

## **THE POVERTY In IRAQ BETWEEN THE REALITY AND THE POOR PLANNING**

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### **Abstract:**

Iraq, like many of developing and the Arab countries, is suffering imbalance in the geographical distribution of the population the dominance of agglomeration in one place, that is, in the capital and its environs, the emergence of phenomena concentration in the major cities and urban sagging and the growth of slum on the outskirts of cities and their surroundings. This reflects in the deterioration of the environment and the low level of services and management of development which, in other words, the imbalance in the distribution of the fruits of development among the population geographically which revealed statistical indicators about deprivation in Iraq.

The statistics also indicate the presence of large variations between the governorates in fertility rates and infant mortality rates that clearly reflect the variation in the level of health services and the economic infrastructure as well as the lack of consistency with the needs of the population. These data indicate the need for population policy attention to the Iraqi government in the future to know the trends of urbanization and rapid urbanization and their potential impact and addressed them through the development plans and programs.

### **Introduction:**

The population of Iraq grows rapidly due to the former population policies which aimed at encouraging population growth since seventies of the last century. The population of Iraq has reached in 2007 more than 10 times the population in 1927. If these fertility and mortality rates continue within the current data, then the number of the population of Iraq will doubles again during 23 years. This would be resulting in negative repercussions that affect the quality of life unless the traditional perspective on the relationship of population growth with development is changed.

Poverty, in addition to other given cases (such as hunger, disease, ignorance, and lack of opportunity for self-development) is the destiny of the vast majority of people in underdeveloped countries. Poverty is not something new there. But new is the realizing poverty and working on eliminating it<sup>1</sup>.

But, the expansion of attention to the phenomenon of poverty from the economic and social sphere in a society to the field of international relations<sup>(2)</sup>.

We try in this approach to address the issue of poverty in Iraq by its nature, types, causes, and the ways to eliminate it.

#### Research Problem:

- 1 – The recent times has witnessed poverty in Iraq.
- 2- The failure of many attempts to develop a serious economic fight against extension poverty threshold.
- 3 – Poverty belt extends as a result of wars and the economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations on Iraq during the nineties of the last century in addition to the invasion of Iraq the beginning of this century by the United States and coalition countries and other reasons.
- 4 - Although we have more riches of the earth and the most beautiful areas where the grace of the four seasons, and the diversity of climate, and the long history of civilization, we are suffering because of poverty.
- 5 - High random housing unit, where some are still poor families live in shanty houses or in the open.
- 6 - High poverty led to higher degree and frustration of millions of the poor, leading to worsening political problem and creating a new world in which there are islands of wealth and luxury, and others, wider and more welcoming, to poverty and despair. Everyone was dismissed from each other by barriers and fences as despair has created fertile ground for extremism and terrorism, let alone epidemics and instability.

#### The Importance of Research:

The importance of this research is to reveal the causes of poverty, which is imposed on the millions of people. Therefore, we find that poverty is a real problem that is facing not Iraqis alone but the whole world. It is more dangerous on the world than wars are. A deprived man who cannot get a minimum of a decent life is even more dangerous and criminal than any nuclear bomb. He does not have anything to lose. Poverty is an unacceptable humanitarian situation. As crippling economic situation weaken society's ability to grow and progress. And poverty leads to explosive political situation.

#### Research Objectives:

- 1– Raise the awareness about the issue of poverty and work to gain support to confront them.
- 2 - Early warning of situations of poverty, hunger and housing
- 3 - Develop and policy analysis related to poverty.

#### The Hypotheses:

- 1 - Poverty alleviation lead to raise the educational level.
- 2- There is a reciprocal relationship between poverty and high unemployment.

- 3- To tackle poverty leads to improved conditions of human resources.
- 4- Poverty is usually associated with terrorism and extremism caused by hatred generated in the human psyche.

### 1 - The Definition of Poverty:

There are many definitions of poverty is the most important:

- It "is the inability to achieve a minimum standard of living and to the absence or lack of asset ownership or possession of wealth or resources available both physical and non-physical<sup>3</sup>.
- It "is the inability to achieve a certain level of living material represents a reasonable minimum and acceptable in a society of communities in a specific period of time<sup>4</sup>.
- Poverty is defined "If you do not get the standard of living is or fit enough, through the community in which the individual lives<sup>5</sup>.

known United Nations poverty in 1999 that "Poverty has a variety of forms including lack of income, and productive resources sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living and manifestations of hunger, malnutrition and poor health, limited access or no to learning and other basic services, and the spread of disease and mortality and the lack of supplies and inadequate housing, and live in an unsafe environment in addition to the lack of participation in decision-making in the civic and social life.

From the above explanation, we find that poverty depends largely on the concept of the minimum standard of living. It also depends on the society in which it is process characterization. "Poverty in the rural India or China, for example, which leads to death because of hunger, is different from poverty in the countries of Western Europe or the United States, which largely refers to the issue of disparity in the distribution of income more than it refers to absolute deprivation<sup>6</sup>.

6- Poverty, as measured by the United Nations Development Program, is "the inability of individuals to control their resources if they are healthy and educated that poverty in this sense means absolute deprivation.

World Bank defined poverty as: "the inability to achieve a minimum standard of living<sup>7</sup>.

It also defines it as "the inability to achieve a certain level of living material represents a reasonable minimum and acceptable in a society of communities in a specific period of time<sup>8</sup>.

In exchange for substantive definitions, there is the self-definition of poverty, which is based on the classification of the individual to the same

whether it was poor or not. However, the self-definition does not acquire any importance realistic. Poverty should be determined based on the objective circumstances of the family, and not on the special report of the same family.

A distinction can be made between two types of poverty:

- Continuous hard poverty is collective and structural.
- Emergency poverty or situational caused by economic crisis or a passing military or political, or natural disaster, which can be overcome public and international solidarity.

### The underlying causes of poverty in Iraq

There are several reasons for the deterioration of the pension status of Iraq's population of the most important:

#### 1. Political reasons including the following:

**A** - Internal and external wars (the war with the Kurds in 1970s, Iraq - Iran war (the first Gulf War) (1980-1988), the second Gulf War in 1991, the third Gulf War 2003); the eight-year war have led to the deterioration in the situation of the population, particularly in border areas in the center and south. Turned those years of Iraqi society and the foundations underlying the state and the economy upside down, and the intensive, even full, militarization of society. Poverty and the growing need have become the basic trait of the Iraqi families and individuals.

**B** - The Economic Sanctions (1990-2003): After 1990, the state institutions deteriorated and decreased in effectiveness and were subjected to vibration and weaknesses. The scarce state resources to social spending and services, specifically on the subject of food and medicine. The cycle of poverty widened and the social environment deteriorated. An atmosphere of insecurity and instability spread on both individual and public levels. On the other hand, the sanctions era aggravated state of imbalance in the distribution of national income, and expanded the income differences between population groups, and increased the widening gap between rich and poor. The poorest 20 percent of households is less than 7 per cent of the total income of the Iraqi family, while having the richest 20 per cent 44 per cent of the income, or 6 times what it receives poor families<sup>9</sup>.

**C** - The nature of the previous political system and pattern of dealing with the community and misconduct economic community resources. In all of those circumstances was the political system focuses more on protecting itself and take further preventive measures. Which led to the transformation of society into something like camps guests who apply daily or weekly or monthly to request Food and Drug Administration, they are deprived of any civil rights<sup>10</sup>.

**D** - The invasion of Iraq caused new difficulties in the area of poverty, and

it took new directions. Despite the improvement in the general standard of living, another manifestation emerged in the absence of political stability, and the deterioration of the security situation put new custom areas hot and different available estimates on the number of displaced families from those areas to safer areas, according to the International Organization for migration bringing the number of internally displaced persons to 45.029 families. About 270,202 displaced people, a third of Baghdad<sup>11</sup>, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, spoke in her own situation of Iraq, which was released in October (October) 2006 for 1.5 million IDPs, of whom 425,000 displaced people after the events of the bombing of Al-Askariya Dome in Samarra, or 71 almost a thousand families. According to official sources, the number of Iraqi internally displaced after the events of the city of Samarra, until November / November 2007, about 163,574 families, or about 999,772 people<sup>12</sup>. Whatever the true figure, the hundreds of thousands have been forcibly admitted in abject poverty under the weight of forced displacement, and having to flee, leaving their property and their homes and their belongings, to implement their lives.

After displacement, the displaced are forced to live in camps housing that includes 45-100 tents, spread in Baghdad, Najaf, Anbar, Qadisiyah, and Karbala. Or in abandoned public buildings, local administrations recently started retrieve, and the expulsion of the families that inhabited.

And - the escalating violence, tens of thousands of victims, who are mostly heads of households, to leave their families without a breadwinner, mother forced to work, children are forced to work after leaving school.

## 2 – The social reasons include the following:

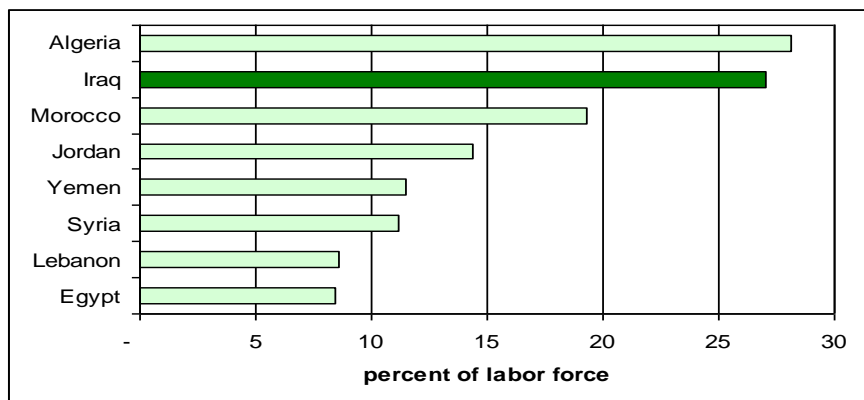
A - The Health Aspect, which is one of the worst at the level of the region. It is much less than the levels of countries with similar incomes. The infant mortality rate, which rose significantly during the period of economic sanctions, currently stands at 102 deaths per thousand births are correct. This rate like the one we are witnessing in countries of Africa south of the Sahara. Maternal mortality rose by nearly three-fold, as indicated by surveys of child malnutrition as a higher level of average middle-income countries from low-class (13% versus 9%). As well as figures show that illiteracy is high and it is higher than in countries such as Syria and Jordan by between 10 - 20 percentage points. The school enrollment rates are lower than in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. There are significant differences and increasingly between the sexes, especially in rural areas, where the number of girls enrolled in primary schools even a third of this category of the population.

B – The High unemployment: currently, there are more than two million

unemployed people making up 30% of the total labor force, Unemployment is often concentrated in the age group (15-24) and then begins to decline in the subsequent age groups. Because of the size that posed by this age group out of the total labor force (approximately 30%); it holds the largest share of the total unemployed. In 2004, the unemployment rate for this segment accounted for 43.8% of which 46% were for males and 37.2% for females, even when compared with the high unemployment rates in the Middle East and North Africa Graph (1); we find that Iraq is significantly different from the others. This situation was not far from expectations due to the current circumstances.

The high level of unemployment and underemployment level, which is much higher, is attributed to three main factors. First, there is a decline in production due to the disruption of the normal economic activity, resulting from the significant damage to the companies in time of war, and continuing security problems that have a profound negative impact on business activity.

Graph (1) the unemployment rate in Iraq is one of the highest in the Middle East and North Africa.



Source: International Labour Organization (2004) and World Bank staff estimate

### Poverty at the governorate level:

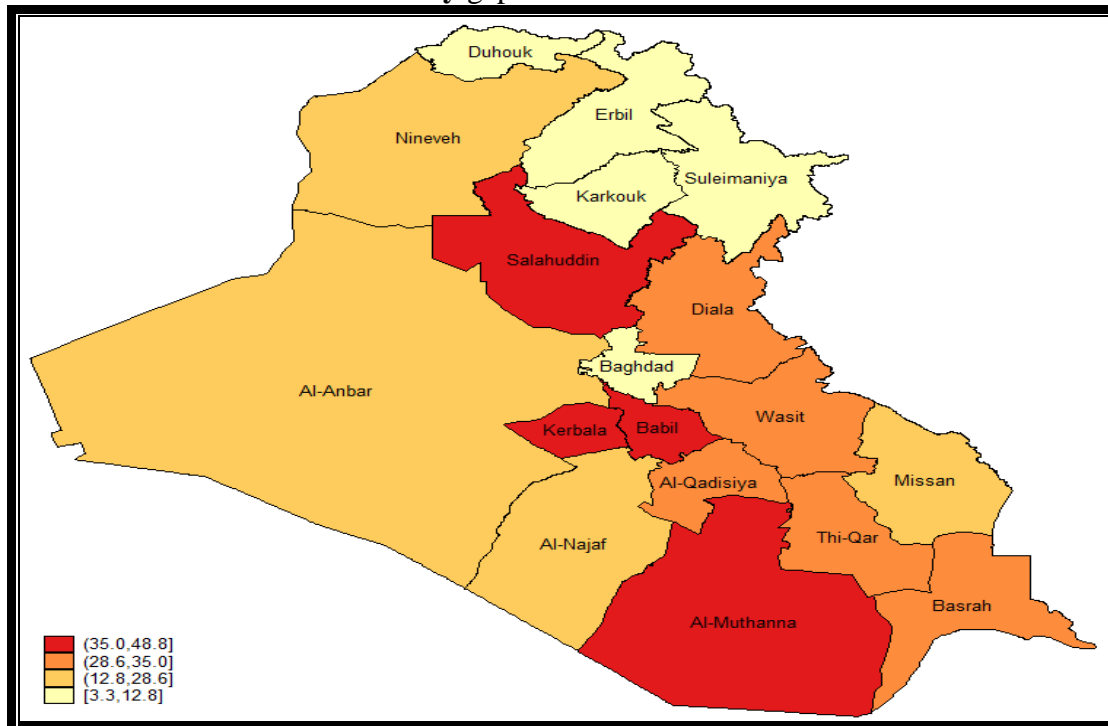
The governorates vary in terms of the proportion and the gap poverty. While is more than 40% of the population of some governorates are poor (AL-Muthanna 49%, Babylon 41%, Salahuddin 40%). The proportion of poor people in other Governorates less than 10% as in the governorates of Kurdistan. The poverty gap is growing in Governorates with a high proportion of poor (Map 1). On the other hand, 13% of the poor are in the Governorate of Baghdad alone and about 11% in the governorate of Basra. And at the level of rural poverty is higher in the Governorates of Muthanna (75%) and Babylon (61%) and Kut (60%).

Table (1) The proportion and **Poverty** gap between the Governortes in 2007.

The governorte	Proportion of provity	Poverty gap
Dohuk	9	2
Nineveh	23	4
Sulaymaniyah	3	1
Kirkuk	11	1
Erbil	3	1
Diyala	34	7
Anbar	21	4
Bagdad	13	2
Babylon	41	9
karbala	37	7
wasit	36	19
salahuddin	40	1
Najaf	25	1
Qadisiyah	35	1
Almothanna	49	14
Dhi-Qar	34	1
Maysan	27	1
Basra	34	1
The poverty rate in Iraq	23	5

Source: The Ministry of Planning, the Central Organization for statistic and information Technology, poverty measurement indicators in Iraq, 2007.

Map (1)  
The Poverty gap bettween the Governortes



Depending on the table (1)

The available information suggests that the contractors spend between 30 and 50% of the total project costs on matters relating to the security situation<sup>13</sup>. Secondly, the increasing labor supply due to the entry of 170.000 new elements in the labor force each year, due to the installation of Iraq population dominated by the young, who are competing for scarce jobs. It has been exacerbated by the impact of these factors because of the large dislocation that hit the labor force, which had enjoyed stable jobs, any former military and police officers and displaced people from returning home and from affected areas of economic activity, in particular, as a result of acts of violence. Third, the industrial structure of economy makes it difficult to absorb new entrants into the labor market, and thus create new jobs. Indeed, the production of state-driven, and the presence of non-flexible systems in the labor market, and heavy reliance on the public sector to create new jobs are things impede the reallocation of labor resources and the creation of new businesses

3 - Economic reasons: Iraq's economy depends totally on oil and public enterprises. The public sector has a mixed sector most desired formal jobs where there is coverage by social security and retirement. However, the private sector is the source of more than 60% of all jobs in the economy, mostly in small businesses operating in the agricultural and services sector. Poverty analysis showed different phenomena in Iraq<sup>14</sup>:



1- Iraq is situated within the middle income countries. However, the exceptional circumstances which it has experienced during the past decades have left a whole segment of the society suffering more as a result of the decline of the incomes out of the total GDP. That is accompanied with decline in the social prosperity levels.

2- The distribution of spending revealed that most of them are concentrated around poverty line, and few of them are far from this line. That means that a great portion of the non-poor are vulnerable in their income (job loss, loss of supporter, sickness of one member of family ...etc.) or to the increase of the consumer needs. It is expected to be put under the poverty line. The gap of poverty in Iraq was estimated in 4.5%, which means most of the poor are very close of poverty line. There was a relative improvement in their incomes and the increase of their share in the governmental expenditure.

### Age and Gender Composition of the Population of Iraq

The population of Iraq in 2009 is estimated about 31.9 million people, including 16.1 million males and the rest females. Percentage of gender (101) males per 100 females and this percentage almost approach the average gender ratio in most Arab countries. But in the world the percentage amount to (106). The gender ratio evidence demographic balance, and gender ratio, like demographics other vary from period to period and from one governorate to another depending on factors of internal and external migration, where the percentage of type in the census in 1997 about 99.4 male per 100 females. The circumstances experienced by Iraq like wars and the economic sanctions might have led to a high mortality rate among males, and pushed up the male to migrate abroad, which led to the qualitative imbalance population as such.

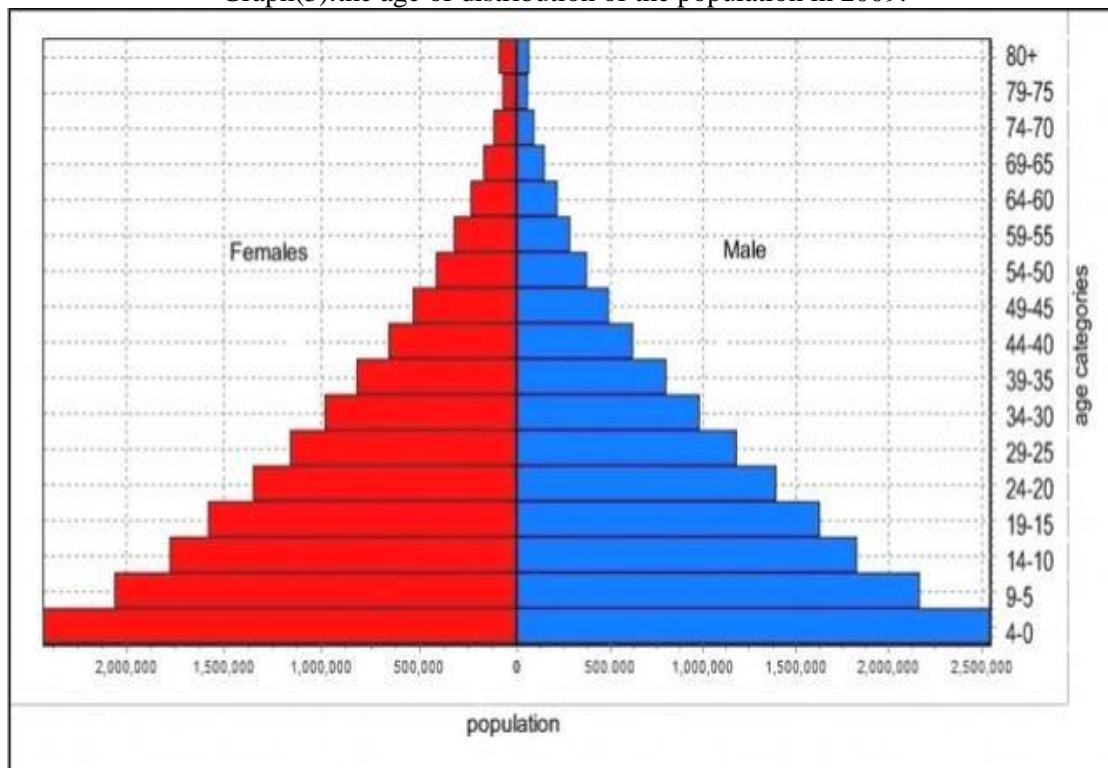
The data of the age structure of the population of Iraq indicate that Iraqi society is still communities that are characterized young population. There is currently a high proportion of children, adolescents and young people in the total population, but more than two-thirds (68.8%) of the population of Iraq are today under the age of thirty years of age. According to the data of socio-economic survey conducted families in Iraq for the year 2007, the age structure of the population has changed in the last three decades. The most important features of this change decline in the proportion of children (people under the age of 15 years) by five percentage points between 1977-1997 and by ten percentage points between 1977-2007 in favor of increasing the proportion of the working-age population (15-64 years old). However, the breadth of the base of the pyramid population shown in Graph (2) indicates that nearly two out of every five people (39.8%) of the

population of Iraq are children less than five years of age - compared with half that number or less in developed societies<sup>15</sup>.

Children aged less than 5 years form approximately 14.6% of the total population, the highest proportion of children aged (5-9) years despite the decline in fertility and the reason for this is due to the high number of women of childbearing age (15-49) years to enter the women additives childbearing age category after previously aged less than 15 years and became the ages in this age group and this is called the driving force of the population, as the percentage of women of childbearing age 49.8% of the total female population in 2009.

The proportion of the working age population (15-64) years represents 57% of the total population in 2009, to increase the proportion of this population means an increase of the economically active population, which foretells the achievement of high levels of economic development when higher employment rates and productivity of employees. The category 65 and above, they accounted for 3.3% and this category in addition to a class of young people aged less than 15 years of age constitute a class of dependents of the population. Therefore the lower the percentage of this category decreased dependency rate, reaching 76% in 2009.

Graph(3):the age of distribution of the population in 2009.



The Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, the Central Bureau of Statistics and Information Technology, the results of a survey of employment and unemployment, 2009.

## The reality of poverty in Iraq

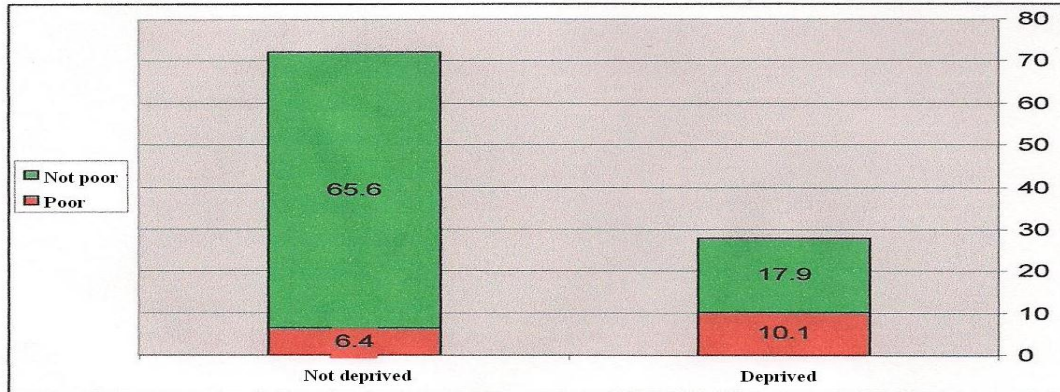
There is little information about the true extent of poverty in Iraq due to the lack of comprehensive data as there is no clear definition of the poverty line. The available indicators suggest that poverty is widespread. It is estimated that the per capita income fell by nearly 50% since 2001 and that, despite some recovery. It was only U.S. \$ 780 in 2004 which puts Iraq in the category of low-income countries. According to surveys carried out lately<sup>16</sup>, quarter of the population almost depends to a large extent on the monthly food rations provided by the state for them. Iraq adopted method the cost of basic necessities Cost of Basic Needs CBN- (Weighted Regionally and Internationally) on the basis of calculating the cost of basic needs of food and the cost of basic needs non-food and bringing the national poverty line = cost of basic needs food + cost of non basic needs food. Also, determining the national poverty line depended on the basis of scale national poverty (Iraq) which was launched by the Central Agency for Statistics and Information Technology of the Year (2009) calculated the value of the volume of poverty level Iraqi (22.9%) that is between about a quarter or a fifth of the population is located below the poverty line (<sup>17</sup>).

Rural areas is regarded the most region vulnerable to the spread of poverty (39%) against (16%) in urban areas. That is attributed to the social and economic situation in the country which is a generating environment of poverty due to the high fertility rate, as the population growth rate is 3.5% the country while it is 2.7% in the city.<sup>18</sup> As a result of the reduced productivity in the Iraqi countryside, as well as the low levels of education, the economic activity they perform does not require high skills, thus, it is not rewarding like working in primary professions, and agriculture and handcrafting not like the professions in the city.

The survey data on socio-economic household in 2007 growing for the purpose of measuring the standard of living in the present study. These data have been used in measuring poverty for the purposes of the preparation of the national strategy for poverty alleviation. Has been the national poverty line is defined as equal to the cost of the basic food needs plus the cost of basic non-food needs. The rate of the cost of the basic food needs monthly per capita as equal to the number of calories needed to sustain the health of the individual Iraqi multiplied by cost estimates Calorie. The total cost mentioned about 34 thousand dinars per person each month. On the basis of household spending, which is located at the food poverty line, estimated poverty line of goods and non-food services approximately 43 thousand dinars per person per month. And collect the cost of the basic food needs with the cost of non-food requirements, equal to the poverty line in Iraq nearly 77 thousand dinars per person per month. According to the poverty

line this poverty rates in Iraq 23% and the number of Iraqis who fall below the poverty line of about seven million people<sup>19</sup>.

Graph (4) the rate of the poor families and not poor according the status the deprivation



Source: The Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, the Central Bureau of Statistics and Information Technology, the results of a survey of employment and unemployment, 2009.

Graph (3) shows the distribution of households by deprivation status according to the evidence standard of living, according to the situation of poverty. It is clear from that the percentage of disadvantaged families, amounting to 28% is distributed to 10% of poor families and 18% non-poor households. In contrast the percentage of households is divided disadvantaged, amounting to 72% to 6% of poor families and 66% non-poor households. And inferred from these figures that the deprivation in Iraq is not strongly linked to income poverty alone, but by other factors, families pay to check deprivation despite their entry raises to above the income poverty.

In order to identify these factors were distributed to households by deprivation status on the level of each one of the fields of the standard of living and by the situation of poverty and poverty line, the field which contains the highest percentage of households suffering from both poverty and deprivation is the field of infrastructure, followed by the field of the economic situation. The high percentage mentioned field of infrastructure to the high proportion of deprivation in the field question whether the poor or non-poor, and with regard to the field of the economic situation is attributable to this field is most associated with the level of household income and thus putting relative to the poverty line. On the other hand noted that the field contains a lower proportion of households suffering from both poverty and deprivation is the field followed by the field of

health education. The decrease in the ratio mentioned that the state provides the bulk of the needs of these fields and thus does not entail for the suffering of the family out of poverty necessarily suffering from deprivation. Poverty analysis showed different phenomena in Iraq<sup>20</sup>:

1- Iraq is situated within the middle income countries. However, the exceptional circumstances which it has experienced during the past decades have left a whole segment of the society suffering more as a result of the decline of the incomes out of the total GDP. That is accompanied with decline in the social prosperity levels.

2- The distribution of spending revealed that most of them are concentrated around poverty line, and few of them are far from this line. That means that a great portion of the non-poor are vulnerable in their income (job loss, loss of supporter, sickness of one member of family ...etc.) or to the increase of the consumer needs. It is expected to be put under the poverty line. The gap of poverty in Iraq was estimated in 4.5%, which means most of the poor are very close of poverty line. There was a relative improvement in their incomes and the increase of their share in the governmental expenditure.

### Recommendations and Conclusions

Until the present time, Iraq did not witness serious attempt to solve the problem of poverty. Everything done was an attempt to deal with symptoms through present social aids and funds, without addressing the real problem. The application of the relevant policies, the legislation of the counter-poverty policies, providing the training to arrive at the productive capacity is priorities for any future work to combat poverty in Iraq.

- The termination of poverty is a decisive challenge in the process of reconstruction of Iraq. That could be performed through the guarantee of productivity and through the creation of work opportunities. The achieving of correlation between the educational system and the market needs cannot be solved unless through human development and the achievement of local programs which depend on skill acquisition.

- Therefore, it is necessary to impose efforts should be focused poverty alleviation to address the structural causes of unemployment, and to address the causes of the lack of employment opportunities for the labor force. That being to diversify the Iraqi economy to extend to intensive sectors of labor. And should be aimed at economic and social policies of low-income groups, and generate better economic opportunities in poor rural areas, and promote social welfare, and promoting employment and equal opportunities. The government should also take the initiative to develop and implement training and education strategy is able to respond to the

requirements of the labor market. Which is working to improve the quality of human resources that includes the active participation of the private sector and civil society organizations?

- Dealing with the future of the ration card must be built on political considerations, economic and social together so can be used to improve the conditions of many poor families that are in dire need them, and before repealed or replaced allowance cash given to be reducing corruption associated.
- On the education system in Iraq to reach universal basic education, government should also facilitate access to schools in rural areas, and improve the quality of education, must also be given special importance to the education of girls, especially living in the rural areas and governorates with high rates of illiteracy among women)<sup>21</sup>. On the response crucial for education in Iraq is not limited to spreading literacy. The following purposes should be given the priority: (1) the elimination of illiteracy; (2) raise the quality of education; (3) to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all people.
- Creating good employment revenues.
- The transformation Iraqi society from a consumer society to a productive society. The government must pay special attention to the informal sector and agriculture, and provide the necessary funding for it.
- The state must act on the promotion of employment through the enactment of laws on minimum wages and absorb all the available labor force, and therefore the application of employment policies and programs effectively.

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## الفقر في العراق بين الواقع وضعف الخطط التنموية

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### الملخص:

ينمو سكان العراق بشكل متسارع بفعل السياسات السكانية السابقة التي استهدفت تشجيع النمو السكاني منذ سبعينيات القرن الماضي، وقد بلغ سكان العراق في عام ٢٠٠٧ أكثر من ١٠ أضعاف سكانه في عام ١٩٢٧ وإذا استمرت معدلات الخصوبة والوفيات ضمن المعطيات الراهنة، سيتضاعف عدد سكان العراق مرة أخرى خلال ٢٣ سنة مما يترتب عليه تداعيات سلبية تؤثر على نوعية حياة الناس ما لم يتم تغيير المنظور التقليدي في علاقة النمو السكاني مع التنمية، والعراق يعاني كالعديد من الدول النامية والعربية من اختلال في التوزيع الجغرافي للسكان ومن هيمنة تكتل سكاني واحد، هو العاصمة وما حولها، وبروز ظواهر التركز في المدن الكبرى والترهل المدني ونمو العشوائيات في أطراف المدن ومحيطها الأمر الذي انعكس على تدهور البيئة وتدني مستوى الخدمات وإدارة التنمية فيه، بمعنى آخر الاختلال في توزيع ثمار التنمية بين السكان جغرافياً وهو ما كشفت عنه المؤشرات الإحصائية حول الحرمان في العراق. كما أشارت الإحصائيات إلى وجود تباينات كبيرة بين المحافظات في معدلات الخصوبة ومعدلات وفيات الأطفال لتعكس بوضوح تباين مستوى الخدمات الصحية والبنية التحتية والاقتصادية وعدم تناسقها مع احتياجات السكان. وتؤشر هذه المعطيات ضرورة اهتمام السياسة السكانية للحكومة العراقية في المستقبل بمعرفة اتجاهات عملية التحضر والتمدين السريعة وأثارها المحتملة والتصدي له من خلال الخطط والبرامج التنموية.