



Social and Economic Reality of Rural Women in the Lower Euphrates Region during the Iraqi Kingdom Era (1921-1958)

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Abstract: Rural women in the Lower Euphrates region of southern Iraq face profound hardships, dwelling in primitive shelters unable to shield them from harsh weather. Wars, displacement, and societal neglect exacerbate their plight, compounded by restrictive tribal customs. Denied education due to societal backwardness and gender norms, they lack basic literacy and healthcare, resorting to traditional remedies when ill. Feudalistic political structures further oppress rural life, trapping farmers in poverty, with agriculture as their sole income source. Women, integral to rural society, shoulder agricultural and domestic responsibilities, yet remain under male authority throughout their lives, reinforcing their dependence on men. This pervasive patriarchal control stifles their autonomy, relegating them to subordinate roles despite their indispensable contributions to rural life. Despite bearing the majority of rural life's burdens, they are marginalized from leadership and politics, underscoring the entrenched gender inequalities perpetuated by tribal customs and societal norms.

Keywords: rural women, monarchy, Lower Euphrates

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1. Introduction

The population of Iraq at the beginning of the twentieth century was approximately one and a quarter million people, distributed as follows: 17% of Bedouin clans, about 59% of the rural population and 24% of the urban population, on this basis, the proportion of clans in Iraq constitutes about 76% of the total population of Iraq, the feudal system was the prevailing system in most regions of Iraq, most tribesmen are subject to this system, which is dominated by tribal spirit and tribal custom, which places women in a lower position than men and less worthy than him in everything [1].

Rural women lived harsher lives than urban women, although she enjoyed a fraction of the freedom that her sister living in the city did not know, the reason for the misery of rural women is that they endured hardships and jobs that exceeded what men endured in their society and environment, the lower Euphrates clans were distributed in the form of villages scattered on the banks of the rivers branching from the Euphrates River, which forms the marshes and the vast beaches in southern Iraq, therefore, we note that rural women in the lower Euphrates region [2], it had a great and important role in the formation of families inhabiting those villages, they get up early to take care of the animals of the field and the hard work it requires, such as milking cows and sheep, it also fodder them, water them, clean their pens, take care of their young and place them in special places to protect them [3].

Rural woman would leave her hut to fetch the family's fuel, firewood and wood for cooking, heating and preparing bread in the clay tandoor she was building, places to fetch firewood and fuel may be very far from the hut of the family in which they live,

where she cut dry trees and uprooted thorns from dry land with the big axe she carried with her, then she transports these thorns on her back after tying them with ropes and then brings them to the hut from which she traveled long distances and often accompanied her children with her, it also transports water for drinking, cooking, bathing and washing, from distances far from its hut from the nearest waterwheel or beach, she carries it on her head in large pots or pottery jars, most women went out very early to work outside the huts before sunrise on [4].

In addition, rural women go to the market on the outskirts of the city, relatively far from the village, to sell the products of the animals they raised, such as eggs, milk and cheese, in addition to some poultry such as ducks, chickens and geese and she buys at her price some of her necessary needs and returns the rest to her husband.

When she arrives at the hut, she prepares food and bread for her family members, then she takes care of her children and tidies up her hut before she goes to her shabby bed, where you grind the grain and crush it with the stone crush (millstone) inside the hut [5], sometimes some women used to crush grain at night in the public sewers for a small fee offered to the owner of the crushed, she used to recite some aphorisms during her daily work, especially when you grind grains at night to late hours, such as these inherited song:

You can't hear my soul,
but my hand is the one who manages
I grind the cry of the soul, not grind barley [6]

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Types of marriage in Lower Euphrates region

With regard to marriage and the nature of relations between rural women and men, they have suffered from a bitter and harsh reality at different stages of history, there tribal traditions and customs played a clear role in determining the type and method of marriage in the countryside, in addition to the economic factors that prevailed among rural communities at the time, marriage from within the clan in the Euphrates region was the lowest rate of 92% and from outside the clan by 8%, marriage in the Lower Euphrates region can be summarized immediately as follows [7]:

- 1) **Marriage to a Cousin:** The first right to marry a rural woman is for the cousin, whether she wants it or not, and no one can betrothed her to another or without his consent, and if someone other than her cousins proposed to her, then her cousin has the right to object and reject through what is called Tribal Pride [8], if the stranger insists on marrying her, he must first satisfy her cousin with a certain amount of money to be agreed upon between them, but if one of the cousins has a number of cousins he has the right over them all, he has the right to marry all of them, without exception if he so wishes, provided that the two sisters should not be joined except for the above, and not more than four wives together, he also had the right to sleep over the rest of the other cousins and the uncle himself has the right to forbid his nieces in order to keep them for his children, even if he did not give birth to a son, on the pretext that he might have the child later [6].
- 2) **Dowry Marriage:** The economic factor played a prominent role in establishing some traditions in the tribal society in Iraq, we find in the marriage of dowry the clear impact of the economic factor and this marriage is called *Kassa Baksa* [9], this type of marriage is similar to selling in a barter way, who could not prepare the dowry for his marriage, and if his condition was poor and he had a daughter or a sister, he agrees with another person who has a daughter or sister or any woman from his womb who is not married, so they marry each other and marry the other's relative,

each of them pays a small amount of money to the bride as a dowry, to maintain the legitimacy of the marriage contract, and one of the principles of this marriage is that the girl is often forced into this marriage, and she is forced to agree to marry someone she cannot bear to live with and does not love, this type of marriage also entails a number of problems, the most important of which is if one of the parties does not agree with his wife, he may divorce her, take his relative, whom he has befriended, and force her husband to divorce her, even if she agrees with her husband and is satisfied to live with him and she has children from him, if one of the two women who is authenticated with her husband happens to be angry and returns to her family, the other should also return and return except with the return of the first [10].

- 3) **Compensation marriage:** This marriage takes place in the countryside when the girl is sometimes presented as part of compensation in tribal compensations or issues (modesty) [8], two or more warring tribes may agree to reconcile with each other, this reconciliation includes the provision of a number of women as quarterly and compensation to the other tribe, in addition to a number of cattle, horses or camels, or large sums of money as compensation for the loss of life and souls of those killed during the war between the two warring tribes, on this basis, a woman goes to foreign people who are hostile to her family and marries those she does not know and whom she does not want, he may be an old man or sick or disabled or deranged or the owner of a reprehensible and vicious character that is unbearable, therefore, the woman is the first and last victim in all this conflict between the tribes, she is the one who bears this injustice and cruelty and is patient and surrendered to her fate, does not protest or object to anything, and even if she does that, she will not find anyone to listen to her or stand with her, because she used to see her sister, mother and neighbor surrendered to this harsh life, women in the lower Euphrates countryside are helpless, especially during the period of the royal era that passed over Iraq, the severity and harshness of social conditions and the poor economic conditions in the countryside in particular [11].
- 4) **Marriage of gift and vow:** There were some fathers in the countryside who vow their daughters from a young age to one of the masters of the descendants of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), or to a shrine of the masters or saints and righteous, if the girl grows up a little, her father goes to present her to that master or to one of the shrines, who in turn can waive his right to her in return for a sum agreed upon with her family [7], the phenomenon of polygamy is one of the phenomena that was prevalent in rural areas, especially the lower Euphrates region, it is a phenomenon that has many causes for the farmer, and one of these reasons is his need for children because they constitute the labor force that helps him in his many and arduous agricultural work, the clan also needs them in its constant battles, in addition to boasting about the large number of children, especially males, among the rural population, therefore, women who used to have males have a special place, while those who have daughters or those who do not have children in the first place are subjected to injustice, humiliation and constant criticism, there are also marriages aimed at strengthening clan relations with the rest of the clans and the large number of marriages to strengthen the clan and raise its social status among the rest of the other clans, to increase its influence and control over the area in which it inhabits, and for this reason men increase the number of wives in the countryside whenever their financial situation allows them to do so, especially since Sharia allows them to marry four women - despite the fact that Sharia specifies certain reasons for this polygamy – [12].

2.2. Social and economic conditions of rural women in the Lower Euphrates region

When a woman moved to the marital home, she usually lived in a dark hut made of papyrus cane or palm fronds called *srifa*, most of the houses of these villages were built of pipes [13] which are made of reeds, which consist of columns of reeds called *Hanaya*,

they are connected to four walls of their kind in a cylindrical shape and covered with mats or pipes, its area ranges between 6-7 meters in length and about 3-5 meters in width, it is free of windows and windows and therefore it is opaque and the sun does not enter it most of the time, it has a small door from the front that the person cannot enter from it the farthest to bend, so you did not protect them from the summer heat and the winter cold, rural women brought in quantities of reeds and papyrus to repair the huts before winter on and also to repair the pens of their animals, where men and women cooperate in the establishment of these huts (drains), in some areas of the countryside, ruins are made of clay or milk made of clay mixed with animal waste (blood) or plant waste (hay), and roofed with fronds, columns, some tree branches or mats (pipes) they are covered with mud, to prevent rain from leaking into those drains, in which they live and make the same for their animals [14].

Rural women have lived a difficult and harsh reality in all respects, so we notice this from their hut that they live in and from its simple contents and the rest of their other affairs, the furniture of the house consisted of a cooking pot and an oil stove in some cases, often a wood-burning stove, a teapot, some copper plates, cheap mugs, and a thick rug of handmade wool weaving in the same village or from neighboring villages, in addition to a wooden box to keep a few and simple clothes [8].

The dowries of women in that period were simple in rural areas and may reach in its highest cases (50) dinars, or a number of buffaloes, cows, sheep and goats, the girl's guardian disposes of her dowry and the girl's father who has more than one daughter is considered wealthy, this is because the dowry of the daughters was one of the sources of wealth in their eyes, while the daughters of the elders differ from the rest of the daughters of the tribe, where their dowries are of gold, thoroughbred horses and a lot of money, because of the social status of their fathers among the tribes and is a source of pride and ostentation between the daughters of the elders and their wives [15].

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for peasants in the villages and countryside in the lower Euphrates region, and animal husbandry in the second place, agriculture is twice a year, but it depends on the climate in terms of rain and floods, where their cultivation is limited to certain types of crops, such as rice (*Chleb*), which is ranked first in addition to beans, millet, corn of all kinds, sesame and mash in summer, wheat and barley in winter, in addition to the cultivation of palm and some types of fruits, because of their sedimentary composition and the abundance of water [16].

The area of winter crops constitutes about 70% of the land area of the lower Euphrates, while the area of summer cultivation represents about 30%, as well as the cultivation of some vegetables by exploiting the areas near their huts, they are from the very poor groups, and they were suffering from many problems in their agricultural work due to the poverty of their situation, women have an important role in their cultivation during all stages from the beginning of their cultivation to their harvest and transportation.

The overwhelming majority of the rural population and most members of this social class are considered poor and heavily indebted to the elders, feudal lords and large landlords, they were suffering from the injustice and exploitation of their elders and those who dominate them in land ownership, as is the case with their families, especially their women and daughters who used to share the hardship of living with them, they worked all the long hours of the day for nothing or for some simple crops that fed the family in the dark hut [8].

As for the duties of the members of the rural family, they are equal in rights and duties in terms of commitment to tribal traditions and laws and the rest of the tasks of social life, although their women bear the largest share of these difficult tasks and heavy burdens of exhausting work inside and outside the hut, these families have suffered from poverty due to their lack of material income due to the monopoly of landlords and feudalism with the largest share of agricultural land production. Rural women in the

Lower Euphrates region were living in conditions different from other rural women in other regions of Iraq, because of the atmosphere, climate and geography of that important area in which she lived, it is one of the most important rural areas in southern Iraq, which is located at the confluence of the rivers of Iraq (Tigris) and (Euphrates) in the river (Al-Gharaf) which used to connect them in the area of Al-Gharaf, coming from Sadat Al-Kut in Wasit Governorate, passing through the areas and cities of Dhi Qar Governorate, including (Al-Shatra), (Al-Nasr) and (Al-Rifai), where it has gained important economic importance, especially in terms of agriculture, grazing, fishing of various kinds, and hunting birds and various animals, the countryside was adjacent to the marshes in the lower Euphrates region, where social and environmental factors often combine between them, in terms of clothing, food, customs, traditions, economic and political activity as well, these things have combined to create a race of people whose warlike, military, social and administrative characteristics have evolved considerably and clearly over the years [2].

The majority of the peasants did not own the land on which they worked, several laws were issued by the government during the monarchy under which most of the agricultural land was concentrated in the hands of a few owners and influential people, such as the Land Settlement Act of 1932 and the Peasants' Rights and Duties Act of 1933, it resulted in the control of large areas of land by a small group of landowners and chiefs, in 1958 there were (4,000,000) farmers who did not own any piece of land, while there are only two hundred and seventy-two owners who own about (4500,000) dunams, since land was the main source of subsistence and economy for the rural community, therefore, we note that the majority of farmers and farmers were under the poverty line in large stages, they do not even own the land in which they work, nor their crops or imports, at the end of each agricultural season, they only get a little of the yield that makes them live and survive only, this is directly reflected on the situation of rural women in general and in the lower Euphrates region in particular.

As for the food of the rural family, it is very simple and lacks important and basic elements, it often consists of barley bread or corn bread prepared by rural women with clay oven, palm fronds, cow and sheep waste or rice, which is cooked without ghee usually on the stove that women make of clay and is kindled with firewood collected by rural women, and with the branches of dry plants such as thorns and palm carp, they also feed on a simple date and some types of plants that germinate naturally in agricultural lands such as baker, fenugreek and others after cooking, as well as some animal products such as milk and yogurt, if some of these animals and livestock are available in the family in the countryside, such as goats, sheep or cows, in addition to eggs and types of poultry that their women harvest and raise, such as chickens and ducks, as for meat, there are families that do not taste it except on occasions, especially if guests come to them or at funerals and weddings, while there are families living on fishing and wild birds in the marshes areas close to the countryside in the lower Euphrates region [6].

As for the clothes of rural women, they were mostly modest, long and wide, sometimes made by women themselves, it consists of a long robe (dishdasha) of dark colors, and they usually cover their necks and heads with a long black cover called (sheila) or (terry), rural women also wore a black cloak, which was often wool, which is multi-purpose, where the woman used to cover her in the summer and cover her in the winter, and if the need arose, she was her box and container in transporting her ammunition and precious needs [17].

Because of the dire economic situation of rural women, they could not afford to buy all the clothes and necessities necessary for their homes and children, because the economic situation of her husband and father was not at the level that could enable her to buy the necessary necessities due to the domination of feudalism over them, her husband's share of winter and summer crops did not exceed (6-15) dinars per year, rural women suffered from hardship, misery and deprivation in all respects, most women on

sad occasions did not have a dress for mourning because they often only have one dress to wear in summer and winter, therefore, women were forced to dye their clothes (dishdasha) in one of the black or indigo colors, therefore, we find her repeating during working hours or on sad occasions some songs or hymns inherited, which were expressing her psychological state and feelings in sorrows and joys [2], including, for example:

The clothes of the tribal women were dominated by sadness (black and blue), this is due to the large number of clan battles and the loss of rural women to one of their relatives, so you see them always repeating sad notices and lamentations, despite all that, you notice that she has a melodious and sweet voice, and a confused face and Sumerian features, strong and clear, she was too tall slender strength wide eyes fresh talk soft body soft hair, and have the qualities of courage, strength, intelligence, generosity and pride what competed with of her people.

In the area of local handicrafts, rural women were spinning wool and cotton with spindles, after collecting and sewing it in the form of woolen and cotton textiles, such as rugs, carpets and buttons in their homes, where the woman allocates part of her hut that she lives, to erect knitting tools, spinning, making woolen cloak (Bisht), and making mats (pipes) from reeds, some women often gather around her to spend time in various conversations while drinking tea and smoking, then they sell them in the markets near the village, to give these sums to her husband or father to help him provide the necessary family necessities, although these industries are primitive, they contributed greatly to meeting the needs of the village, in addition to the manufacture of clay skirts and the manufacture of hand brooms, mahafif and others [18,19].

2.3. Impact of tribal customs and traditions on rural women

Iraqi women in general and rural women in particular in that period of time were deprived of their political rights, including her right to vote and the right to run for office as well, as she pays the taxes imposed on her and does not know anything about the state budget, article I of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates the need to proclaim equality between men and women, in all rights and duties and was approved by the Iraqi government during the monarchy (1921-1958), it became an internal law that is no less legitimate than the Iraqi laws in force, therefore, depriving women of their right to vote is a clear violation of laws that have been recognized as legitimate by the Iraqi government, in a census conducted by the Committee on Women's Rights of the United Nations in 1950, it was found that thirteen late countries did not enjoy women's rights, including Iraq [5].

Another thing that rural women in the Lower Euphrates suffered from during the period of royal rule was the deprivation of their legitimate right to inheritance, the tribes in those rural areas did not follow the provisions of Islamic law or Iraqi civil laws in the issue of inheritance and the right of a daughter or sister to the inheritance of her parents, where the elder brother controlled the inheritance of his brothers and sisters and his stepmothers, he spends on them from their father's money, and when the inheritance is divided, the brothers, sisters and wives are forced to give up a third of the inheritance to the eldest of the brothers, and this share is rightly called (the elder), tribal elders rejected the issuance of legal rulings by the civil courts stipulating a woman's right to inherit her husband.

Despite all this suffering that the Euphrates rural woman was experiencing, dealing with it by strangers and foreigners who are without mercy, it was based on the tribal custom that is concerned with preserving the dignity of women and their lives and not attacking them as an integral part of the work of men, where the various activities are distributed between them, each according to his ability and efficiency, therefore, the aggressor or transgressor was subject to very strict penalties up to murder, the interest of the rural community in genealogy prompted the peasants to pay attention to the

maintenance of women to maintain their behavior and chastity, as a flow vessel, if this vessel is contaminated, its content is contaminated, therefore, it is rare that there is a desecration of the woman's show from all sides, therefore, the tribal community imposed harsh punishments on those who assaulted women, the aggressor often ends up killing especially in matters of women's honor, rural women are accustomed to injustice and deprivation, as their husbands often get angry with them for the most trivial things, he may beat and humiliate her and sometimes divorce her and expel her from her hut to go to her father's cottage to suffer a bitter and tiring life that is not much different from her husband's hut of cruelty, misery and deprivation, however, the man remains for her the patron of the house and the protector of the house, and his presence is her asset and his separation is humiliating, as the house should have someone to protect it.

As for the health field, rural women suffered from complete neglect in all respects, especially in the field of mental and physical health during the period of the monarchy and in the lower Euphrates region, health care was completely lacking, as treatments in rural society relied heavily on superstitions, charlatans, elders and masters [20], women and even children relied in their treatment on drugs extracted from herbs and from some animals and their products, as for surgical operations, they depended on knives and (cupping), to remove rotten blood or shrapnel, and sometimes cauterization with fire to treat gunshot wounds during clan wars, or hot acupuncture treatment to treat gynecology and treat some skin diseases with boiling fat [21].

Parasitic diseases affected about 50% of the rural population, and of course the share of women was the largest by virtue of their responsibility for feeding the family and their work in the field and agricultural land and animal care, it is often spread due to drinking contaminated water that women bring from the waterways and swamps near the huts, the common diseases were many and different such as plague, smallpox, cholera, typhoid fever, dysentery, schistosomiasis, dysentery, ophthalmia, measles, kidney stones, liver and gallbladder diseases, that's why we see most of the rural population, including women, suffering from schistosomiasis, this caused a large number of deaths in rural areas, the majority of whom were women due to government negligence, lack of health institutions and poor medical care [22].

2.4. Role of rural women in wars and armed clashes in the Lower Euphrates

Rural women perform the duty of hospitality when men are absent from the home, where she acts on behalf of her husband in honoring and appreciating the guests, they are inherited traits from parents and grandparents, and are not acquired through learning or training, rural women play an important role in battles, rivalries, invasions and armed clashes that update between tribes and some of them, between clans and the government, or between the peasants themselves for the most trivial reasons, her role here is to transport what the belligerents need from the sons of her clan, from livelihood or equipment, and to transport the wounded from the battlefield and treat them [23].

To strengthen the fighters' resolve and raise their combat morale during the war, rural women made loud noises from their throats called zaghareed or halahl, and they cut their braids and sent them by the hand of the messenger going to battle on horseback, to arouse Arab pride and jealousy in the men of the tribe to defend their homeland and their honor and their women, it is one of the strongest messages in the war to bravery in defense and resistance, and to launch some songs (obsessions), and the inherited enthusiastic notice to explode enthusiasm and passion in the hearts of the fighters, to push them to withstand and patience and not to be defeated in front of the enemies, including [2]:

Whoever pours the mouth does not sit in a Diwan

He wears waists and supports and he kisses women

And also:

The head of our family's shouting and they are embarrassed
 Here, our family's home, you don't witness
 The sound of a mortar rings, and its people are estranged
 And who is enough for us Oh home what did you say

When the men are defeated in battle and return, the women receive them by taking off their masks (sheila) or abaya and wearing them for the defeated from the battlefield, and they want to indicate that they resemble women in their cowardice and fear of war, and they ask them to return to battle, and thus they used to price the fire of war and increase the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of the fighters from their tribesmen, despite that, women were the ones who bore the calamities of these battles, strife and wars, so the victims were often her sons, husbands or relatives, therefore, she lived her life as a pet of sorrows that does not leave her for life.

Rural women suffered from injustice, oppression and long grief, due to the loss, deprivation and destitution they suffered, she saw herself in poetry and took it as a way to express her feelings and sadness, one of them, while complaining to Allah about her condition, said [24]:

Go up to the officer a step on a step
 If he doesn't know, I want to tell him.

The woman's nostalgia and passion appear most of the time through those short hymns and poems that she repeated with herself most of the time, even as she calms down the pleasure of her liver in the cradle until he sleeps on her melody and the warmth of her sweet voice and her melodious moaning, through which she explains her fears and anxieties to her young baby, including:

Dalloul Oh boy my son Dallool
 Your enemy is sick and dwells in the desert

3. Material and Methods

The study employed a descriptive methodology, elucidating the various forms of marriage prevalent in the lower Euphrates region. Additionally, the social and economic circumstances of rural women were examined, along with the influence of tribal customs and traditions on them. Finally, the role played by rural women in armed conflicts and wars was acknowledged.

4. Results and Discussion

The first phase of the royal policy towards the clans was from 1921 to 1939, especially during the reign of King Faisal I, by luring tribal sheikhs to its side by providing them with vast lands and by passing laws and legislation that serve their interests and increase their influence. Iraq suffered from several political and economic crises during the monarchy that had an impact on the social reality and public life of the population, especially on the weaker classes of society, who make up the vast majority of the population. and give them many economic, political and social privileges at the expense of the rest of the members of society in general and rural in particular, the tribal chiefs became the most powerful pillar in the existing monarchy at that time, especially after the events of the May Revolution in 1941, which increased their domination and domination over the clans, especially the peasants who worked in those agricultural lands controlled by the feudal lords.

The enactment of those agrarian laws devastated the lives of the peasants, bound them to the land with the chains of servitude and humiliation, and reduced them

to the status of defenseless slaves. This, in turn, had a profound and evident impact on the social reality of rural women in Iraq, particularly in the Lower Euphrates region, where they were subject to a number of social and economic pressures, including strict tribal customs and traditions that forbade them from engaging in real, authentic social interactions., as well as incorrect religious customs and legislations that have been passed down from the generations from the ancestors, and which have no basis in truth have been interpreted according to whims and personal interests, such as polygamy without a real reason in disguise, only for the purpose of boasting, increasing the number of children, and satisfying the desires and whims of some economically empowered, it also imposed on women in the tribal and rural society to obey males in the family regardless of their degree of kinship, and to deprive them of all their legitimate, religious and economic rights, the Islamic religion gave women the right to live, learn, work, own property and the freedom to dispose of their lives.

These deplorable conditions caused peasants to migrate from the countryside to the city, making them live in very poor conditions that reflected more on rural women who shared hunger, destitution and poverty with men, rather, she was the one who supported the family in most cases because of the large number of deaths in men due to the continuous wars between the tribes, because a large number of men have entered compulsory service in the army and left the family without a breadwinner, as well as the actions of the rebel and the displacement of the wanted outside his lands, in addition to the abandonment to which some women in the countryside were subjected, due to the large number of marriages for one man, these women are forced to work and support their children and family.

The government has not had any role in helping rural women to play their right to take their right and share of education, health and general culture, those governments did not pay attention to it, even by establishing a governmental institution to help those women who are absent from a decent life and from all aspects of development, although they represent the majority in the countryside and in the southern regions, to take care of them and provide them with the simplest necessities of life such as medicines, treatments or educational courses to eradicate illiteracy, or even providing them with advice and guidance on how to claim their rights or provide them with protection from what they were exposed to, from the types of psychological and physical torture, and methods of repression and murder under the pretext of washing shame or discipline them because of disobedience or refusal to marry a cousin and others.

Rural women in the Lower Euphrates region, like most women in rural areas of Iraq, suffered from neglect, marginalization and domination by parents or husbands, as a heavy burden and they must be rid of it for several reasons, including economic, social and tribal, and the inability of parents to support their daughters due to the difficult situation and the difficulty of living and the deterioration of the economic conditions of the farmer, so fathers marry off their daughters at a very young age, not more than a few years, most of them were minors from the age of 13 and did not reach the age of majority 18 years, they are married to old men of the age of their parents or even the age of their grandparents, to live in dilapidated huts where the simplest means of decent living are not available, with a number of wives with their dependents and large numbers of children of those wives, in addition to that, they have to serve this family, take care of it, obey them and not object.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Rural women in Iraq endure extremely difficult conditions while working in agriculture and livestock, and suffer oppression and the burden of responsibility to feed their families. However, the problems that persist and expand day after day require solutions, including:

- 1) Access to land and property: Facilitate rural women's access to land and property to

enable them to engage in agriculture and economic activities.

- 2) Awareness and Education: Strengthen awareness programs for rural communities on the rights of women and girls and the harms of early and forced marriage.
- 3) Amend laws: Work to change tribal and national legislation to raise the legal age of marriage to at least 18 years.
- 4) Women's Economic Empowerment: Supporting rural women by providing job opportunities and vocational training to improve their financial independence.
- 5) Legal and psychological support: Providing legal and psychological support to women and girls who are subjected to early or forced marriage.
- 6) Enhancing the role of women in society: Encouraging women's participation in decision-making at the local and national levels.
- 7) It is also important to collaborate with international and local organizations to implement these strategies and monitor their impact on rural communities.

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