

## The Economic and Social Problems of the Rural Community and the Methods of Facing these Problems

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### ABSTRACT

The rural community in Egypt represents a great importance whether in terms of population, as about 55% of the total population of Egypt live in it. Also, it is the source of producing food and raw materials on which most industries depend as well as it is a source of the workforce for all sectors. One of the fields and entrances of development of the countryside is highlighting the different problems from which the countryside suffers. The study aims to identify the economic, social and environmental problems and the other problems which spread in the Egyptian countryside and face the processes of rural development. The most important problems from which the Egyptian countryside suffers were: first: poverty, as the proportion of the population living below the local poverty line reaches to about 26% in 2013 according to UN report. The countryside of Asyut governorate is the poorest one at the level of the Egyptian governorates. Second: literacy, as the proportion of literacy in Egypt reaches to about 21.7% of the total population that reaches to about 67.052 million people in 2014 in the age group 10 and over according to the estimates of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. In addition, it is observed that literacy proportion in the governorates of Upper Egypt is higher than its proportion in the governorates of Lower Egypt. Third, unemployment, as the proportion of agricultural unemployment to national unemployment reached to about 33.15% in 2002, and it was increased to reach to about 36.72% in 2013. Then, health and the environmental pollution, as 98% of the villages suffer from the absence of sewage systems, and about 90 thousand citizens die every year due to the diseases resulted from water pollution. In addition, more than 30 million farmers have had dangerous cancerous diseases, kidney failure and liver disease. And then the problem of the lack of and pollution of irrigation water in several areas come. However, the social problems are represented in opulence and extravagance, social problems, youth problems, early marriage for females and divorce, as the study has shown that divorce cases in the rural areas of Upper Egypt's governorates are increased more than the divorce cases in the urban areas.

**Key words:** Egyptian countryside – economic problems – social problems – rural development

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### Introduction

The rural community in Egypt represents a great importance whether in terms of population, as about 57% of the total population of Egypt live in it. Also, it is the source of producing food and raw materials on which most industries depend as well as it is a source of the workforce for all sectors. This is why it was necessary to give an attention to the countryside and its development. Perhaps one of the fields and entrances to rural development is to highlight the various problems from which the Egyptian countryside suffers, in terms of diagnosing the contemporary reality of the Egyptian villages in terms of the economic and social situations in the countryside such as poverty, crime, health, environmental pollution, opulence and extravagance, social relations, youth and their problems and the agricultural policy and its repercussions on the countryside. This matter shall not be limited to search and study, but instead, it shall be placed with focusing on attention of the authorities in the state especially the executive and legislative authorities in order to develop the laws and legislations that restore the villages' status and guarantee the rights and interests of rural people, and to work on completing all the elements of developing the Egyptian villages to return to their earlier age as productive villages full of love, cooperation and peace in order to let good prevail over the whole Egyptian society.

### The Problem of the Study:

The difficulties and problems that face each society are various and ramified. Some problems are known and their impacts exchange to each other. Some of the reasons of those problems in the Egyptian countryside are the steady increase in population at rates exceed the rates of development and its impact on unemployment rates, the phenomenon of migration from rural to urban areas, the emergence of slum areas in rural and urban areas,

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the increase in the urban distance to the detriment of the agricultural lands and the emergence of health, environmental, economic and social problems that hinder the process of rural development.

**The Aim of the Study:**

The study aims to identify the economic, social, environmental problems and the other problems that are prevalent in the Egyptian countryside and face the processes of rural development.

**Research Method and Data Sources:**

The study has depended on the descriptive analysis to identify the different problems prevalent in the Egyptian countryside, as it has depended on the data published in the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and the different organizations, in addition to the data and information available in some of the websites of the electronic information network (internet).

**The Results of the Study:**

**Economic Problems:**

**First: the Problem of Poverty:**

Poverty is one of the most important problems that hinder the process of economic development in Egypt. Also, it causes a lot of social problems and negative phenomena in the society. The severity of this problem is increased in the rural areas more than urban areas.

The reason for increasing the proportion of poverty in Egypt is due the adopted economic policies that do not achieve the principle of justice in distributing wealth, which led to an increase in the spread of the phenomenon of poverty. The spread of poverty contributes to the outbreak of violence and the rise in crime rates in all its forms. Moreover, the proportion of the population living below the local poverty line reaches to about 26% in 2013 according to the report of the United Nations. The proportion of the population who get less than 2 dollars per day reaches to about 43.9%, and the proportion of those who get less than one dollar per day reaches to about 3.1% according to the same report. In addition, the countryside of Asyut governorate is the poorest countryside at the level the Egyptian governorates.

Source: the Geographical Targeting to Reduce Poverty in the Governorates of the Arab Republic of Egypt – the Regional Workshop on the effective use of statistics in policies 26-28/9/2012 – Amman Jordan – the Egyptian Experience.

The concentration of the poor in the governorates of Upper Egypt and, also, in the governorates of the lowest level of human development is clear in table No (1). The study has shown that poor people who live in large families and their fertility rate is high, which means that the dependency ratio is raised. The average of the size of family in the rural areas reaches to about 4.4 persons; however, this proportion reaches to about 3.9 in the urban areas at the level of the Republic.

**The Characteristics of the Poor:**

- The increase in the level of child labor, the decline in school enrollment and education dropout.
- The increase in the level of incidence of poverty in the families supported by women.
- The educational level of the head of family affects the situation of the family effectively in terms of poverty level.
- The poor are characterized by rates of contribution in the economic activity, and these rates are less than the corresponding rates of the non-poor.

**Table 1:** the distribution of the poor in the 1000 Egyptian province

Governorate	The number of villages	The number of poor in these villages	%
Asyut	234	1436795	29.4
Minya	310	1270324	26
Sohag	250	1268608	12
Qena	112	587743	4.7
East	55	227576	1
Giza	18	48811	0.6
BaniSweif	13	31162	1
Lake	4	5839	0.1
Aswan	4	2391	0.05
Total	1000	4879241	100

Source: *geographical targeting to reduce poverty governorates of the Arab Republic of Egypt -the Regional Workshop on effective use of statistics in the 26-28 / 9/2012-Amman Jordan– Egyptian experience.*

**Second – Illiteracy:**

Although Egypt’s adoption of the policy of combating illiteracy since 1976, as the number of illiterates then has reached to about 14 million citizens. The category targeted to eliminate their illiteracy is the category of

the age group from 15 to 45 years old. Eliminating one's illiteracy takes a period of time ranging from three to six months. It is mentioned that illiteracy was one of the main reasons for delaying Egypt's order in the report of human development, as Egypt has been placed among the nine countries that contain the greatest number of illiterates. This emphasizes the view of some of Egypt's intellectuals who declared that the proportion of illiterates in Egypt is approaching fifty per cent and not as what the official reports indicated that it reached to about 25.9% in 2013.

It is shown from table No (2) that the proportion of illiteracy in Egypt reaches to about 21.7% of the total population that reached to about 67.052 million people in 2014 in the age group 10 and above, according to the estimates of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. Moreover, the proportion of illiteracy among males reaches to about 15%, and about 28.5% among females. It is observed that the proportion of illiteracy in the governorates of Upper Egypt is higher than its proportion in the governorates of Lower Egypt, as it has reached to about 30.2%, 28.5%, 27.4% and 26.6% in the governorates of Assiut, Fayoum, Sohag and Qena, respectively. However, it is shown from the same table that the proportion of illiteracy decreases in urban governorates compared to rural governorates and the governorates of Upper Egypt, as it has reached to about 15.9%, 17.4%, 10.8% and 11.4% in the governorates of Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said and Suez, respectively.

**Table 2:** The number of illiterate population and their proportion in the age group 10 and over until 07/01/2014

Governorate	Population 01/01/2014			The illiteracy rate in% 01/01/2014		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Cairo	3586624	3528377	7115001	11,3	20,5	15,9
Alexandria	1869670	1816672	3686342	13,2	21,8	17,4
Port Said	258827	252199	511026	6,0	15,8	10,8
Suez	210307	234799	475076	6,1	17,3	11,8
Damietta	516570	500209	1016779	13,6	17,8	15,7
Dakahlia	2296733	2251307	4548040	14,3	26,7	20,4
East	2523709	2422115	4945824	17,7	31,0	24,2
Qalubia	1993141	1906626	3899767	15,4	28,4	21,8
Kafir El-Sheikh	1217648	1200680	2418328	17,8	34,9	26,3
Western	1832888	1800652	3133540	11,7	27,9	19,7
Menoufia	1539601	1469526	3009127	9,4	29,5	17,8
Elbehaira	2250375	2163700	4414075	17,5	37,6	27,1
Ismailia	452681	443131	895817	7,0	12,9	9,9
Giza	3958835	2823269	5782104	17,1	28,4	22,6
BaniSweif	1097510	1098572	2166082	14,7	32,5	23,5
Fayoum	1233822	1167413	2401235	21,3	36,1	28,5
Minya	1985418	1926295	3916713	14,1	28,8	21,3
Asyut	1636758	1586328	3223086	22,3	38,5	30,2
Sohag	1760758	1732675	3493433	19,1	36,0	27,4
Qena	1156846	1156357	2313203	19,6	33,6	26,6
Aswan	546697	543524	1090221	10,2	17,5	13,8
Luxor	443474	431373	874847	7,7	21,9	14,7
The Red Sea	157482	105754	263236	4,5	10,2	6,8
the new Valley	87704	83953	171657	3,3	16,1	9,5
Matrouh	173366	160812	334178	10,8	36,9	23,4
North Sinai	170116	159703	329819	4,9	22,0	13,2
south Sinai	84313	44149	128462	3,0	17,2	7,9
General total	34071878	32980140	67052018	15,0	28,5	21,7

Source: General Authority for Adult Education, the epicenter of information and decision support -2014

Table No (2) the Number of Population and illiterates and their Proportion in the Age Group 10 and above until 1/7/2014

The reasons for the failure of the plans of fighting against illiteracy to achieve their objectives have been, generally, represented in:

- Illiterates have no motivation to join literacy classes, as the proportion of the actual regulars in the classes has reached to about 30% despite the opening of large numbers of classes.
- Not identifying roles for the bodies and postponing roles identification to subsequent stages which led to the non-implementation by these bodies to their specific roles.
- The lack of funds, the rise in the cost of implementation and the weakness of popular participation.

#### Proposals for Eliminating Illiteracy:

- The necessity to adopt new ideas to eliminate that problem. In the forefront of those ideas are the ideas of taking advantage of the large numbers of university students and the necessity to replace the military education subject in the secondary schools with obligating students to teach a number of illiterates.
- Taking advantage of the large numbers of employees in some authorities that suffer from overcrowding by giving them leave with full pay in exchange for teaching a number of illiterates.

- Applying the same system on those enrolled in the public service for 150 pounds per month and exploiting their abilities to connect with citizens in marketing for this work.

### Third- Unemployment:

Unemployment is a problem requires standing and drawing attention as the reality emphasizes that unemployment rates are in a continuous increase, and everyone tries to find a way to get out of the crisis. But it is clear that this way moves away increasingly, as the Egyptian countryside witnesses an increase in the numbers of the unemployed in the last years, especially from the educated youth, and this is for several reasons including:

- The decrease in the area of the agricultural land that is in the possession of family, as it no longer suits the agricultural labor force, which was previously able to absorb all family labor, thus unemployment rates in the rural areas are less than unemployment rates in the urban areas.
- After the January 25 revolution, the vicious attack has occurred on the agricultural lands and their plantings by the concrete residential buildings instead of plantings. It is mentioned in some estimates that Egypt has lost about quarter million acres, upon which buildings were built, during and after the revolution. Buildings movement is still ongoing to the present time in a complete absence of the state.
- The absence of or the lack of the investments directed to the rural areas to establish projects able to accommodate the labor, as most of the investments were directed to the new cities and urban areas, and thus the rural areas have been deprived of the availability of fields for new job opportunities.
- Large numbers of workers in the companies and factories come out under the name of early retirement, after they were tempted by several thousands of pounds spent due to the crazy rise in prices, without investing them to provide job opportunities for them and their sons, and thus the unemployment rates have been increased.
- The difficulty to get job opportunities abroad whether in the Arab or European Countries, but the recent years have witnessed dispensing great numbers of the labor that migrate to some Arab countries especially from Libya under the Arab autumn revolutions, not spring, and the hint of some Gulf Countries to expel the Egyptian labor.
- The growth of some marginal activities to the detriment of productive activities as the direction to the works of brokerage, trade and speculation on the agricultural lands has increased. These works achieve significant gains for those who do them without any real addition to the Egyptian economy. That is why it is found that the winds of pseudo-urbanization have blown in the Egyptian villages. In addition, shops of different kinds have spread on them, especially to sell luxury and leisure goods, which helped to empty villages from their authentic Egyptian cultural heritage and they became inane with no meaning or value.
- Agriculture and working in agriculture was the solid ligament for the members of rural family, and also between the people of the same village, as the field of work is the same and the interests are common. Thus the interconnection and strength of family and society increase. But today, agriculture is no longer the predominant economic activity, as it is abandoned even by those who were brought up in it. In addition, the members of family have been divided to different fields and jobs, which weakened the social relations among family members as well as among the people of the same village.

Table No (3) shows the national and agricultural unemployment in Egypt and the proportion of the agricultural unemployment to nationalism. It is clear that it has reached to about 33.15% in 2002 and increased to reach to about 36.72% in 2013.

**Table 3:** National and Agricultural Unemployment in Egypt during the period (2002-2013)

Year	National Unemployment (million)	Agricultural unemployment (million)	Rate of Agric to National Unemployment (%)
2002	2.021	0.67	33.15
2003	2.241	0.69	30.79
2004	2.154	0.078	36.21
2005	2.450	0.69	28.16
2006	2.434	0.71	29.17
2007	2.135	0.73	34.19
2008	2.144	0.75	34.98
2009	2.378	0.79	33.22
2010	2.351	0.83	35.30
2011	3.183	1.1	34.56
2012	3.425	1.22	35.6
2013	3.649	1.34	36.72

Source: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics - Annual Bulletin collected to discuss workforce - different issues (2002-2013).

- There is no strategy for the country, in its direction and support to the small projects that reflects the value of the loans that have been paid to establish small projects in all the agricultural, industrial and commercial and

service activities. If these projects are achieved, they will accommodate great numbers of labor and absorb the numbers of the unemployed. But a lot of these projects are imaginary, and the loans are directed to completely other fields. Even those who believed and established projects, their projects doomed to failure. Also, the owners of these projects were entered the prison or they are still chased because there is no clear and specific strategy for the small projects in Egypt. It is shown from table No (4) the actual amount of money, of the country, spent on the small and micro projects during 2014, as business activity has occupied the first place in terms of the number of projects for the total projects by about 53% at a financing proportion reached to about 56%. The proportion of the projects of animal production for the total projects has reached to about 28% by funding reached to about 14% of the public funding, followed by service activity by funding reached to about 15% at projects' proportion reached to about 14% of the total projects. Then the industrial finance and the liberal professions by about 14%, 1% of the public funding, respectively.

**Table 4:** The actual outgoing micro and small enterprises, according to sectors of activity during 2014

Activity Sector	Outgoing (LE million)	Number Projects Thousand	% The number of projects for the year Total	% The amount of public funding for Total
Industrial	428.6	75.5	4%	14%
Trade	1693.9	94.984	53%	56%
The service,	457.9	24.119	14%	15%
Animal	411.5	50.725	28%	14%
Free professions	29.7	930	1%	1%
General total	3021.6	178.253	100%	100%

Source: Social Fund for Development- the Technical Office - Information Administration 2014.

#### **Fourth- Health and Environmental Pollution:**

The area of the countryside in Egypt has reached to about 3.3% of the total area. In addition, its population reached to about 57.4% of the total population, which requires giving a priority to the advancement of their situations in order to provide opportunities to a dignified life for them.

The environment or the field where more than 35 million farmers, who represent the productive forces whether at the level of food or manufacturing, live is full of pollutants and health problems.

It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Water Resources said that there are 90 thousand citizens, including 19 thousand children, die every year because of the diseases resulted from water pollution. The Ministry added that 98% of the villages suffer from the absence of safe sewage systems.

The government shall take the responsibility of injuring about 18 million farmers of bilharzia and about 25 % of C virus, kidney and liver failure, serious cancer diseases and infertility, as well as the damage to the environment, soil and water due to the excessive use of pesticides. In addition, the deprivation of the essentials of a dignified life such as clean drinking water and safe sanitation, as the Ministry of Water Resources has explained that about 98% of the villages suffer from the absence of sewage systems, and acknowledged wasting 14 billion cubic meters of water every year. This water is lost in the agricultural and industrial drainage. The Ministry mixes about 5.5 billion cubic meters of agricultural drainage water to reuse them in agriculture only, with the prohibition of using them in the drinking. Also, the Ministry acknowledged the continuous decline in water table as a result of the unjust water withdrawal, which causes harm to the supply of groundwater in the long term. Moreover, Egypt loses from 15 to 20 thousand acres annually as a result of the encroachment on the agricultural lands.

It is supposed that with the health progress, the rates of having diseases will decline, especially in the rural areas. But that did not happen (despite the rise in the expected life at birth for both males and females), as diseases increased, especially the diseases of hepatitis (C virus), kidney failure, cancer diseases, respiratory diseases, impotence and other diseases as Egypt recorded the first rank at the level of the world in having these diseases. The proportions of having these diseases are raised in the rural areas more than urban areas. One of the reasons for the rise in the rates of having these diseases is resulted from the environmental pollution in all its forms and manifestations in the Egyptian countryside, especially the watercourses such as canals and drains. These canals and drains became the favorite place for getting rid of the dead animals and birds. In addition, in these canals and drains the drainage of houses is drained off and the empty pesticide cans and other wastes are thrown until they became a source of having many diseases. The responsibility for this is common between rural people and the officials whether in terms of the decline in the environmental awareness of rural people about the seriousness of such practices, and not providing for them to get rid of wastes. Then, the absence of the governmental censorship, the end of the role of the state especially after the January 25 revolution and the complete absence of the state in all walks of life.

Then the pollution resulted from the excessive use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, fertilizers, growth regulators and hormones, as the Egyptian agriculture became a testing ground and permissible for using many pesticides that are internationally banned. That, also, has been increased in the light of the complete absence of

the state's role, after the January 25 revolution, such as the censorship over the markets where there is trafficking in the agricultural production requirements. As a result, serious diseases have been increased and threaten the health of the Egyptians, as well as the negative effect on the Egyptian exports such as vegetables and fruits due to exceeding the borders permitted in the proportions of the residues of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. That is a quick brief about the environmental pollution in the Egyptian villages and its effect on the health of rural people.

A part of the resources of the rural environment pollution is due to the methods of getting rid of the agricultural wastes. These methods are whether by burning, throwing in the waterways or others although these wastes are national wealth if they are used and recycled properly to produce organic fertilizers (compost) instead of the excessive use of the chemical fertilizers that are expensive and cause significant health damages. Also, these wastes can be used in producing nontraditional forage such as silage and others. All these things can be made easily by the Egyptian farmers and at the lowest cost but the absence of vision, the weakness of will and mismanagement are the reason behind that, despite providing all the constituents of taking advantage of wastes and recycling them, the matter that reduces the sources of the pollution of environment and achieves a high material return for farmers.

Furthermore, the public spending on health is estimated at about 1.8% in 2004. It was declined in 2006 to reach to about 1.3% of the domestic production. It reached to 5.2% in 2004, declined in 2006 to reach to about 3.8% of the total general budget of the state and reached to about 5.9%, in 2014, of the total government spending on health. Thus, Egypt occupies the rank No 166 at the level of the world. In addition, the number of families in the hospitals for population in Egypt has reached to about 17 beds for every 10000 citizens, and Egypt has occupied the rank No 56 in the world in this indicator. In Egypt, there is one doctor for every 357 citizens and Egypt has occupied the rank No 33 in the world in this regard. As for the per capita of the total expenditure on health care, the Egyptian per capita of the total expenditure on health reaches to about 112 dollars annually in the rank No 125 globally.

This refers to the deterioration of the quality of healthcare service in the governmental health centers and unites despite they are available, as the proportions of the shortage of the requirements of health services in them have reached to as follows:

- The shortage of the important requirements of medicines 52.1% in the urban areas and 82.3% in the rural areas
- The shortage of the equipment 51.6% in the urban areas and 70.3% in the rural areas
- The shortage of specialists 36.1% in the urban areas and 80.1% in the rural areas.

#### **Fifth- the Agricultural Policy:**

Since the eighties of the last century, the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture has issued its strategies. The first of these strategies was in the eighties, then in the nineties, and then until 2017, and finally the strategy of the Ministry to 2030. These strategies did not achieve more than 20% of their targets. The great catastrophe on the Egyptian agriculture was with the policies of the economic liberalization and the structural adjustment. These policies have caused damages more than benefits to the Egyptian agriculture. The enough evidence for that is the deterioration of the cultivated area and the productivity of the most important agricultural crop which is cotton, which was called white gold.

Working in agriculture became totally unprofitable under the increase in the costs of the requirements of the agricultural production without a corresponding increase in the price of selling the agricultural products. However, if there is an increase, the traders and jobbers are the people who primarily benefit. Those people are too many because of the destruction of the agricultural cooperatives that were considered the house of security and safety for the Egyptian farmers for long decades.

Under these situations and policies, farmers have become threatened with imprisonment as a result of the debts for development banks, or the hunger of farmers and their families because of the decline in the return of the agricultural production. Thus, it has become easy for them to leave the work in agriculture for any other work, and even alienate the agriculture land, sell it and invest its price in any other projects that bring more income for them. Some of the most important of these policies are:

1-The rise in fertilizer prices under a free market without protective standards for small farmers:

The crisis of the decrease and increase of fertilizers has been increased during 2014. This crisis is continuous for years, and during this year the government has raised their prices by more than 30% of the current prices. The price of one ton of fertilizer has been increased for about 500 pounds to reach to 2000 pounds. This last decision is considered a stab for the rights of small farmers and a model for the policies that are conflicting and biased to the interests of traders, as small farmers bear these increases and that leads to a decline in their income and an increase in the prices of vegetables and food for citizens. That is although Egypt's production of fertilizers reaches to 16 million tons every year and the annual needs of our agriculture do not exceed ten million tons. Fertilizers are produced by six companies: two of them belong to the public sector

and the other four belong to the private sector in the system of the free market. These companies get raw, gas and electricity at subsidized prices, and they prefer to export them abroad because of its prices that are higher than the prices of the domestic market, as the prices of the markets abroad reach, during this season, to about 400 dollars per ton.

2-The rise in the rents of the utilization of the reclaimed lands and the price of their titling:

Farmers were harmed when the Ministry of agriculture has raised the value of the rents of the land they reclaimed, as they dug wells at their expense and converted it from a barren dessert to a green oasis without any support from the state. They were surprised recently when the body of property has raised the rent of acre from 175 pounds to 1200 pounds in a year. Farmers emphasize that land do not give excess profit that can cover these rents. In the same context, the body of reclamation and reconstruction of the desert raises the prices of the land that has been handed over by it to the farmers harmed by the application of law 96 of 1992 from about 15 thousand pounds, for the piece whose area reaches to about two acres and half, to 50 thousand pounds.

3-The rise in the rents of the agricultural lands in a way more than what they were before applying the law 96:

The tenants of the agricultural lands suffer, beside the rise in the prices of production requirements, from a significant rise in the rents of the agricultural lands, as the price of renting one acre reaches, in some areas, to about ten thousand pounds in one year. In addition, the rent of one acre ranges, in most of the lands of the state, between four thousand and ten thousand pounds.

4-The rise in feed prices and the deterioration of its quality lead to a decline in farmer's income:

Poultry wealth in Egypt faces every year several dangers, especially with the approaching of winter. These dangers are represented in "bird flu", and this disease threatens the poultry wealth, in Egypt, of extinction and threatens the life of man himself. The Poultry wealth in Egypt is considered one of the constituents of the Egyptian economy, as the sector of meat consumption depends on it. Also, it is considered an alternative to red meat due to its cheap prices in Egypt, as the volume of investment in this field reaches from 15 to 20 billion pounds. In addition, More than 1.5 million Egyptian workers work in it, and more than 100 trades and professions depend on this industry. However, it suffers from a clear deterioration and randomness which results in a coming loss for the state and the investors of the poultry sector, to the detriment of consumers who buy whether poultry meat or eggs of high price and low quality. Moreover, poultry farming relies on randomness, and breeders cannot do a feasibility study for the project in order to improve it and to reflect its effect on the Egyptian economy. Therefore, the state must develop a system in determining feed prices in order to stabilize the price of poultry, which leads to achieving good profits and a balance between the cost and the selling price of poultry in the domestic markets, in order to export them in a good way. The main problem of poultry wealth in Egypt is concentrated greatly in the instability of the prices of feed ingredients and the variation in their prices in a significant way, as they rise and decline without taking into account the prices and the needs of market for white meat, and without a real study of market, which causes several losses.

5-The rise in the prices of pesticides and the absence of the control over their distribution lead to food contamination and the spread of epidemic diseases:

The use of pesticides has been increased significantly in a lot of the countries of the world, including Egypt, during the last two decades. It is mentioned that about 250 agricultural pests and insects, at the global level, have acquired immunity against most of the different types of pesticide. Moreover, it should be referred to that the problem of agricultural pesticides in Egypt ranges between the ill methods of the circulation of using pesticides, which allows the freedom of circulating and using pesticides in the Egyptian market, the matter with which the control over number and types of the crops, on which it is permitted to use a pesticide, becomes difficult. Also, it is difficult to follow-up and to observe the pesticide residues in the agricultural productions intended for consumption, as well as the period that is after harvest in the crops of vegetables and fruit, in particular, in addition to the encroachment, the wrong behaviors and the medical history of farmers and spray workers, which are very important and dangerous matters. In addition, they cause the spread of cancer, and the official sources estimate that the number of people having serious diseases such as kidney failure, virus (C), liver failure or cancer is increased to more than 8 million citizens.

6-Wasting the resources of the agricultural lands and its effect on the sector of agricultural, the rights of generations and on the future of the country:

The feature that Egypt has been characterized by since the dawn of history is lost and the quality and fertility of the agricultural lands, which were built up over thousands of years on both sides of the Nile, are wasted. Now, lands are lost easily, and the future of future generations and of our country is assassinated. This waste is due to building on the agricultural lands and the urban sprawl on them, which lead to the loss of more than one million acres over the last tens of years because of the corrupt rulers who are biased to businessmen, large owners and corrupt people. This resulted in turning the agricultural lands into moors and deceiving farmers to sell their lands to the traders who build residential towers and factories on them. In addition, farmers have been forced, before their low agricultural incomes, the deterioration of their standard of living and the lack of job opportunities to sell their lands in order to establish other projects help them to live, as the applied policies and the prevailing culture glorify profit. Before these policies that ignore building a secure future for Egyptians,

more than a fifth of the agricultural area is lost during the last fifty years. Despite the attempts of the state since the fifties of the last century to reclaim the desert and compensate the lost lands, but traders, future thieves and corrupt people have applied the same policies on the new lands.

7-The agricultural cooperatives in the Egyptian countryside:

The first period of the fifties of the last century until the end of the sixties witnessed a comprehensive control from the state over the agricultural cooperatives, which aimed to mobilize the productive energy and the agricultural assembly in attempts to increase the production, particularly in the production of cotton. There was exclusion for small farmers in the cooperative associations, which led to large farmer's control over the agricultural cooperatives in the local level of villages and their ability to evade the agricultural cycle. The transition period, which was named economic openness, witnessed at the beginning of the seventies of the last century a marginalization for the agricultural cooperatives and a continuation for the control of large farmers. Then, the period of applying the programs of structural adjustment witnessed a total exclusion for the agricultural cooperatives, especially after the transfer, of some roles of the agricultural association, to the banks of villages at the end of the seventies of the last century. This situation led to the deterioration of the situation of the agricultural cooperative associations. Although the agricultural cooperation is one of the important solutions, which can work on coming out of the crisis of the country and protecting the rights of farmers, especially under the limited resources and it also helps to treat some of the social imbalances, the deterioration of the stock and the social and moral balance, which came as a result of injustice and inequality in the various social and economic aspects, and the spread of poverty- but the practical reality and the methodology and policy of the state towards this sector emphasize that it goes to kill the dead buried in the corners of villages, and this dead is named the agricultural associations.

#### **Sixth- the rise in energy prices leads to the deterioration of farmer's income:**

The rise in the prices of gasoline and diesel has affected in the decline of farmers' income, as the rise in the price of plowing and irrigating lands as well as the effect of that in the rise of the prices of transferring vegetables and fruits. The development of the agricultural machines and the reliance of most of farmers on them have led to rising the costs of the process of agriculture starting from plowing until reaping. This has led to a rise in the costs of irrigation process that relies on diesel and electricity whose prices rose during 2014 to more than 50% in some areas and thus the incomes of tenants have been declined as a result of this rise.

The rise in the prices of energy to more than 70%, in diesel, gasoline and natural gas, has led to a rise in the cost of the agricultural production due to the rise in the prices of the agricultural requirements such as fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and others. It, also, has led to a rise in the price of the agricultural service due to the reliance of agriculture on the agricultural machines such as plowing tractors and the machines of irrigation and harvesting. The cost of transferring the agricultural crops has been increased by 25% and fertilizers by more than 30%, which has resulted in a lot of burdens on the Egyptian farmers who threaten to go on agriculture strike this year because of the great losses to which they are exposed. It is worth mentioning that the rise in the prices of petrol material will affect primarily in the smallholders and small farmers who already suffer from the problems of the unavailability of production requirements such as fertilizers and seeds, and the shortage and contamination of irrigation water.

#### **Seventh- the shortage and pollution of irrigation water in several areas:**

The last report of World Bank emphasizes that the shortage of water threatens more than 80 states and 40% of world's population drink water in which the simplest rules of health are not available. In addition, one of the disadvantages of the area where we live is the scarcity of water which is emphasized by most of the studies that tackled the subject of water crisis. The points of view in dealing with this issue have been differentiated, as some points of view release from a "narrow" economic vision. Water is a commodity that must make a profit, and then it must be sold to those who require it. Those people see that water is an element characterized by relative scarcity, as the quantities of freshwater available on the earth do not exceed 0.06% of the total volume of water. Under the steady population growth, the scarcity of water is considered one of the determinants of economic growth in general, especially the agricultural growth. If we are going to talk about agriculture and its problems, the awaited major disaster, which threatens the Egyptian agriculture, cannot be overlooked. This disaster is irrigation water, which began to emerge with the cultivation of the summer season of this year, as the severe shortage of irrigation water. So, how it is going? And how to deal with this disaster? Some of the estimates of experts refer to that half of the cultivated area in Egypt is threatened by desertification and drought. The disaster is great and the negative effects that are expected to be resulted in it are huge. However, the national deal with it is characterized by naivety, as the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam effects on Egypt and its water security. This matter is serious and threatens the whole Egyptian society, so there should be a quick move to stop this danger in spite of permitting other things, especially after signing Sudan's last convention.

It is worth mentioning that water problems in Egypt range from not providing irrigation water, drinking water pollution and the lack of sanitation services... etc. Some of the most important water problems for

Egyptian farmers, which affect mainly on their agricultural production and on the economy as a whole, are the problems of irrigation and drainage. There are general problems relating to irrigation water. These problems are repeated in all the governorates and villages in the north and south of Egypt. The main problem of irrigation is always limited to the shortage of the quantity of irrigation water, it does not reach sufficiently to the farmers of the ends of canals and it is little in the main canals. Also, it is limited to the multiple collapses in the sides of the canals as a result of the malpractices of farmers, the expansion in reclaiming the lands that are outside the zipper, the lack of accurate data on water requirement for the annual crop composition as a result of the freedom from the agricultural cycle, the absence of justice in distributing irrigation water among the governorates and not taking the area of the agricultural lands into account when distribution, as well as not purifying canals at the appropriate times, the absence of an administration to develop irrigation in each governorate which leads to a clear lack in irrigation water and the absence of an administration for water guidance in each governorate. Corruption affects in turn in the poor planning, as distinction is made between large farmers and small farmers while presenting the local services. Sometimes farmers are forced to use sewage water in irrigation as a result of water shortage. In addition, the streets of villages and people's homes floats above a pool of sewage water and ground water, this threatens of a real collapse for these homes.

### **The Social Problems:**

#### **First- Opulence and Extravagance:**

With the rise in poverty rates, it is expected that rationalization in consumption and the reduction of opulence and extravagance would be increased, but what happens is the opposite. There is sufficient evidence on opulence and extravagance in villages which is what happens in weddings and funerals, where the great excessiveness in dowry and wedding costs. As for opulence and extravagance in funerals, they may be somewhat less than what happens in marriage and weddings, but there are some villages still keen to establish solace marquees, bring Quran readers, slaughter sacrifices or cook food (trays contain food) by the people of villages, and solace may last for days. However, a lot of these rituals and practices have no origin in any doctrine or religion, but they fall under the subjects of traditions and bogus appearances.

#### **Second- the Social Traditions:**

The strength of the social relations among the people of villages is one of the most important things that characterize the Egyptian villages, as one feels that the people of villages are one family, united, collaborators and coherent in all situations and crises as well as differences and distances narrow among them. All these meanings and strong relations have been embodied in the impossibility to find a wedding and funeral in the same day in a village, but the wedding is postponed until after the fortieth anniversary in order to take into account the feelings of the others. These things even happened between the rich and the poor of villages, as they take into account the feelings and interests of each other. But now it is common and familiar to find that the stage of the bride is just few meters from solace marquee in the same street, and perhaps even in the same family, and people come out of the solace marquees to complete the evening and binge at the wedding party. This is a change force that changed the type and the form of the social relations in the Egyptian villages and even in families. After the fathers in rural families were the ones who owned the reins of power and influence on the rest members of family, because of their need to fathers and that no one especially from the sons can disobey the orders of his father, the situations have been turned especially after the economic emancipation of sons away from families. Those who migrated and worked abroad have returned with money to build separate houses away from families, and no fathers or other persons have authority over them, which led to the weakness of the interrelations within families.

#### **Third- Youth and their Problems:**

Youth are the wealth owned by any nation that seeks progress and advancement, provided that the investment of those youth is improved in terms of educating, training and preparing them in order to be good citizens. In spite of all the problems from which the Egyptian youth, in general, and the rural youth, in particular, suffer. Moreover, the youth in the Egyptian villages are not luckier than the others, as their suffering from the problems of unemployment, poverty, the high prices and the inability to society. Some of those youth preferred to try the experience of the illegal immigration to the European countries in order to escape from the painful reality and the dark future even if the price of this adventure is their lives and this is what happened to a lot of them, as they died by drowning on the open sea. There is no doubt that a part of the responsibility for this rests with the state, which failed to provide a dignified life for those youth in their country and their villages. The reality of youth in the Egyptian villages provokes to grief as a result of the case of loss in which they live, as there is no work from which they can get a livelihood, guarantee a decent life and occupy their time in. In addition, there is no youth center able to accommodate all the unemployed youth to empty their energy in sports or cultural activities and there is no society able to embrace those youth and compensate them as it happens in

the high-end and developed countries, and thus the youth have nothing but deviation in all its forms and manifestations such as violence, crime and addiction.

#### **Fourth- the Social Structure in the Egyptian Countryside:**

A number of the aspects of the social structure in the Egyptian countryside could be monitored as follows:

- The widening of the distance among the social classes in the rural areas and the increase in their number. The class gradient in the rural areas have become very similar to the social class gradient in the urban areas in terms of the number of its social classes, and the widening of the distance among them.
- The ownership of agricultural lands and the affiliation to certain families have not become the basis for determining the class situation, but new determinants have been entered. The most important of these determinants are the volume of the material wealth of a person, which he obtained in any way whether legal or illegal, the ownership of projects, education, being in leadership positions, working in policy, the state of house and having entertainment and private cars.
- The weakness of the linkages and relations that controls the social structure due to the rise of the personal interests and the individual disputes over the interests of the community and family. In addition, the old people have no longer receive the same amount of respect and appreciation that they were receiving before, differences and quarrels have been increased even inside the same family and the informal mechanisms of the social control (reconciliation committees) have been weakened.
- Some Egyptian villages have become attractive to a number of the migrants from the nearby cities due to the rise in the rents of houses in cities compared to the rural areas as well as the provision of a lot of services in these villages. This has led to a cultural blending between the rural areas and urban areas, the aspects of bogus urbanization have appeared in villages and villages have been taken out of their known cultural identity, as a lot of rural people have started to imitate those who come from the urban areas in some of their behaviors and actions that do not suit the rural culture.
- Perhaps one of the factors that helped to weaken the social structure in the rural areas is youth emancipation from family control, especially in the marital choice which was done from the family, or even from the other families in the village, which was supporting the linkages and strengthening the social structure by the relations of lineage and intermarriage as well as blood relations. In addition, the outer marriage, whether outside the family or outside the village, has become the dominant feature of the marital choice.
- Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the disintegration of the social structure in the rural areas also is the disintegration of the extended families, which were the dominant type of rural families and the emergence and spread of the simple families, as sons' independence, after their marriages, in their own families, but perhaps in private homes away from the family home, if they are not, in some cases, outside their villages and the residence becomes in a city.

#### **Fifth- Early Marriage for Females:**

The "early marriage for females" represents a form of violence against women, as young girls bear the responsibility of several activities resulted from the establishment of marriage relationships. These marriages are done without their will and they are not qualified psychologically or physically to bear the consequences of this relationship. The African commission for the harmful practices that affects women and children defines early marriage as it is any marriage happens before the age of 18 years old, i.e. before girls get ready psychologically, physiologically and physically to bear the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing.

#### **The Current Status of the Phenomenon and its Volume**

It is observed that it is difficult to get completely reliable statistics in terms of early marriage, as most of marriages are not registered and are not official, which causes a small amount of information about the marriages under the age of 14 years old. Moreover, early marriage is considered a feature of the rural communities, as about 36% of the total number of wives in the rural families were married under the age of 16 years old while the proportion of the females who married under the legal age in the urban areas reaches to about 1.9%. The General Census of Population has indicated that about 11% of the females in the age group (16 – 19 years old) are currently married or were married.

#### **The Causes of Early Marriage for Females:**

The increase in the proportion of early marriages –especially in the rural areas- is due to a number of reasons, including

- The desire of rural people to have a lot of boys and get rid of the burdens of girls
- The economic reasons: poverty remains one of the most important factors behind early marriage, as parents get money or properties in-kind in return for or as price of bride.

The religious factors are one of the most important factors of the prevalence of early marriage in the Islamic societies as a result of the prevalence of tribal society concepts

- Customs and traditions: and the fear for honor as early marriage has become common because it represents some concepts such as virginity, chastity and the control over the instinct of sex in women and then the principle of early marriage is the best way to prevent the occurrence of any scandals before marriage and preserve virginity which is one of the basics of marriage in the religious concept.
- Supporting family ties and the desire of parents to marry off their sons early to prove their manhood and assert the control.
- Some families make their young daughters, who did not reach the legal age, marry wealthy husbands, whether Egyptians or Arabs, who have the ability to meet the conditions set by girls' families on husbands.

*The Damages of Early Marriage:*

- The rise in divorce cases as a result of the absence of marital adjustment
- Depriving girls of their rights to choose their husbands
- Positioning girls in the situation of social responsibility before they reach the stage of maturity
- Health problems for mothers as a result of repeated pregnancy and childbirths
- The increase in women's reproductive age, which causes an increase in the number of the times of childbearing and leads to the deterioration of their health and the health of their children
- The negative effects on the sexual health
- The negative effects on the reproductive health, as the weight of baby relates to the extent of mother's maturity and mother's experience
- Genital mutilation
- Maternal deaths
- Child deaths
- The deterioration of the psychological health of women
- The increases in the proportions of education dropouts as girls leave schools in an early age to marry.
- The increase in the proportion of young widows
- Abusing and insulting women and girls and the deterioration of their humanitarian conditions

One of the most painful causes of early marriage for girls is marrying them off for economic reasons, which represents an underestimation of women's humanity and dealing with them as a commodity for achieving economic benefits or marrying them off just to get rid of the social and financial burdens.

Hence the importance of having a law for the protection of female children appears and the importance of following up the implementation of this law in a real and realistic way appears so that we can avoid the gap between law and application. This gap exists and it is supported by the male society which looks at women in a low way and considers them as creatures with no rights and that they are private properties for men and men can use them as they wish. In addition, women have to bear, be ordered, obey and marry in an early age to achieve the different purposes -which will never make them happy- of their families -who are the closest people to them- and they have no right to object or complain.

**Sixth: Divorce**

Divorce is a social psychological problem. It is a general phenomenon in all societies and it seems that it spreads increasingly in our societies in the modern times. Divorce is "the most hated halal" because of its negative effects in the disintegration of families and it increases enmity and hatred. Also, it has negative effects on children and then several social and psychological effects starting from the psychological disorders to the deviant behavior, crime and other things.

*The Reasons for Divorce:*

- 1-Marital infidelity: most of the analysts of that phenomenon, especially when it concerns to the Arab and Muslim reality, agree on the impossibility of the marital relationship after infidelity, especially if it is occurred by wife.
- 2-Incompatibility between husband and wife: includes the intellectual compatibility, the compatibility of personalities and natures and the emotional, social and educational harmony. There is no doubt that the concept of compatibility always remains a relative concept and that the age difference may cause the spread of polygamy that is strong reason for the existence of strong conflicts between husband and wife.
- 3-The frequent repetition of the word of divorce: a lot of men trivialize the word of divorce and divorce their wives for trivial reasons to which wives may have no relation. This is associated, in the most cases, with some social customs that require a serious attention in order not to end many marital relations as a victim of these customs.

- 4- The economic problems, including the high cost of dowries and the accumulation of debts: when debts accumulate, the problems and conflicts also aggravated between husband and wife, which may lead to their divorce.  
The low financial level of husband compared to his wife, the low family income and the economic difference between husband and wife create conflicts within families, as the strongest party desires to impose his/her control on the other party in terms of the financial situation.
- 5- The parental involvement in the marital specificities: the problems that arise between husband and wife may be simple and sometimes trivial, but they may not be so from the perspective of parents and then problem became sophisticated and their solutions became elusive.
- 6- Having more than one wife and not to achieve justice between them: polygamy itself may not be a reason for divorce, but the main reason is not achieving justice between wives, which raises malice and hatred not only among women but also between woman and her husband, as the lack of justice causes the feeling of jealousy, and if woman is unable to get rid of this feeling, she prefers divorce.
- 7- Husband's exaggeration in absence from home: husband may be forced, for several reasons, to be absent from home all the day and until a part of night, but if this absence have reasons justifying it, such as work, it may cause a deep gap between husband and wife, which in turn leads to sharp conflicts between them, and these conflicts may not be ended except by divorce.
- 8- The weakness of the moral consciousness of woman: it has become possible for woman to impose herself on husband and know him by resorting to the use of phone, which may lead to a distrust and suspicion between husband and his wife and therefore they resort to divorce.

*There are other several reasons for divorce:*

- 1- The disharmony between the natures of husband and wife.
- 2- Husband's insult to his wife.
- 3- Husband's control and dominance within the family
- 4- The husbands do not take into account the feelings and emotions of their wives.
- 5- The husbands resort to beating as a means of understanding and conflict resolution.
- 6- Pathological jealousy that reaches to the extent of suspicion and abusive interpretations.
- 7- Bad selection.
- 8- Relatives' intervention.
- 9- Dissatisfaction with marriage.
- 10- The lack of trust between husband and wife.
- 11- The frequent travel continuously.
- 12- The participation of the relatives of the two parties.
- 13- The difference in propensities and the educational level.
- 14- Addiction
- 15- The age difference between husband and wife.
- 16- The intense hatred between husband and wife, and hatred may be due to marital infidelity, violence or selfishness.
- 17- Falling in love.
- 18- The lack of commitment to the religious values.
- 19- The mutual hatred between the relatives of husband and wife and the inequality between them.

*Some of the bad effects of divorce on women are:*

- 1- The psychological disorders: women suffer, after marriage, from psychological disorders as a result of the significant change that has occurred in their lives.
- 2- In addition to these disorders, women suffer from a terrible social blockade, as society looks at them as remiss and blame them for the failure of the marital life.
- 3- The financial need, and the tragedy of divorced women does not end at the limits of the social tension but it exceeds it to the financial need which represents one of the most dangerous problems faced by divorced women who embrace their children.
- 4- The deviant behavior: personalities differ from each other as well as their reactions, towards the suffering; differ according to several effects including family education, the cultural level and the extent of coherence of the members of family who shelter divorced woman after her return to her parent's house.

*The effects of divorce on children:*

- 1- Children's homelessness: the first things the children lose after their parents' separation are safety, shelter and the quiet home that overshadows them, where they feel comfort and reassurance. But when divorce occurs, their lives are turned and they leave their homes where they were born or their fathers leave home and leave a great void for them.

- 2- Juvenile delinquency: the word of juvenile refers to the age group that runs between the age of late childhood and puberty. Psychological and social studies emphasize that there is a close relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency, considering that delinquency is a social phenomenon results from a defect in the upbringing after the disintegration of family.
- 3- The early involvement of the divorced people's children in the labor market: parents' separation often leads to father's abandonment, as father is considered the first person responsible for spending, and he stops to satisfy his children's material needs.

*Some of the certain dangers for working children in specific work places are:*

- Construction sites where heavy lifting, which may cause fractures, is imposed on children.
  - Petrol stations where children spend long hours in the smells of petrol that causes cancer.
  - Streets where they are exposed to physical violence from their peers or from older people.
  - The ugly exploitation by employers.
- 4- School dropout: This is one of the most important social effects resulting from divorce. There is no doubt that the sensitive psychology and delicate feelings of children are easily affected by everything happens in home.
  - 5- Family disintegration: the collapse of its children and the society's loss to one of its cells are one of the most dangerous effects resulting from divorce, considering family is the basic unit to build the society and as much as family forms proper human, the society would succeed in consolidating the pillars of stability, and advancement and prosperity would be possible in it.

It is clear from table No (5) that divorce cases in the rural areas of the governorates of Upper Egypt are increased more than the divorce cases in the urban areas. Also, it is shown that the numbers of divorces in the rural areas of the governorates of Daqhliah, Sharqiah, Kafr El-Sheikh, Gharbiah, Menoufia and Bheirah are increased more than the numbers of divorces in the urban areas of those governorates.

**Table 5:** Divorce certificates, according to the Governorates urban and rural areas in 2012 in Egypt Unit: No

Statement	Divorce certificates		
	Attend	Country	Total
Cairo	31213	-	31213
Alexandria	12915	312	13227
Port Said	2929	-	2929
Suez	1708	-	1708
Damietta	1908	847	2755
Dakahlia	2941	8511	11452
East	1953	6003	7956
Qalubia	6111	2936	9047
Kafr El-Sheikh	1954	2040	3994
Western	2533	5686	8219
Menoufia	1507	3124	4631
Elbehaira	2427	5170	7597
Ismailia	1649	1084	2733
Giza	11368	4806	16174
BaniSweif	714	2702	3416
Fayoum	964	3192	4156
Minya	900	3907	4807
Asyut	861	2662	3523
Sohag	921	3508	4429
Qena	1000	4582	5582
Aswan	790	1628	2418
Luxor	378	620	998
The Red Sea	636	0	636
the new Valley	124	152	276
Matrouh	731	0	731
North Sinai	547	0	547
south Sinai	107	0	197
The total	91789	63472	155261

Source: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics - Vital Statistics- Egypt in figures.

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