

Spatial Variation of the Demographic Characteristics of Rural Women in Saqlawiyah District in 2022

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Abstract

The spatial variation in the demographic characteristics of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district for this research is an essential step for planning and social and economic development processes and for determining human needs and requirements in the present and future. Population characteristics include demographic, social, and financial data in a specific period, and studying them is of great importance in clarifying the demographic features that characterize women, determining the geographical components and the extent of their impact on the demographic characteristics of rural women, identifying the spatial and temporal distribution of the size and rate of population growth of rural women, recognizing the problems they suffer from, and finding solutions. In order to achieve these goals, attention must be given to girls' education by building more schools in rural areas, as well as paying attention to their health, providing care and watchfulness for the mother, achieving justice and equality in the distribution of job opportunities and wages, protecting women from domestic violence, and imposing strict laws against anyone who does this to a woman.

Keywords: *Woman, Demographics, Rural areas, Mirror development, Saqlawiya.*

Introduction

Women are considered half of society. Society is the population that is responsible for the advancement of society and planning and developing various development programs. They understand the fundamental determinant of the size of the various economic, social, and urban activities. Therefore, their study was based on geography as a geographical phenomenon characterized by change and variation and interaction with other geographical variables present on the surface of the Earth and in recent times. Population geography found its primary subject as interest and research in it increased, not only in its approach and content, which includes the growth of the population, its geographical distribution, its density in the place, and the characteristics of its gender and age composition, as well as the characteristics of its social and economic composition only but also in the in-depth use of technologies.

Women have a role in bringing up and raising children, preparing for living requirements at home, and actively participating in various service sectors such as education, health, and upbringing. All of this makes them extremely important in society, and they are the ones who determine the trends, customs, and morals that they instill in their children. They also have activities and work outside the home as well for example, in (agricultural fields, factories, hospitals, schools, service institutions) and other various works carried out by women. In this research, we will learn about the spatial variation in the demographic characteristics of rural women in the study area (Saqlawiyah district).

Research problem

The research problem can be formulated as follows:

1. Is there spatial variation in the demographic characteristics of rural women in the study area?

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- To what extent do the numerical and relative geographical distribution, age, and educational composition affect the spatial disparity of rural women at the provincial level in the Saqlawiyah district?
- Do economic characteristics have an impact on rural women and their work?

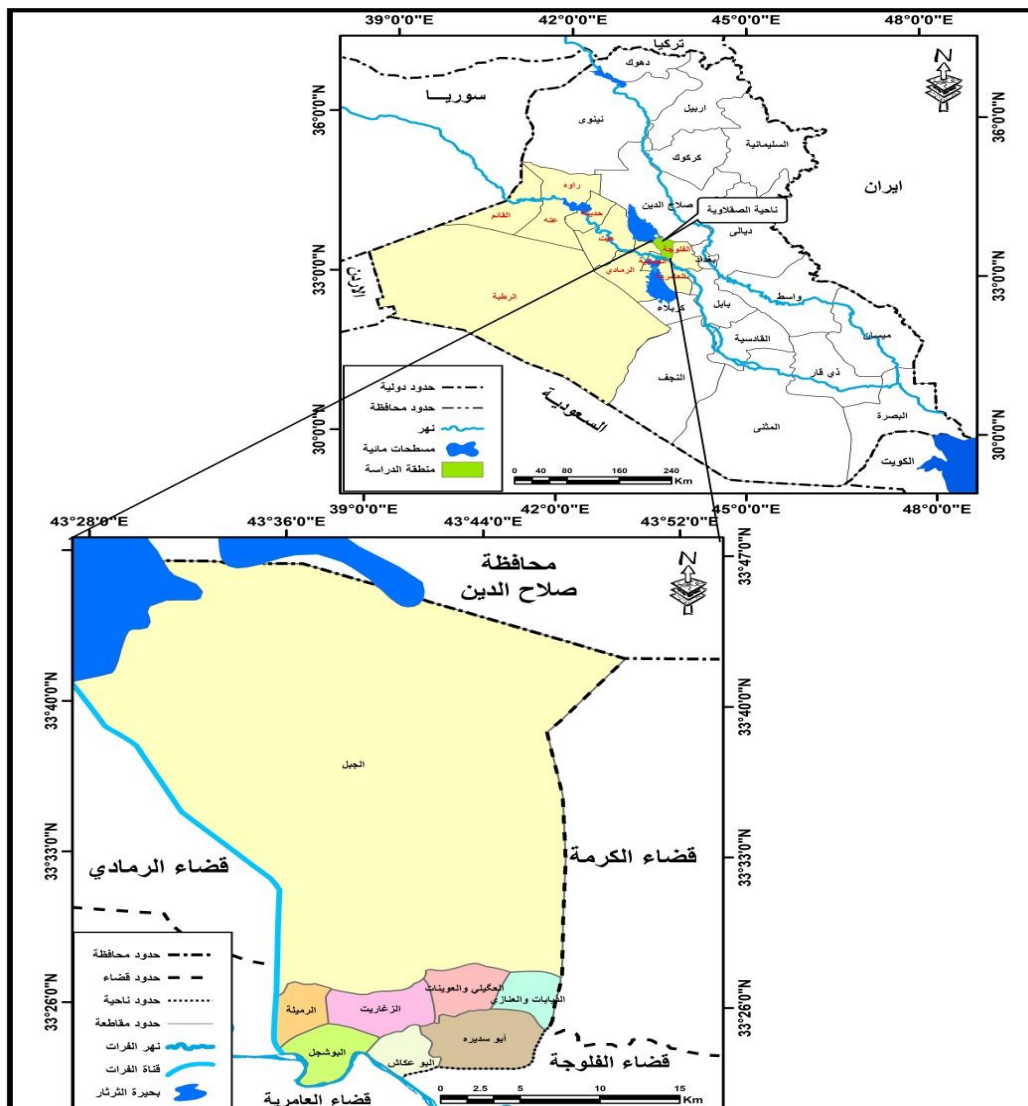
Research Hypothesis

- There is a spatial variation in the demographic characteristics of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district and at the level of its provinces.
- The geographical distribution, age, and educational composition affect the spatial disparity of rural women in the study area.
- Economic characteristics affect rural women and their work.

Research Limits

The study area (Al-Saqlawiyah district) is located to the northwest of the city of Fallujah, at a distance of 11 km, about 78 km from the capital, Baghdad, 103 km from the city of Samarra, and 33 km from the town of Tharthar, which existed. As for its astronomical location, it is located at the intersection of latitude of 33.2 north and longitude 43.40 east, as in map (1).

The city center is located on the Euphrates River, from which the Saqlawiyah River branches in the west of the city, which gave the town an essential role throughout history as a station for transporting travelers and protecting commercial caravans on the historic Euphrates River route⁴.



sis (unpublished),

Map 1. Location of the study area

Source: 1. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Water Resources, Directorate of Public Survey, Administrative Map of Iraq and Anbar, 2023, scale (1000000:1).

2. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Agriculture, Anbar Agriculture Directorate, unpublished data, 2023.

Research Objective

The research aims to reveal the spatial variation in the demographic characteristics of rural women in the Saqlawiya district and the impact of geographical distribution, age, and educational composition on women's status and work at the level of the provinces of the study area.

Research Methodology

The research adopted the descriptive approach, library sources, and field study to fill the gap in the required data, in addition to simple statistical methods to complete the research, as it included axes represented by numerical and relative distribution, age and educational composition, spatial analysis of economic characteristics, and the practical situation of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district, and then reaching out conclusions and proposals.

First: The Numerical and Relative Distribution of Rural Women in the Saqlawiya District

The study of population distribution is one of the essential topics for geographers, through which it is possible to highlight the extent of the relationship between the population and their places of residence and its connection to the place where people live because of the differences it shows in the distribution of population within their areas of residence and any region⁵.

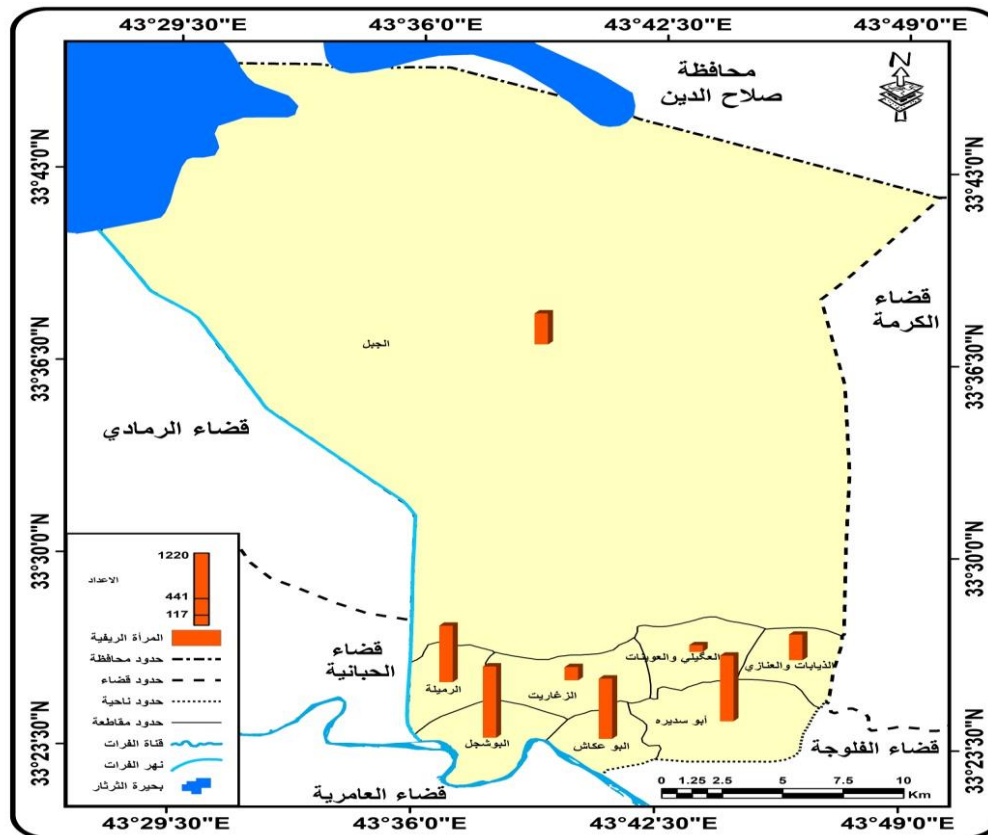
An apparent discrepancy appears in the numerical distribution of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district, as the Table (1) shows that the Abu Shajl district occupied first place in terms of the number of rural women, reaching (1220) and with a percentage of (21.5%). While the Abu Sedira region came in second place in terms of the number of rural women, reaching (1,128) and (19.9%), followed by the Al-Masalha and Al-Bouakash regions, which came (1,032) and (18.2%).

Table 1. Numerical and relative distribution of rural women in Saqlawiya district in 2022.

No.	Place	No. of rural women	Rate %
1	Rumaila	970	17.1
2	Abu Sedira	1128	19.9
3	Al-Musalaha and Al-Bouakash	1032	18.2
4	Albu Shajal	1220	21.5
5	Al-Dhiabat and Al-Anazi	441	7.8
7	Al-Ugaili and Al-Awainat	117	2.1
8	Zagharit	228	4.0
9	Al-Jabal	533	9.4
Total		5669	%100

Source: Based on the Planning Authority, Central Population Census 2022.

⁵ Jacqueline B. Garnier, Population Geography, translated by Hassan Al-Khayyat and Makki Muhammad Aziz, Al-Ani Press, Baghdad, 1974, p. 8.



Map 2. Numerical and relative distribution of rural women in Saqlawiyah district.

Source: Depend on Table 1.

The increase in the number of rural women in the Al-Bushegel region is due to the nature of the rural environment of this province, which includes a large population. The percentage of rural women will increase.

Second: Age composition of rural women in Saqlawiyah district in 2022

The population composition is of great importance, as it represents the extent of the impact of vital demographic processes on the age groups and the gender ratio of the society and its ability to develop and advance society through the availability of the necessary human resources and support for other groups of society members who are unable to work⁶. The occurring change in the population composition will lead to change in the areas of life (social, economic, and demographic) for a certain period⁷. Studying variables is vital for developing development plans by focusing on the factors influencing those variables in order to employ them in developing and raising the standard of living of society because age and gender structure are among the most prominent factors influencing those variables and have their significance on the economic and social level of any country, and its relationship to the distribution of population (males, females) into age groups, as well as determining fertility, births, and deaths, the extent of its impact on

⁶ Abd Ali Al-Khafaf, Abd Makhwar Al-Rihani, Population Geography, University of Basra, 1986, p. 322.

⁷ Muhammad Azhar Al-Sammak, The Main Patterns of Population Structure in the Arab World, A Study in the Methodology of Subsistence Analysis, Mosul, 1984, p. 43.

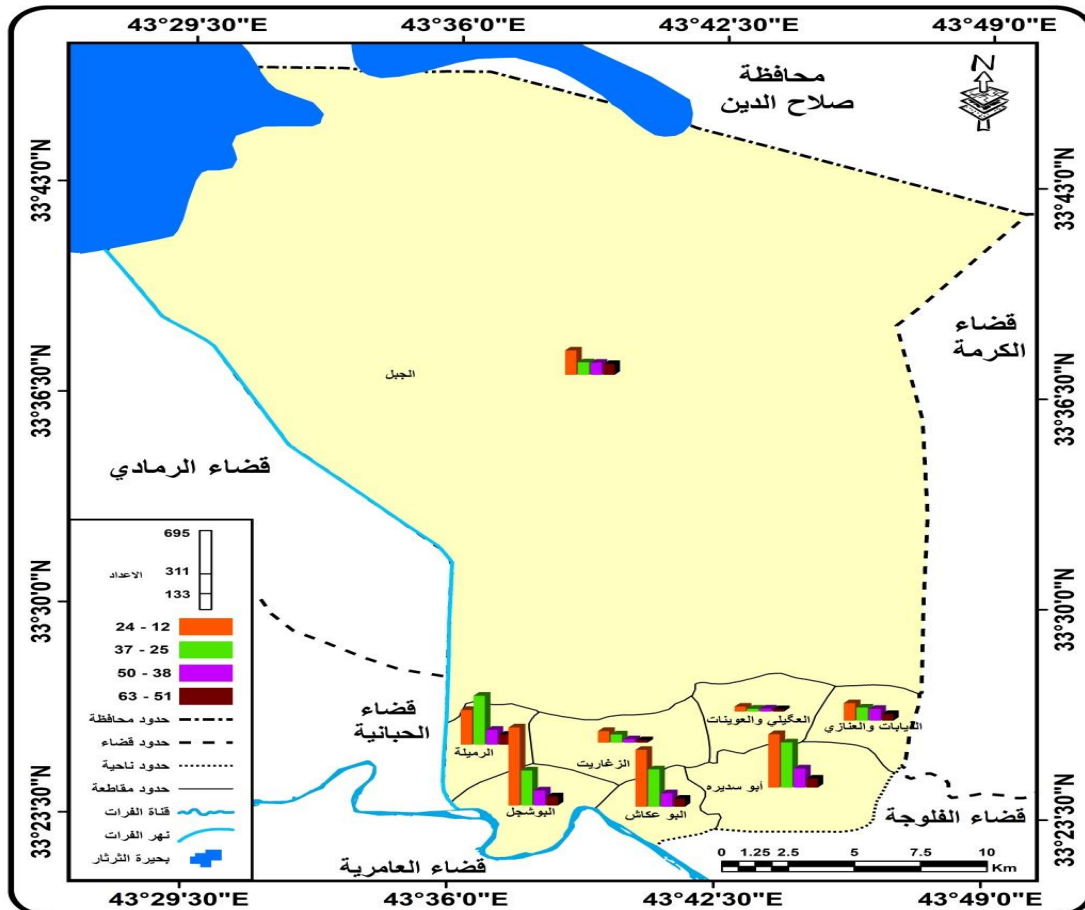
fertility, and determining the amount of economic activities involved in working age⁸. Population size approximations are of great importance in population studies because they have a role in development research to predict the size of the population in the future and chart future trends related to community services⁹.

It is clear that the age structure varies between the provinces, and this is shown in Table (2) and Figure (2), as the first category (12____24) ranked first in terms of the number of rural women in the district at (2511). The second category came after that (25____37) and reached (1810) to occupy second place among the total number of rural women in the study area.

Table 2. Numerical distribution of rural women according to age groups in the study area.

Place	Number of rural women	12____24	25____37	38____50	51____63
Rumaila	970	311	437	133	89
Abu Sedira	1128	476	402	170	80
Al-Musalaha and Al-Bouakash	1032	507	333	120	72
Albu Shajal	1220	695	311	133	81
Al-Dhiabat and Al-Anazi	441	157	118	106	60
Al-Ugaili and Al-Awainat	117	44	25	27	21
Zagharit	228	103	73	30	22
Al-Jabal	533	218	111	108	96
Total	5669	2511	1810	827	521

Source: Based on the field study 9/7/2022.



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Map 3. Spatial variation of rural women according to age groups in Saqlawiyah district.

Source: Based on Table (2).

As for the category (38____50), it came in third place with (827), and the fourth and last category (51____63) accounted for (521) of the total number of rural women in the study area. The reason for this decline is a result of the low health, social, and economic status of women and the effort they exert in household chores. And arduous agriculture leads to a decline in the health status of women.

Third: The educational composition of rural women in the Saqlawiya district in 2022

The educational structure is considered the means and the end at the same time. It is the pillar of all fields and represents the source of the prominent characteristics in the composition of the population, which have three dimensions (economic, cultural, and political). The educational structure is no less critical than other structures, as it is one of the essential foundations in the success of the population development process¹⁰.

Illiteracy

The total number of illiterates in the Saqlawiyah district reached (864) women in 2022, as Al-Bushjal District ranked first with (450) and Rumaila District came in second place with (145) women. The third and fourth place went to the districts (Abu Sedira, Al-Masalha, and Al-Bushjal) with (115 and 105) respectively, and this is the result of the lack of female enrollment in schools and the failure to continue their studies due to the prevailing customs and traditions. Al-Ukaili and Al-Uwaynat districts ranked last and had the lowest number of illiterate women, with (7) women being the least among the other districts in the Saqlawiyah district, in order to encourage the people to study and register their daughters to attend school.

Read and write only

The total number of women reading and writing in the Saqlawiyah district reached (956) in 2022, with Abu Sedira district ranked first, with (330) women, and the provinces of (Al-Masalha, Al-Boukash, Al-Rumaila, and Al-Bushjal) ranked second, third, and fourth, with (208), (206), (126), respectively, and that the high numbers of these provinces came as a result of many women enrolling in primary schools and leaving their studies before completing the primary stage. Al-Jabal Province recorded the lowest number of women reading and writing only with four women to be in last place.

Females who hold a primary school certificate

The total number of women who obtained the primary certificate in the Saqlawiyah district reached (2,153), with Abu Sedira district occupying the first place, with a total of (540) women, and (Al-Masalha, Al-Boukash, Al-Bushjal, and Al-Rumaila) districts coming in the second, third, and fourth advanced ranks, at (500, 320, 319) respectively, while Al-Ukaili and Al-Owainat District ranked last, with (28) women.

Intermediate certificate holders

The total number of women who obtained an intermediate certificate in the Saqlawiyah district reached (869), with the Al-Bushjal district ranked first with a total of (209) women. In contrast, the districts of (Al-Masalha, Al-Boukash, Al-Rumaila, and Al-Zagharit) came in the three advanced ranks, second, third, and fourth, at

¹⁰ Muhammad Ahmed Al-Khayyat and Ibrahim Abdel-Hafiz, Education in the Republic of Yemen (Future Vision), research prepared for the educational symposium of the Arab Teachers Union, Sana'a, 1997, p. 3.

(122, 121, 110) respectively. Al-Ukaili and Al-Owainat counties ranked last among the counties in the study area, with (33) women.

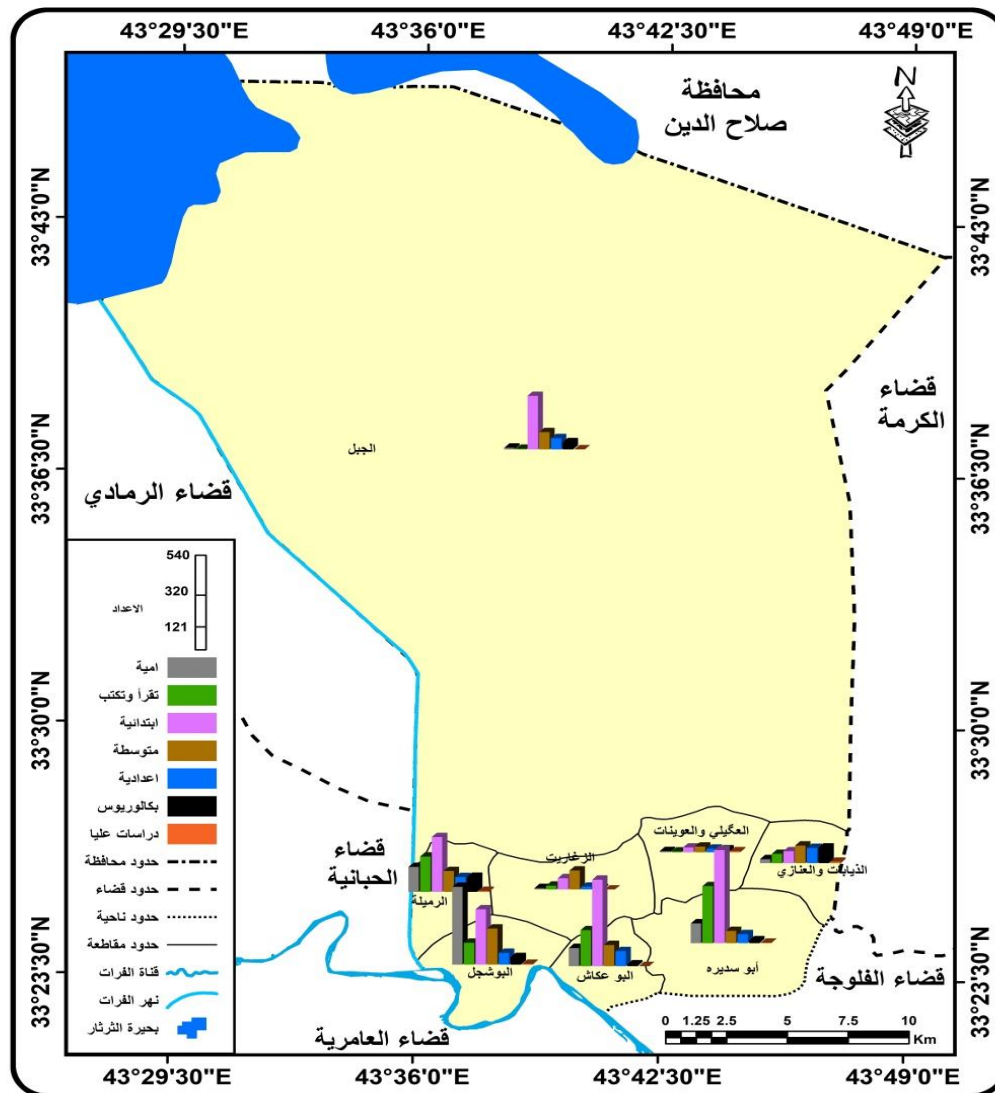
Table 3. Numerical distribution of the educational status of rural women in Saqlawiya district.

Place	Illiterate	Reads and writes	Primary	Intermediate	High school	Bachelor's degree	Postgraduate studies	Total
Rumaila	145	206	319	121	86	87	6	970
Abu Sedira	115	330	540	71	52	17	3	1128
Al-Musalaha and Al-Bouakash	105	208	500	122	87	10	0	1032
Albu Shajal	450	126	320	209	68	43	4	1220
Al-Dhiabat and Al-Anazi	24	55	70	103	89	91	9	441
Al-Ugaili and Al-Awainat	7	5	28	33	21	17	6	117
Zagharit	8	22	65	110	16	7	0	228
Al-Jabal	10	4	311	100	65	42	1	533
Total	864	956	2153	869	484	314	29	5669

Source: Based on the field study 10/10/2022

High School Graduates

The total number of women who obtained a secondary school certificate in the Saqlawiya district reached (484) women, with Al-Dhiabat and Al-Anazi counties ranking first with (89) women, and the counties of (Al-Masalha, Al-Boukash, Al-Rumaila, and Al-Bushjal) came in second, third, and fourth places with (87, 86, 68), respectively, Zagharit District ranked last, with (16) women.



Map 4. Spatial variation in the educational status of rural women in Tahia Saqlawiya.

Source: Based on Table (3).

Bachelor's degree holders

The total number of women who obtained a bachelor's degree in the Saqlawiyah district reached (314) women, and the Al-Dhiabat and Al-Anazi districts came in first place, with (91) women. However, the provinces of (Al-Rumaila, Al-Bushjal, and Al-Jabal) ranked second, third, and fourth, with (87, 43, and 42) respectively, while the province of Zagharit recorded the lowest total, with (7) women, to be ranked last.

Graduate Studies

With regard to women holding higher degrees (Master's, Doctorate) in the study area (Saqlawiya district), their numbers may vary from one province to another, so the total number of women

holding higher degrees reached (29) women. The provinces of Al-Dhiabat and Al-Anazi ranked first with (9) women, followed by the provinces of (Al-Rumaila, Al-Ukaili, and Al-Awainat) in second place with (6) women each, and the provinces of (Al-Bushjal, Abu Sedira, and Al-Jabal) recorded (4,3,1) women respectively. The provinces (Al-Masalha, Al-Bouakash, and Al-Zagharit) are among those with zero higher education certificates.

Spatial variation in economic characteristics of rural women

Studying the spatial variation in the economic characteristics of the population, the size of resources, and educational status has a relationship with the amount of income, the labor force, and the percentage of unemployed people in the population, as well as the occupational structure and services that individuals in society obtain¹¹. Women's economic activity and participation in the financial process may increase, as women's work depends on their demographic behavior and increases with the increase in the use of contraceptives. The relationship is a direct relationship, so women's economic activity increases when their use of contraceptives increases, and thus leads to a decrease in women's fertility¹². Despite the rise in women's participation in the market, the work in recent years with the practice of many professions, the involvement and inclusion of rural women in the labor market is limited where the rural women works were limited in the agricultural field. There is still more significant gap in the participation of rural women in the labor force¹³.

The practical situation of rural women

The developmental role of women and their integration into productive work is still below the required level, and the reason for this is the influence of social customs and traditions in rural areas¹⁴.

It is clear from Table (4) and Figure (4) that the practical situation of rural women at the level of the districts of Saqlawiyah district, according to the field study for the year 2022, shows the following:

1. Unemployed women (4310) were registered in the Saqlawiya district. They do not participate in work and, therefore, do not contribute to the economic life of the family. They are busy with domestic work without pay, and this reduces the degree of their economic and social effectiveness. In the overall general life of the family and society, this

¹¹ Abbas Fadel Al-Saadi, *Studies in Population Geography*, Dar Al-Maaref facility, Alexandria, 1980, p. 238.

¹² Same as previous.

¹³ Fawzi Abed Sahawneh, *Principles of Demography*, Jordanian Press, Amman, 1982, p. 87.

¹⁴ Fawzia Al-Attiyah, *Women and Work in Iraqi Society*, Journal of the College of Arts, Issue 37, Baghdad University Press, 1990, p. 95.

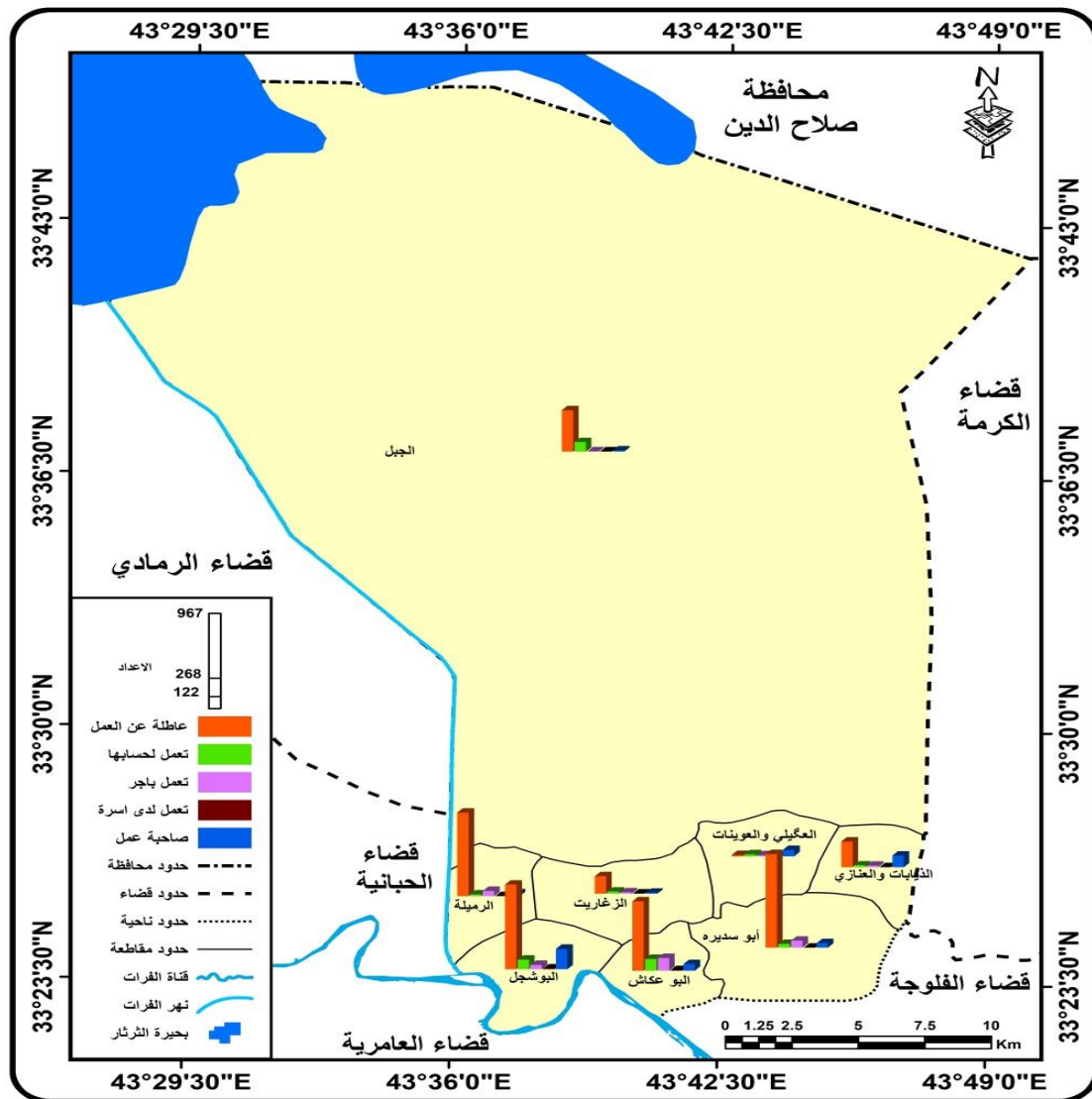
is high compared to the total number of women in the region. The study included (5669) women.

- It is clear from the same Table that the numerical distribution of the working status of rural women varies spatially from one province to another. Unemployed women ranked first in Abu Sedira District, with a total of 967 women, and Al-Bushjal and Rumaila Districts ranked second and third, with total of (873,864) women; then came the other provinces. The other is dependent on the total number of unemployed women and varies from one province to another. The more the total number of unemployed women increases, the more rural women becomes economically incapable of decision-making.

Table 4. Numerical distribution of the employment status of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district.

Place	Unemployed	Work for herself	Work for wages	Work for a family	Business owner	Total
Rumaila	864	19	55	2	30	970
Abu Sedira	967	39	73	1	48	1128
Al-Musalaha and Al-Bouakash	716	122	132	6	69	1032
Albu Shajal	873	98	44	8	211	1220
Al-Dhiabat and Al-Anazi	268	21	18	3	122	441
Al-Ugaili and Al-Awainat	14	22	12	8	66	117
Zagharit	180	23	15	2	11	228
Al-Jabal	428	98	3	2	12	533
Total	4310	442	351	32	569	5669

Source: Field study dated on 10/10/2022.



Map 5. Spatial variation in the employment status of rural women in Saqlawiyah district.

Source: Based on Table 4.

- The participation of self-employed rural women also varied, with a total of (442) women recorded. Al-Musallah and Al-Bouakash Districts came with the highest total of self-employed women (122), ranking first. Al-Bushjal and Al-Jabal Districts came in second place, with the exact total reaching (98) women, and Abu Sedira District recorded a total of (39) woman; while the rest of the provinces ranked last, varying among themselves because women work for themselves.
- It is clear from the Table that women who work for wages constituted a total of (351) women in the Saqlawiyah district (the study area), as the Al-Masalha and Al-Bouakash districts recorded the highest total of (132) women, while the Abu Sedira and Al-Rumaila districts recorded (54.73) women, ranked second and third, respectively. The rest of the

provinces ranked last, according to the total number of female workers employed in each province in government and private jobs.

5. Likewise, the numerical distribution of women who work with their families, whether in the field or handicrafts, without receiving payment for their work, varied. A total of 32 women were recorded in the district, with low numbers ranging from one province to another. The highest numbers were in the provinces of Al-Bushjal, Al-Ukaili, and Al-Awainat, with number of (8) women and the lowest number was one woman in the Abu Sedira district.
6. While the numerical distribution of the employment status of female employers recorded total of (569) women, Al-Bushjal province ranked first, with total of (211) women. In contrast, the provinces of (Al-Dhiabat, Al-Anazi, Al-Masalha, and Al-Bouakash) ranked second and third (122, 69), respectively, then the rest of the provinces ranked the last, as shown in Table (4).

Conclusions

1. The numerical and relative distribution of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district varies according to the rural districts of the study area. Al-Bushjal District ranked first with a percentage of (21.5) rural women, Abu Sedira District came in second place with a rate of (19.9) women, then Al-Musalhah and Al-Bouakash Districts ranked third with a percentage of (18.2) rural woman, followed by the rest of the provinces in turn.
2. The distribution of rural women varies according to the age groups in the study area, as the age group (12-24) recorded the highest total of (2511) from the rest of the categories to occupy the first place. The group (25-37) came in second place with a total of (1810), while the age group (38-50) ranked third (827), and the lowest number was recorded by the age group (51-63), with a total of (521) rural women, due to the standard health and economic situation in the study area.
3. The numerical distribution of the educational status of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district recorded illiteracy (864) women, while the total number of women who read and write was (956) and those who obtained a primary certificate registered (2153) women, which is the highest number compared to those who received an intermediate certificate (869) and high school certificates (484) and bachelor's degrees (314) and postgraduates (29).
4. The numerical distribution of the working situation of rural women in the Saqlawiyah district varies according to the provinces. The total number of unemployed women reached (4310) women, as they do not participate in the economic life of the family and are busy with domestic work. There were (442) self-employed women, (351) paid workers, and (32) worked for a family. Whereas, (569) women were registered as employers in the study area.

Recommendations

1. There must be studies that focus on aspects of the governorate and at the level of rural provinces, identifying the demographic characteristics of rural women and their differences and paying attention to studies that concern woman, who are considered half of society.

2. Paying attention to rural areas and providing all services, as well as paying attention to infrastructure, because the countryside represents the food basket for cities and the preservation of the national economy.
3. Providing job opportunities for rural women as much as possible, even if they are through simple handicrafts and small projects, with government support through cooperative societies and providing soft loans to achieve what rural women aspire to and to feel their active role in the family.
4. Schools must be built to meet the needs of every rural province and continue the educational journey of all rural people (males and females) to reduce the illiteracy rate. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning must take this into account.
5. Providing all community services (health and education) to rural residents and creating infrastructure such as paving roads and delivering electricity poles to all rural districts, as well as paying attention to providing water through water spouts.
6. Activating the role of the media and introducing rural residents to the provisions of the Islamic religion through visual and audio media, urging them and preventing them from committing acts of violence to which women are exposed, and working to find appropriate solutions and informing them of women's rights and their role in society.

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