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Summary

Studying Female-Headed Household Status in Egypt during the Last Two Decades

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Summary

During the last few decades, the Egyptian society has witnessed fundamental changes in basic economic and social conditions. For example, civilization and urbanization led to a decrease in the family's traditional support. The Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program of the early 1990s was accompanied by a decline in social subsidies of the State, this included significant reduction in direct and indirect subsidies, in addition to the unavailability of jobs in the governmental and public sectors which were important sources for providing new job opportunities for female since early sixties till mid eighties. Although the female headed household (FHH) in Egypt represents a vital sector of different population categories and play an important role in shaping the society and are more affected than other females to the results of rapid social and economic changes, there is a lack in demographic surveys and studies for them. Accordingly, the population literature need a thorough understanding of their characteristics, current status, their problems and an accurate database of their regional distribution.

In that respect, the research adopts the study of female headed household phenomenon to achieve the following objectives:

(1) Identify the characteristics of female-headed household compared to male headed household (MHH) , and identify the differences among these characteristics according to the marital status of female-headed household through descriptive analysis.

(2) Study the relation between the poverty levels and the sex of household head to answer the question of " Are the female headed household the poorest in the society ?" By apply the logistic decline.

(3) Identify the features of the poor living standard of female headed household by using several indices for standards of living.

The primary data used in this study are from the survey of "Fertility and Social Mobility in Egypt,1995" Also, for comparison purposes, the data survey of "Subjective Poverty and social Capital: Towards a comprehensive strategy to Reduce Poverty, Egypt 2002" was used.

The study was divided into six main chapters. *The first chapter* presents the study's problem, its objectives and the major definitions in addition to the important previous studies that covered the phenomena of female headed household by characteristics as well as feminization of poverty. The poverty concept, measurement methodology and the problems of poverty studies, were discussed in *the second chapter. The third chapter* elaborated a descriptive analysis to social and demographic characteristics of female-headed household compared to male-headed household in Egypt in 1995. Also, it conducted a comparison between the characteristics of female headed household according to the marital status, in addition to conducting a comparison between the characteristics of female headed household during the period 1995- 2002. *Forth chapter* focused on assessing the percentage of the relative poverty among families headed by females in Egypt in 1995, and the main characteristics distinguishing poor ones from non poor female headed household. Also, this chapter clarifies the equality measures. *The fifth chapter* investigates the difference among the status of female and male headed household through four adopted indices; basic needs index, housing condition index, economic security index and standard of living index. The results of logistic regression model were illustrated in chapter five.

The sixth chapter highlights the important results of the study and suggested recommendations. The important results are: the sex of household head is not the only sufficient indicator of the standard of living, but the most important is the characteristics of the household head. Educational level and household size are the most influencing factors for differences in poverty levels. Also, the results stresses on the geographic distribution of poverty in Egypt,. The study indicated also that the income poverty is not only sufficient for distinguishing between welfare level of families by head. Finally, the marital status of female headed household plays also a role in identifying the welfare level of the family.

Finally, the chapter offers some recommendations which could improve the status of FHH, in addition to some suggestions of future research. The study indicated in its recommendations that the proper starting point to overcome the negative sides of the phenomenon is to identify its actual size. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to conduct a national survey presenting an actual population map reflecting all the

population categories and its economic, social and demographic characteristics. In addition to the importance of availing the data on cases when females were heading their families. As such, we can identify the development of some characteristics by comparing their status before and after heading household.

As for recommendations on means of improving the standard of living for female headed household, the study pointed out that, the development of human capabilities approach is considered very important. This is through increasing self capabilities which allow better opportunities of earning income. This could be attained by allocating sufficient investments in education in addition to providing sufficient subsidies to the poor.