i.e., living above the poverty line).

Table (1)

The Electric & Electronic Appliances Owned by the Bahraini Households Receiving Monetary Social Assistance Provided by the Ministry of Social Development

Type of Electric & Electronic Appliances	Number of Beneficiaries	The Number of Electric & Electronic Appliances Owned by the Bahraini Households Receiving the Assistance						
		None	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Fridge	222	1	189	27	3	2	-	-
2. Washing Machine	211	1	205	4	1	-	-	-
3. Oven	202	-	200	1	1	-	-	-
4. Television	217	-	171	32	9	5	-	-
5. House Telephone	195	4	182	9	-	-	-	-
6. Cell Phone	139	15	81	30	7	5	-	1
7. Car	154	10	110	24	8	2	-	-

Source: Sherifa Alhagry and Gaafer Alsayegh, «Assessment of the Cash Social Assistance Program as a Mean to Combat Poverty and Attaining Social Security in the Kingdom of Bahrain,» Center of Bahrain for Studies and Research, Kingdom of Bahrain (May 2003), (in Arabic), Table 3.9.

Third, the women-headed households (widow or divorced). In Bahrain, women

(5) There is an economic logic, though, behind the social tradition of the unequal distribution of food, clothing, etc. in favor of men in the households. This is because men are the breadwinners of the families and, hence, women have vested interest to keep them healthy to continue working and earn income for the survival of the whole family.

headed households represent 10.8% of total households in 2001⁶. Many of those households are poor because the income earned by the breadwinner (the women in this case) is below the poverty line. This low income earned by the Bahraini women-headed households is attributed to different factors. Among those factors are the relative spread of illiteracy among Bahraini women as compared to men⁷ and the relatively low work capabilities of women which is not only due to its relatively low education level, but also due to her responsibility towards her family as a wife and a mother which takes a good part of her time and effort. An additional cause for the low income earned by women are the social traditions which give priority to men as compared to women in job's hiring, on the basis that men are the main breadwinners of the families and, hence, should be given priority in hiring⁸. This may make women accept jobs below their qualifications to earn their living, especially if they are heading families.

Moreover, even in the same job specification, it has been found that women earning is considerably less than men. According to a report prepared by the department of labor studies in the Ministry of Social Development on men and women wages in the private sector in 2002, it has been found that the wages of women are less than men by about 27% in the administrative jobs, 39% in the services jobs, 45% in the scientific and technical jobs, 54% in the transportation jobs, and by about 73% in the handicraft jobs⁹.

3. Poverty of the Bahraini Females; Estimation and Assessment:

Poverty is the same for men and women. To estimate relative poverty of the Bahraini females, the relative poverty line and income distribution for all Bahrainis (men and women) has to be estimated, first. To apply an objective indicator for the definition and estimation of the relative poverty line, a methodology will be applied that is based on the theoretical concept of the state of equal-distribution of income¹⁰. Applying this methodology, the relative poverty line of the Bahrainis (men and women) will be estimated first, and then the estimation and assessment of the Bahraini females poverty will be provided next.

A- Estimation of the Relative Poverty of the Bahraini

Applying the methodology in Annex 1, the equal expenditure-distribution share

(6) Efnan R. Elzayani [et al.], «The Financial Recommendation Draft of the Program, Strategy, and Budget of the Economic Empowerment of the Bahraini Woman,» Supreme Council for Women, Kingdom of Bahrain (July 2006), Table 9, (in Arabic).

(7) 17.0% of the Bahraini females are illiterates as compared to 7.5% of males, See: «Bahrain in Figures,» Central Information Organization (CIO) (Kingdom of Bahrain) (2004), Table 1.4.2.

(8) «Millennium Development Goals».

(9) «Woman and Man in the Kingdom of Bahrain (Statistical Image),» Central Information Organization (CIO), and United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (Kingdom of Bahrain) (2006), Table 5-11, (in Arabic).

(10) For the description of this methodology, See: Annex 1.

(EEDS)¹¹ will be used to differentiate between the low-, middle- and high-expenditure household groups. Since we are using the decile distribution, the EEDS is the 10% share of the national expenditure (see Annex 1). Accordingly, the three household groups are: the low-expenditure (low-income) households group, which includes all deciles whose expenditure shares are below the EEDS; the middle-expenditure (middle-income) households group, which consists of all deciles whose expenditure shares are around the EEDS; and the upper-expenditure (upper-income) households group, which encompasses all deciles whose expenditure shares in total expenditure are higher than the EEDS.

To differentiate between the three income (expenditure) groups in practice, we define a range of 20% around the equal expenditure-distribution share (EEDS). Accordingly, the low-income Bahraini households are those deciles which receive (spend) less than 8% of total income (expenditure) on the national level; the middle-income (expenditure) Bahraini households are those deciles who receive (spend) between 8% - 12% of total Income (expenditure) on the national level; and the high-income (expenditure) Bahraini households are those deciles in the income (expenditure) share of more than 12% of national income (expenditure). Hence, as shown in Table 2, 50% of the Bahraini households are identified as low-income (expenditure) group, 30% as middle-income (expenditure) households, and 20% as high-income (expenditure) households. The three groups are presented in Figure 1. The relative poverty line of the Bahraini is the average annual income of the Bahraini individual who falls in the lowest five expenditure deciles; this is estimated as equal to 2292 BD annually¹² (see Annex 2).

B- Poverty of the Bahraini Females

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Survey has shown that families headed by females are better off as a group with respect to expenditure per capita than the population as a whole. No individual in the family headed females lives on daily expenditure less than \$ 3 a day, while 2% of the population do. Also, for the daily expenditure of \$ 5 a day, it has been found from the Survey that only 5.4% of the individuals in families headed females are living at that level as compared to 12.2% for all the population¹³. On the other hand, there is a significant gap between the average income of a household headed by a man and that headed by a woman as revealed by the MDG Survey. The average annual income is 13716 BD for the man-headed household as compared to 9692 BD for the female-headed household. In other words, the average income of a female-headed household reaches no more than 71% of the average income of a household headed by a man. However, this difference diminishes when taking into account the household's size. The average income **per individual** in a female-headed household reaches approximately 89% of that in a male-headed household. This is because the average household's size of the female-headed household is

(11) The equal expenditure-distribution share (EEDS) is used, and not the equal income-distribution share (EIDS), because only the expenditure data for the Bahraini households in the Households Surveys are available.

(12) One Bahraini Dinar (BD)=US \$ 2.7.

(13) «Millennium Development Goals».

5.0 members as compared to 6.6 members for the male-headed households¹⁴.

Females seem to be poorer than males, if we take the share of each gender in the total number of recipients of cash financial assistance, as an indicator in this respect. According to a sample survey carried out on 228 recipients of the cash social assistance provided by the Ministry of Social Development, it has been found that females represent 70.2% of total number of recipients of those assistance as compared to men, who represent 29.8%¹⁵. On the other hand, among those eligible for social assistance (those whose daily expenditure is less than US \$ 5), the MDG results revealed that 69.2% of female-headed families in this group receive social assistance as compared to 30.6% of the male-headed families. One explanation provided for this phenomenon is the cultural practice in the Bahraini society which favors families headed by female as compared to male-headed families, when providing cash and non-cash assistance¹⁶. In our view, another possible explanation for the high ratio of females in the total recipients of social assistance can be the gender distribution of responsibilities within the needy families: females go looking for social assistance and men go looking for a job. Whatever the explanations are, females represent a higher ratio among the recipients of social assistance provided by governmental and non-governmental institutions (NGO's and Charity Funds).

Table (2)
The Decile Distribution of Bahraini Households
Total Expenditure in 2002

Distribution Deciles	Households Expenditure
I	2.6
II	4.1
III	4.8
IV	5.8
V	6.9
VI	8.1
VII	9.9
VIII	11.8
IX	16.1
X	29.8
Income Inequality Index (III)^(*)	0.308

(*) The Income Inequality Index (III) is calculated by applying equation (1) in Annex 1.

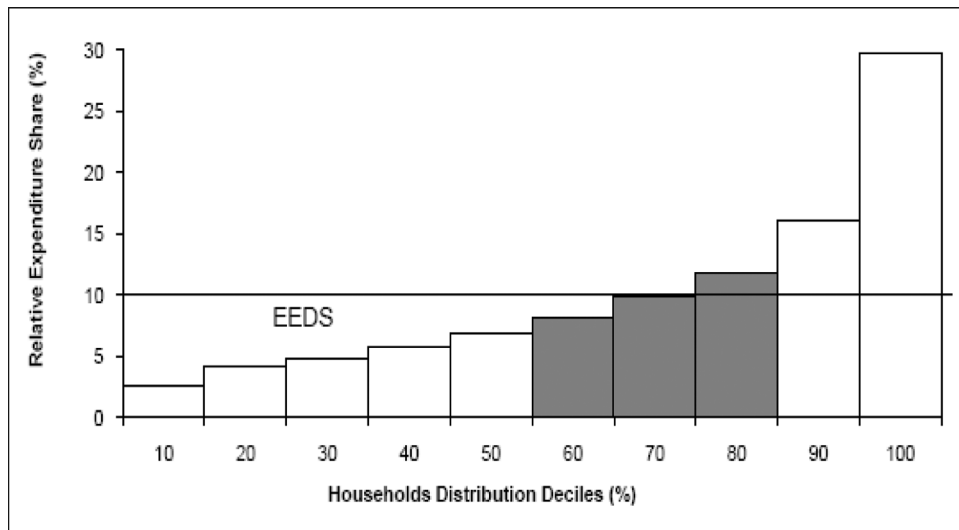
Source: Calculated from Table (1), in Annex 2.

(14) «Living Conditions in the Kingdom of Bahrain at the Outset of the Third Millennium,» UNDP (Kingdom of Bahrain) (October 2004).

(15) Alhagry and Alsayegh, «Assessment of the Cash Social Assistance Program as a Mean to Combat Poverty and Attaining Social Security in the Kingdom of Bahrain,» Table 3.1.

(16) «Millennium Development Goals».

Figure (1)
Decile Expenditure Distribution of Bahraini Households in 2002



- Lower-expenditure household deciles : left to the shaded area
- Middle-expenditure household deciles : the shaded area
- Upper-expenditure household deciles : right to the shaded area

Source: Table (2)

4. Causes of Poverty of the Bahraini Females

Female poverty is the outcome of two kinds of causes: the macro causes of poverty which affect both men and women; and the specific causes of poverty which affect the females.

A- The Macro Causes of Poverty

One may point out to three direct causes of poverty, and two indirect causes¹⁷ on the macro level which affect both Bahraini males and females. The direct causes are:

First, the high population growth rate. Although the annual population growth rate of the Bahrainis took a declining trend since the sixties, it is still high. It fell from 3.5% during the second half of the sixties to 2.5% over the period 1991-2001¹⁸. The outcome of

(17) The indirect causes are those factors which underlie the direct causes of poverty. For the identification of the direct and indirect causes of poverty, See: Karima Korayem, «Causes of Poverty in the Arab Countries: An Economic Perspective,» in: Karima Korayem and Maria Petmesidou, eds., «Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Mediterranean Area,» Comparative Research Program on Poverty (CROP) (Norway) (1998).

(18) «Bahrain in Figures,» Table A3.

the high population growth rate is the high dependency rate and the large average size of the Bahraini family.

Second, the high support burden ratio. The support burden ratio is the average number of people supported by each employed individual¹⁹. The support burden ratio among the Bahrainis according to the Population Census data of 2001 is 4²⁰. This means that every Bahraini employed has to support four individuals on average. The support burden ratio in the developed countries and in the newly industrialized countries is 2, implying that every employed has to support two individuals only on average²¹. The Bahraini support burden ratio is among the highest in the Arab region²². This high support burden ratio is the outcome of the low labor participation rate and the high unemployment rate, which are indirect causes of poverty for the Bahrainis

Third, the state of income distribution among the Bahrainis. This can be measured by two indicators: the Income Inequality Index (III), and the ratio of the relative share of total expenditure of the highest decile to the households expenditure share of the lowest decile. The III is 0.308²³, which is quite high as compared to other Arab countries - Egypt (III= 0.245)²⁴ and Yemen (III=0.284)²⁵, indicating more unequal distribution of income in Bahrain. According to the second indicator, the ratio of the expenditure share of the highest households decile to the lowest decile is 11.5²⁶, i.e. the expenditure of the Bahraini richest decile is about 12 times the expenditure of the poorest decile. Despite that Bahrain is a welfare oriented state, and the social assistance system applied in the country has resulted in eradicating almost absolute poverty among the Bahrainis, more attention needs to be given to income distribution issues. Economic and social policies are needed to raise income of the families in the low-income (expenditure) deciles to reduce the gap between the highest and the lowest households expenditure deciles.

(19) Korayem, Ibid.

(20) The support burden ratio of the Bahrainis = total Bahraini population (405667)/the employed Bahrainis (110985) = 3.7. Calculated from: «Millennium Development Goals» Tables 1.1.1 and 1.5.1.

(21) Korayem, Ibid.

(22) The support burden ratio in the Arab countries ranges between 3 and 4 in 1993, with the exception of Somalia. See: Ibid., Table 1.3.

(23) Calculated from Table 2 by applying equation 1 in Annex 1.

(24) This is the average of urban and rural III of Egypt in 1999-2000. See: Karima Korayem, «Pro-Poor Policies in Egypt; Identification and Assessment,» International Journal of Political Economy, vol. 32, no. 2 (Summer 2002), Table 2.

(25) This is the average of rural and urban III of Yemen in 1998. See: Karima Korayem, «Poverty in Yemen: Evolution and Causes,» Report prepared at: The United Nations Sub-Regional Resource Facility for Arab States (UN-SURF-AS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (10 April 2005), Table 2.

(26) Calculated from Table 2 in the text.

The two important indirect causes of poverty of the Bahrainis are:

First, the low participation rate. The low labor force participation rate, which is 49.4% in 2001, is attributed to the low female participation rate²⁷ (73.1% for the males and 25.5% for the females).

Second, the high unemployment rate. The unemployment rate of the Bahrainis was 11.6% in 2002; 20.7% for females and 8.6% for the males²⁸. Both indirect causes are responsible for the high support burden ratio in Bahrain.

B - Specific Causes of Poverty for the Bahraini Females

The Bahraini females are affected by the macro causes of poverty mentioned above and, also, by two important causes specific to gender inequality: the low average income earned by the Bahrain females as compared to the males; and the relatively low participation rate of the Bahraini females.

First, the low average income of the Bahraini females. The average income of the Bahraini households headed by female is about 71% of the household's income headed by males; it is 9692 BD annually in the former group as compared to 13716 BD in the latter²⁹. Two potential factors can be responsible of the low average income earned by the Bahraini females and, hence, responsible for her poverty. Those factors are: the education level and the occupation type of the Bahraini females as compared to males. Those two factors will be investigated with respect to gender difference to find out whether or not they are responsible for the low income earned by the Bahraini females as compared to males.

(1) Education level of the Bahraini females. Comparing the Bahraini females with the males at the highest education level attained as revealed by the Population Census of 2001, one finds that 17.0% of the Bahraini females are illiterates as compared to 7.5% of males; 27.3% of the females are at the primary and preparatory levels as compared to 35.6% of the males; 34.9% of the Bahraini females at the above preparatory (2.0%) and secondary (32.8%) levels as compared to 36.3% for the males (above preparatory 2.8% and secondary level 33.5%); 11.5% of the females at above secondary/diploma and university levels as compared to 10.5% of the males; and 2.4% of the females at the above university level as compared to 3.9% of the males³⁰.

According to the MDG Survey 2002, there is almost no correlation between the average income and the level of education at the preparatory level and below, including illiter-

(27) The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the labor force (working and unemployed) in the population of 15 years and more. Calculated from: «Bahrain in Figures,» Table 1.5.2.

(28) «Living Conditions in the Kingdom of Bahrain at the Outset of the Third Millennium,» Table 2.1.

(29) Ibid., Table 4.4.

(30) «Bahrain in Figures,» Table 1.4.2.

ates and those who can just read and write. Compared with the average income of all the education levels, which is equal to 13327 BD annually, the average income of the illiterates and those who have primary and preparatory education levels ranges between 75% - 78% of the average of all education levels, with the exception of those who can read and write, whose average income represents 88% of the total average. No explanation has been given for the high average income of those who can read and write as compared to the primary and preparatory education levels!! The correlation between the education level and average income earned is quite obvious at the secondary education level and above; it is 101% of the total average at the secondary level, and 159% of the total average at the above secondary level³¹. As shown above, 44.3 % of the Bahraini females fall in the category of low average income -illiterates and those with primary and preparatory levels- as compared to 43.1% of the males. Thus, one cannot point out that low education level is one of the causes of income difference between the two gender, since the percentages of both females and males falling in this category are quite close. Also, the gender ratios at the secondary level (32.8% of the Bahraini females and 33.5% of the males) and at the above secondary ratio (13.9% of the Bahraini females, and 14.4% of the males) are also quite close. Accordingly, education differences by gender cannot be considered as one of the causes of the relatively low average Bahraini females earnings and, hence, not one of the causes of Bahraini females poverty, according to the MDG Survey data.

(2) Type of occupation of the Bahraini females. The occupation type of the Bahraini females as compared to males can be a potential cause of the gender difference in average income earnings. The type of occupation of both gender will be investigated via three angles: the type of the job performed; the type of ownership (government versus private employment); and the type of economic activity of the employed. The data of the MDG Survey 2002 will be used in this analysis.

(i) Occupation type by job performed. The highest average income earned by the household head (HH) is the job of general manager (22199 BD annually), which amounts to 167% of the average of the household's earning, which is equal to 13327 BD annually. It is then followed by the average income earned in the experts' category (19678 BD annually), which represents 148% of the total average income earned in all job categories. The third category with respect to income earning, is working in the «manufacture, chemical and food industry occupation», which is the closest to the total average (107% of it). The lowest average wage is in the services sector's occupation (70% of the total average), and next comes the income earning in the «basic subsidiary engineering professions» which amounts to 70% of the total average³².

Looking at the distribution of employed females and males among those types of

(31) Note that the value of the average income of all the education levels (the total average) in Table A-15 is not correct. The correct figure is 13327 BD. See: «Living Conditions in the Kingdom of Bahrain at the Outset of the Third Millennium,» Tables A-15, A16 and A-19.

(32) Ibid., Table A-17.

jobs as revealed by the MDG Survey³³, one finds that 11.7% of the employed males as compared to 4.5% of the employed females are working in the «public administration general manager» category which has the highest average earning. This indicates that the males outnumbered the females in this top-paid jobs. But, on the other hand, looking at the next occupation category with the second highest average earning, which is «experts in education, arts and amenities», one finds that the percentage of the employed females working in this occupation is much higher as compared to the employed males; employed females represent 33.1% of total females employment, while employed males represent 10.8% of total male employment. The «Industry, Chemistry, Food Industry» category ranks third with respect to average wage earned; it has 4.7% of the employed males and 7.9% of the employed females, which is relatively close as compared to the female-male ratios in the two highest average wage occupations. The lowest average wage occupations are the «services workers» and the «subsidiary basic engineering occupations»; they include respectively 22.3% and 22.7% of the males employed, as compared to 10.0% and 1.8% of the females employed. Thus, in total one cannot say that the employed females are concentrated in the low-paid occupations and the employed males are working in the high-paid occupations, which would have been taken as one of the causes of females poverty.

(ii) Occupation by type of ownership (government versus private sector). According to the MDG Survey, the highest average income earned is in the private sector/individual (16361 BD annually), which is 123% of the total average income. Next comes the average income earned in the private sector/establishment (15227 BD annually), amounting to 115% of the total average. The third in ranking is the average income earned in the joint sector (15159 BD annually), which is 114% of the total average. In the government sector, the average income of a household headed by an individual working for the government is 12650 BD annually, making 95% of the general average³⁴.

Comparing the average income earning with the gender distribution of the employed in the four mentioned types of occupations in the private and government sectors, it is found that 14.2% of the employed males, and 12.0% of the employed females are in the «private individual» occupations; 25.4% of the employed males and 31.5% of the employed females are in the «private establishment»; 10.2% of the employed males and 4.1% of the employed females are in the «joint» establishments; and 47.4% of the employed males and 49.4% of the employed females are working in the government³⁵. Thus, in this government/private sectors occupations category, there is no obvious bias towards the concentration of the employed males in the highly paid occupations as compared to the employed females. The high percentage of males employed in the high-paid occupation is

(33) Ibid., Table 2.4.

(34) Ibid., Table A-18.

(35) Ibid., Table 2.5.

compensated for by the high percentage of females employed in the next high-paid occupation category.

(iii) Occupation by type of economic activity. The highest average income earned is by the household head working in banking and insurance (25953 BD annually), which is 195% of the total average income of all occupation categories. Next comes the average income earned in the real estate and business sector (24484 BD), making 184% of the total average income. For the economic activities with the lowest average income earned, first comes the households headed by individuals working in restaurants and hotels with 7228 BD annually, representing 54% of the total average income. Next comes the average income earned in the agriculture and animal breeding sector, which is 9582 BD annually amounting to 72% of the total average, and followed by the average income earned in hospital and health care centers (9988 BD annually), representing 75% of the total average³⁶.

The percentage distribution of the females and males employed in the occupations classified by economic activity, according to the highest and lowest average income earned are as follows: 4.7% of the employed males and 5.9% of the employed females are in the highest pay sector of «Bank, Insurance/Finance», and equal percentage of employed males and females (2.5%) work in the next highest paying economic activity «Real estate and Business». For the economic activities with the lowest average income earned, 1.8% of the employed males and 1.6% of the employed females are working in «Restaurant and Hotel»; 2.2 % of the employed males and none of the employed females are working in «Agriculture and Animal Husbandry/Fishing»; and 2.1% of the employed males and 10.2% of the employed females are working in «Hospital/Health Establishment Centers»³⁷. Thus, in this occupation categories also, no obvious gender discrimination can be pointed out in the distribution of the employed males and females to the economic activities with different pays.

One may conclude that neither education, nor the type of occupation can explain the low income earned by the Bahraini females as compared to males. Hence, both factors cannot be taken as causes for females poverty. One possible explanation, though, of the low income earned by the Bahraini females as compared to males can be the broad classification of the types of occupation, which conceals the differences in income earned in specific jobs within each occupation. A second explanation is that when women are employed, their opportunities for promotion are limited, and their participation seldom rises above low or middle management levels. This situation may also be attributed partly to the fact that unlike men, women in general have not been outspoken in voicing their complaints.

(36) Ibid., Table A-19.

(37) Ibid., Table 2.6.

This situation is beginning to change as women are demonstrating side by side with men, to call for government action to improve the employment conditions³⁸. Another possible explanation is that, in practice, there is gender discrimination in hiring, despite that the Bahraini constitution states the equality between females and males in earnings. Women are often passed over for employment in favor of males, who may be less qualified, on the grounds that their roles as mothers and housewives disqualify them³⁹.

Second, the low participation rate of the Bahraini females in the labor force: The participation rate of the Bahraini females indicates their potential to work and earn income and, hence, escape from poverty. According to the Population Census 2001 of Bahrain, the participation rate of the Bahraini females is 25.5% (20.3% employed and 5.2% unemployed) as compared to 73.1% for the Bahraini males (65.7% employed and 7.3% unemployed)⁴⁰. Thus, the males participation in the labor force is close to 3 times the female participation. According to the Population Census 2001, 50.3% of the Bahraini females of 15 years and over are not involved in any activity outside the house⁴¹. This means that half of the Bahraini female population are financially supported by others. Consequently, one may conclude that the low female participation rate is an important cause of the Bahraini female poverty.

5. Current Policy Applied to Combat Bahraini Poverty

Bahrain is a welfare oriented state. According to the Bahraini constitution, the government declares its responsibility of the welfare of the population. To achieve this goal, the government is subsidizing the citizens' basic needs like basic food items (bread, rice, cooking oil, sugar, and meat), utilities and fuel; also education and health are free to all Bahrainis⁴². Efforts are made to solve the housing problem to the low-income people by providing them with houses at affordable prices, and by rehabilitation of their old houses at subsidized prices⁴³. Those assistance are provided through different ministries including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Housing.

The Ministry of Social Development provides assistance to the needy Bahraini families and individuals. It provides also productive families project to help the Bahraini poor. This project was launched in 1978 to encourage families in need to get involved in the productive activity and become self reliant. To help them in marketing their products, a

(38) «Millennium Development Goals».

(39) Ibid.

(40) «Living Conditions in the Kingdom of Bahrain at the Outset of the Third Millennium,» Table 1.5.2.

(41) Ibid., Table 1.5.2.

(42) Abdel-Rahman A. Mussaiker, «Food Basket and Poverty Line in the Bahraini Society,» Kingdom of Bahrain (February 2003) (in Arabic), and «Millennium Development Goals».

(43) «Path Toward Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the Kingdom of Bahrain: Draft Report,» Ministry of Social Development (Kingdom of Bahrain) (2006) (in Arabic).

center has been initiated as a permanent venue for productive families to market their products. The centre was inaugurated in 2007.

The Ministry of Labor provides training programs to enhance the capabilities of the Bahrainis and empower them to join the labor market, since work is the most important means to combat poverty anywhere. Also, the Ministry of Housing is involved in establishing a Fund for Social Housing that opts to provide assistance for housing of the needy Bahraini families. This will include providing assistance for house renting, for the rehabilitation of old houses, building new houses, and supporting the needy families in receiving real estate loans from the banks⁴⁴.

In addition to the social assistance program provided by the Bahraini government, additional means of supporting the needy Bahraini families financially is the «Royal Gesture»⁴⁵. In the year 2000, a «Royal Gesture» was adopted which reduced the cost of electricity and water to the needy Bahraini families. The number of beneficiaries of this royal act reached 9020 families until December 2005. Another «Royal Gesture» has been applied in December 2001, which entailed distributing 30% of the assets of the Seif Mall to the needy Bahraini families. This amounted to 138 million shares with total value of 13,800,000 BD, and has benefited 10655 families from the recipients of social assistance from the government (Ministry of Social Development, 2006). Those families became owners of an average of 1295 BD⁴⁶ worth of shares of the Seif Mall and, hence, are entitled to the annual return of those shares and to the capital gains realized when the share's value increases. However, those families are still receiving the same amount of social assistance from the government. A recent «Royal Gesture» came out, giving 50 BD monthly to each Bahraini disabled person, no matter what his/her economic condition is⁴⁷.

The civil society organizations that work on social assistance of the needy Bahraini families are the non governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Charity Funds. Both types of organizations provide assistance to the needy Bahraini families and individuals in cash and in kind, mainly in certain occasions (like Ramadan, feasts, marriage), and for certain purposes, especially for education⁴⁸. In limited cases, monthly cash assistance will be paid.

(44) Ibid.

(45) Almakrma Almalakiya.

(46) Total value of shares (13,800,000)/number of beneficiaries (10655 families) = 1295 BD.

(47) An interview with Dr. Atef El-Shabrawi, advisor of the Minister of Social Development in Bahrain.

(48) Education is free until the university level.

Annex 1

The Methodology Applied⁴⁹; the Equal Income-Distribution Share Indicator:

The low-, middle- and high-expenditure households group will be estimated by applying the decile distribution of households' expenditure. The state of income distribution is measured by applying the income inequality index (III). The development of this index, methodologically, is based on the equal-distribution concept of income. Income is equally distributed among the population, if a given percentage of the population receives an equal percentage of national income; e.g., five percent of the population receives five percent of national income, ten percent of the population receives ten percent of national income, etc. Accordingly, income is unequally distributed if a given percentage of the population receives a smaller percentage share of national income, while other equal percentage of the population receives a greater percentage share of national income. The former group is the population who fall in the lower-income intervals, while the latter group is those who belong to the upper-income intervals.

The income inequality index (III) is presented mathematically as follows:

$$III = \frac{[\sum_{i=1}^N |(X - RS_i)|] / 2}{(100 - X)} \quad (1)$$

where X = fixed population interval = equal income-distribution share (EIDS)

RS_i = relative income share of the ith population interval.

N = number of the population intervals; i.e., N = 5 for the quintile distribution of the population, N = 10 for the decile distribution, etc.

The Meaning of the III:

$$[\sum_{i=1}^N |(X - RS_i)|] / 2$$

represents the relative share of national income (or expenditure) that is unequally distributed. Since we are taking the sum of the absolute value of differences from EIDS, it is necessary to divide by 2 in order to avoid double counting⁵⁰.

(49) For the development of the methodology, and its application on Egypt, See: Korayem, «Pro-Poor Policies in Egypt; Identification and Assessments».

(50) This is because we are taking the sum of the absolute values (i.e. disregarding the + & - signs) of the differences between the decile expenditure shares and the EIDS which fall below the EIDS, and also the absolute values of the differences between the decile expenditure shares and the EIDS which fall above the EIDS. This entails double counting and, hence, the total of the summation of all those differences should be divided by 2 to rectify it.

The denominator: (100 - X)

represents the extreme case of inequality in income distribution, when all the national income is received by one population interval (X), i.e., by one quintile, or one decile, etc.

In the extreme case of equality in income distribution, $III = 0$, since in this case $RS_i = X$ for all i , and hence the numerator in equation (1) is equal to zero. In the extreme case of income inequality, the general solution of equation (1) will be:

$$III = \frac{[\sum_{i=1}^{N-1} |(X_i - 0)| + |(X - 100)|] / 2}{(100 - X)} = 1 \quad (2)$$

where $N = 5$ for the quintile distribution of the population; $N = 10$ for the decile distribution, etc.⁵¹

Thus, the value of the income inequality index falls between 0 and 1,

$$\text{i.e. } 0 \leq III \leq 1$$

In the decile income-distribution, one may differentiate between three groups: the household deciles whose shares of national income are less than 10 percent for each decile; the household deciles whose shares of national income are around 10 percent of national income for each decile; and those household deciles whose relative shares are greater than 10 percent of national income for each decile. Hence, in the decile income-distribution, the 10 percent share of national income is the equal income-distribution share (EIDS), while in the quintile income-distribution pattern, the EIDS will refer to 20 percent of national income, etc. The EIDS will be used in identifying the three household groups: the lower-income households, the middle-income households, and the upper-income households; the first group includes the poor and the last group includes the rich.

(51) Applying the general solution (equation 2) to the quintile and decile distribution of the population, we get the following:

(a) For the quintile distribution: $X = 20$, $N = 5$

$$III = \frac{[\sum_{i=1}^4 |(X_i - 0)| + |(X - 100)|] / 2}{(100 - X)} = [(4X + 80) / 2] / 80 = 80/80 = 1$$

(b) For the decile distribution: $X = 10$, $N = 10$

$$III = [(9X + 90) / 2] / 90 = 90 / 90 = 1$$

When the income distribution data are not available, the expenditure data in the Households Expenditure Surveys can be used to identify the low-income households group in the society, since household expenditure and income are closely related. In this case, the equal expenditure-distribution share (EEDS), instead of the EIDS, will be used to differentiate between the three household groups: the lower-expenditure (lower-income) households group, which includes all deciles whose expenditure shares are below the EEDS; the middle-expenditure (middle-income) households group, which consists of all deciles whose expenditure shares are around the EEDS; and the upper-expenditure (upper-income) households group, which encompasses all deciles whose expenditure shares in total expenditure are higher than the EEDS.

Annex 2

Estimating the Relative Poverty Line in Bahrain

The relative poverty line of the Bahraini individual is estimated by using the Annex Table as follows:

First, having identified the low-income households as 50% of the households falling in the lowest five deciles, and having 1210 households (Annex Table, column 1), our first step is to identify the lowest expenditure brackets in the Annex Table which includes 605 households representing 50% of total households number. The seven lowest expenditure brackets in the Table (up to 7200 - bracket) include 564 households, and the rest of the low-income households -41 households- fall in the 8400- bracket.

Second, the total annual expenditure of the 605 households is estimated as equal to 3465913.7 BD (calculated from column 4 in the Table as the summation of total expenditure of the lowest seven expenditure brackets (= 3097877.2 BD) and the total expenditure of the 41 households falling in the 8400- bracket (= 41 x 8976.5= 368036.5).

Third, the average expenditure of the low-expenditure households group is estimated as equal to total expenditure of the low-expenditure group (= 3465913.7 BD)/number of the low-expenditure households (= 605 households) = 5728.8 BD. This represents 48.5% of the average expenditure of all the households in the sample, which is equal to 11809.9 BD (column 3 in the Table).

Fourth, Applying this ratio (48.5%) to the average individual income on the national level, which is 4726 BD in 2002⁵², the average annual income of the Bahraini individual who is living in relative deprivation (who fall in the lowest five deciles), is equal to 2292.1 BD⁵³. Thus, the estimated relative poverty line in Bahrain is 2292.1 BD.

(52) CIO, National Accounts of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Table 18.01 (provided by the CIO on a CD).

(53) 1 BD = 2.7 US \$

Annex Table
Average and Total Expenditure of the Bahraini Households Per Expenditure
Bracket in 2002
(in Bahraini Dinar)

Expenditure Brackets (In Bahraini Dinar)	Bahraini Households		Average Expenditure of the Bahraini Household (3)	Total Expenditure of the Bahraini Households	
	Number (1)	(%) (2)		(In Bahraini Dinar) (4) (= (1) *(3))	(%)
Less than 1200	4	0.3	1034.0	4136.0	0.03
1200-	26	2.1	1815.2	47195.2	0.3
2400-	59	4.9	3141.8	185366.2	1.3
3600-	93	7.7	4245.6	394840.8	2.8
4800-	143	11.8	5358.0	766194.0	5.4
6000-	126	10.4	6508.2	820033.2	5.7
7200-	113	9.3	7788.6	880111.8	6.7
8400-	105	8.7	8976.5	942532.5	6.6
9600-	82	6.8	10243.9	839999.8	5.9
10800-	60	5.0	11323.5	679410.0	4.8
12000-	129	10.7	13264.3	1711094.7	12.0
15000-	72	6.0	16335.1	1176127.2	8.2
18000-	88	7.2	20539.5	1807476.0	12.5
24000-	49	4.0	26800.8	1313239.2	9.2
30000-	61	5.0	44626.6	2722222.6	19.1
Total	1210	100.0	11809.9	14,289,979.0	100.0

N. B.: The percentage columns may not add up to 100, because of rounding.

Source: Calculated from: «Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Households Survey 2002,» UNDP and the Central Informatics Organization of Bahrain (ICO), Table C.17 (Unpublished).

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إعلان عن:

جائزة مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية للباحثين الشباب

تحقيقاً للتواصل مع الشباب، والباحثين منهم بصفة خاصة، على جميع المستويات، وفي كل الأقطار العربية، بما يمكن ويعزز التنمية وتوسيع قاعدة المعرفة وتشجيع البحث العلمي وتعميق الاهتمام بقضايا المنطقة العربية ودولها. وبالنظر إلى أن الشباب باتوا يشكلون اليوم نحو ثلثي سكان الوطن العربي، ويعبرون اليوم عن التغيير والتحويلات، ومن ثم المستقبل، يصبح هدف التواصل معهم ودفعهم نحو توسيع معارفهم واهتماماتهم أمراً أساسياً للحاضر والمستقبل معاً. انطلاقاً من هذه الخلفية والأهداف، يعلن مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية عن «جائزة المركز للباحثين الشباب في الوطن العربي».

موضوع الجائزة

– ينبغي أن تتركز المساهمات المقدمة إلى الجائزة على إنتاج أصيل لم يسبق نشره، أو تقديمه لأية مؤسسة أخرى، وأن يتناول بشكل تحليلي نظري أو أمبيرقي إحدى المسائل أو الموضوعات المتصلة بواحد أو أكثر من العناصر الستة للمشروع النهضوي العربي في: الوحدة العربية والديمقراطية والتنمية المستقلة والعدالة الاجتماعية والاستقلال الوطني والقومي والتجدد الحضاري.

يمكن الاطلاع على نص المشروع بزيارة موقع المركز: < http://www.caus.org.lb > .

– يكون حجم البحوث أو الدراسات والمساهمات المقدمة إلى المسابقة في ما لا يقل عن حدود (٥,٠٠٠) كلمة للمساهمة الواحدة. يشترط أن تتلزم المساهمات المقدمة بأصول وأدبيات البحث العلمي وقواعد النشر المعروفة.

– يكون باب الترشح في الأعمال للجائزة متاحاً للباحثين الشباب من الأكاديميين والمتقنين أو الطلاب الذي يعدون دراساتهم العليا للماجستير أو الدكتوراه في حقول المعرفة المشار إليها أعلاه، وبحيث لا تتجاوز أعمارهم ٣٥ عاماً.

– يبدأ المركز في استقبال المساهمات على عنوانه الإلكتروني أو البريدي، اعتباراً من ١ تشرين الأول/أكتوبر ٢٠١٢ ولغاية ٣١ كانون الثاني/يناير ٢٠١٣.

– ترسل المساهمات المقدمة إلى الجائزة إلكترونياً وبريدياً مطبوعة ببرنامج WORD.

– تؤول ملكية جميع الأعمال المشار بها إلى مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية الذي يكون له وحده كامل التصرف فيها وحقوق نشرها بأية طريقة يراها مناسبة.

– يتم تحديد الفائزين في مجالات الجائزة من قبل لجنة مختصة يشكّلها المركز لتقييم المساهمات الواردة، وتحديد الفائز الأول والثاني والثالث في مجالات المسابقة.

– يتم الإعلان عن الفائزين قبل نهاية شهر نيسان/أبريل ٢٠١٣، ويتم لاحقاً نشر أعمالهم ضمن مطبوعات المركز بعد إجراء أية تعديلات تقترحها لجنة التقييم.

– يتم نشر الأعمال التي لم تفز بالترتيب الثلاثة الأولى بالمجلات التي يصدرها المركز وفقاً لما تقرره لجنة الجائزة وبموافقة اللجنة الاستشارية لهذه المجالات في المركز.

– يشترط أن تكتب المساهمات المقدمة إلى الجائزة باللغة العربية، ويمكن في حدود تقررها لجنة الجائزة قبول المساهمات المعدة باللغة الإنكليزية، وبالشروط ذاتها.

يقدم المركز الجوائز التالية:

أولاً: ثلاث جوائز نقدية كالاتي:

– الفائز الأول \$٢٠٠٠ – الفائز الثاني \$١٠٠٠ – الفائز الثالث \$٥٠٠

يعطى للفائزين خيار الحصول على اشتراكات في منشورات المركز مقابل التنازل كلياً أو جزئياً عن الجوائز النقدية، أو أن تمثل هذه قسماً من الجائزة بحسب الأحوال.

ثانياً: جوائز عينية:

يتم إهداء مجموعة مختارة من منشورات المركز للفائزين الثلاثة في كل مجال من مجالات الجائزة.

للاشتراك في مجلة بحوث اقتصادية عربية

(تصدر المجلة باللغة العربية فطلياً)

● الاشتراك السنوي (بما فيه أجور البريد الجوي):

للحكومات والمؤسسات، في أقطار الوطن العربي	١٠٠ دولار أمريكي
للحكومات والمؤسسات، خارج الوطن العربي	١٢٠ دولاراً أمريكياً
للأفراد، في أقطار الوطن العربي، كافة	٧٠ دولاراً أمريكياً
للأفراد في أوروبا	٩٠ دولاراً أمريكياً
للأفراد في أمريكا وسائر الدول (عدا أوروبا)	١٠٠ دولار أمريكي

يرجى تسديد المبلغ كما يلي:

(١) إمّا بشيك لأمر المركز مباشرة مسحوب على أحد المصارف الأجنبية.

(٢) أو بتحويل إلى العنوان التالي: حساب مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية رقم

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