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**Social Development
in Jordan**

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Social Development in Jordan

Table of Contents

Table of contents	i
List of tables	ii
list of graphs	iii
Introduction	iv
Theoretical Background	1
Measuring social development	3
Social development in Jordan	7
Indicator of social development	8
Summary and conclusions	22
Research agenda for social development	23

List of tables

Table 1 : Selected Social indicators 1960 - 1990	7
Table 2 : Selected Economic indicators 1960 - 1990	8
Table 3 : Percent change in Health indicators	10
Table 4 : Percent change in Education indicators	12
Table 5 : Percent increase for selected indicators of General standards of living	17
Table 6 : Percent increase in selected Economic indicators	21

List of Figures

Figure 1 : Health indicators, 1960 - 1990	9
Figure 2 : Population per physician , 1960 - 1990	9
Figure 3 : Education indicators. 1960 - 1990	11
Figure 4 : General standard of living indicators, 1980 - 1990	13
Figure 5 : Women's labor force participation, 1980 - 1990	14
Figure 6 : Economic indicators, 1960 - 1990	16
Figure 7 : Economic and Health indicators, 1960 - 1990	18
Figure 8 : Economic and Education indicators, 1960 - 1990	19
Figure 9 : Economic, General standard of living, and women's labor participation	20

Introduction

This report is a study of social development of Jordan: 1960 - 1990. The paper consists of three parts. Part one deals with some theoretical issues of National development, defines social development, and the way it's measured. Part two reports and summarizes the results of the Jordanian experience in social development. Relevant indicators of health, education, general standards of living, Gender equality, and economic dimensions of development are reported and analyzed. Part three summarizes the results of this reports and discusses the areas of research needed to be done which have policy implications for social development.

I am grateful for the National Center for Educational Research and Development for providing the opportunity to do this research at the center, special thanks are extended for the president of the (NCERD), Dr. Victor Billeh for his support and encouragement. Thanks also to Ms Rana Zubi for her assistance in the graphs used in this report.

M.S

Theoretical Background

In this part of the report, a brief theoretical discussion of the concept of national development in general and social development in particular will be presented.

The study of national development has preoccupied the concerns of social scientists, international development agencies, and heads of states for the last four decades. The overriding objective of these efforts was to find ways to improve the socio-economic well being of third world countries. Very often, the direction of this change was to reproduce the developmental experience of advanced industrial countries in the Third World as fast as possible. This process is usually referred to as national development.

National development is commonly used to indicate change with progress in the economic, political, and cultural level of societal existence. However, most of the efforts were geared at indicating economic growth and development. The other aspects of national development were assumed to follow once economic development (growth) has been achieved. More recently, (mainly due to the failure of such efforts) attention has been paid to what can be called social development. The main point to be mentioned here is that national or societal development is a complex and multidimensional process. The complexity of this process does not stem only from the complexity of human society, but also from the interrelation between the internal and external economic and political environment.

However, much of the research monitoring societal or national progress has mainly focused on economic indicators of development (usually Gross National Product (GNP) or derivations from it), leaving out other important dimensions or giving them a secondary role. It is suggested here that relying on the economic dimension alone or giving subservient role to other indicators in assessing the developmental experience of countries is inadequate. A real understanding of the progress of societies must address the economic development or progress as well as the dimension of social development. So what is meant by social development ?

The concept of social development shall be used to refer to the changes or progress in the living standards of the population. The change or progress is in the direction of the improvement of the various dimensions of the population's well-being. This conception of national development concentrates not only on the basic needs of the people but also other needs that go beyond the mere necessities. The social development approach recognizes that the overall developmental efforts must be geared toward the betterment of the welfare and the well being of individuals and groups in society. In other words, people become the objective of developmental efforts or they become an end in itself.

In more concrete terms, our conceptions of social development, although incomplete, entails increasing overall wealth of the population with a more egalitarian distribution of wealth and income that results in widespread population access to socially necessary goods and services. These goods and services include adequate food, education, health, housing, and gender equality.

The concept of social development puts the well being of the people as its concern. While this assertion might seem redundant or simple enough, it is often ignored or not paid enough attention to. Concern over and interest in economic matters have overtaken those of social development. The emphasis and interest on the social dimension of development has arisen for many reasons. First, the developmental experience of Third World countries in the last four decades demands reconsideration for the focus of studies and re-examination of the relationship between economic and social development as defined above. Many countries with relatively high levels of economic growth and development have levels of social development lower than countries with much lower economic development levels but with relatively high levels of social development. This is the even more difficult question: can economic growth be managed in the interest of the people? If the answer is in the affirmative (which I believe it is), then one needs to look at alternative policy strategies and plans to do so. This point brings us to another important question: what is the relationship between economic growth and social development? Any realistic or reasonable view to the relationship indicates that economic growth is a necessary precondition for social development. To put it differently, without economic growth, the social objectives suggested by the social development approach can not be satisfactorily achieved or

realized. However, it must be pointed that the link between economic growth and social development is not automatic. There must be an emphasis on economic growth that is sustainable and equitable. In the final analysis, improvement in the area of social development is the real test of whether economic growth has been transferred into improving the well-being of the people or not.

The second reason for the growing interest in social development is that it is an end in itself. After all, the central concern of human activity is to improve the quality of life. But more importantly, the attainment of high level of social development (healthy, nourished, well-educated population) can contribute tremendously to better economic growth and productivity contributing in turn, to better life in the future, or better levels of social development.

In sum, the social development approach to assessing progress in national development focuses on the outcome or the attainment rather than on its potentiality (through proxy measures such as GNP per capita). Furthermore, it is development of the people that should satisfy everyone's needs, and provide opportunities for all.

Measuring Social Development

Traditional measures of the progress of nations have mainly used economic indicators such as Gross National Product per capita (GNP/C). There are two main problems in relying solely on such measures. First, GNP/C conceals the variation in the way it is distributed. It does not tell us much about how income or wealth is distributed or about the concentration or dispersion of wealth and income among the population. Second, and more importantly, income per capita reflects mainly the potential, rather than the actual welfare. The advantages of social development is that it focuses on the actual welfare achievements rather than the potentiality of welfare.

There are two ways in which social development can be assessed. First, through the creation of an index of social development that comprises the relevant indicators and provide a summary of the performance of all the indicators. This is a preferred option, but the fact that this is a case study makes that statistically difficult and theoretically irrelevant. It best can be done in a comparative setting. However, factor analysis was performed to assess the relative importance of the indicators that can

make up the index. Second, social development can be assessed by individual item analysis by the level and change in the relevant indicators. Ideally, one can include as many indicators as possible for a comprehensive appraisal of social development. However, the lack of such data makes that objective unattainable. Even if data are available, too many variables might confuse the analysis. The key issue here is the trend and the emphasis. There are several dimensions of social development that can be represented by some key indicators. The dimensions of social development that will be discussed here are: health, education, general standard of living of the population, and gender inequality. Each dimension and key indicator will be discussed below.

Health indicators

There are four health indicators that will be used in this analysis. Life expectancy at birth refers to the number of years a new born infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life. Life expectancy has an intrinsic value in itself - a long life is desirable. It is also considered a good proxy for the health care system. So, the greater the life expectancy, the higher the level of social development.

Infant mortality rate refers to the number of infants per thousand live births, in a given year, who die before reaching one year of age. Infant mortality rate is a widely used indicator of development. The ability of a population to keep their infants away from death before they reach the age of one is a testimony to its health care and nutritional system. Therefore, the lower the number of infants who die before the age of one, the better the level of social development.

Population per physician is calculated by dividing the population by the number of practicing physicians qualified from a university level at medical school. This indicator is important in that it shows the extent to which medical advice and treatment is available to the population. Consequently, the lower the number of population per physician, the better the health system and hence its social development level.

Calorie supply per capita is defined as calorie content of per capita net supply of food per day. This indicator is used as a proxy of the nutritional level of the population. Although protein supply per capita is a better indicator, but there is a scarcity of data on this indicator. The higher the Calorie supply per capita, the better the level of social development.

Education indicators

There are two indicators used to assess the educational dimension of social development. They are: Adult literacy rate and the secondary school enrollment ratio. Adult literacy refers to the percentage of the population at age 15 and over that is able to read and write, generally at the third grade level.

Literacy rates are only a crude reflection of the education dimension but it attests to the ability of schools to extend education to its population. The higher literacy rates, the higher the level of social development. Secondary school enrollment ratio refers to the gross enrollment of all ages at secondary level as percentage of school - age children which is generally considered to be 12-17 years. This indicator is more reflective of the degree of access to education especially of those at school age. The greater the ratio of secondary school enrollment, the better the level of social development.

Gender equality

There is one indicator that will be used to reflect the degree of gender equality. Female labour force participation refers to the female labour force as percentage of total labour force. Although this indicator might not be the best indicator of gender equality (i.e income differentials might be better indicator), it is certainly an important measure of female participation in public life and to gender equality in general. So it is assumed that the greater the female participation in the labour force, the better the level of social development.

General standard of living

There are two indicators to be considered in the area of general standard of living. Unemployment rates reflect the percent of people who are eligible for work and not

employed. Poverty rate refers to the percentage of people whose income is below poverty line. These two indicators are very important in assessing the well-being of the society. They are believed to have an impact on all other dimensions of social development. Unemployment and poverty restrict the ability of individuals to have good education, decent health care, and sufficient nutrition. So the higher their rates, the lower the level of social development or the lower the progress in social development.

Economic indicators

The report will be incomplete if we did not include some important economic indicators. Most of those indicators are directly related to social development. These important economic indicators are Gross National Product per capita, percent people living in urban centers, percent labour in agriculture, and external public debt as percentage of GNP. The importance of per capita income is that it indicates command over economic and other resources, but also reflect the health of the overall economy. The significance of external public debt as Percentage of GNP is that it reflects the degree of dependency on foreign countries which is related to the overall level of development in the country.

All the above mentioned indicators to measure progress in social development suffer from one major common problem. Most of these indicators reflect national averages. These averages conceal the differences and disparities between different groups (such as social classes) and different parts of the country (such as rural - urban). Different social groups have different life expectancy, infant mortality, access to health care, education ... etc. The same can be said about urban rural areas. However, this problem is not prohibitive from assessing the overall progress in social development in the country in the absence of data about the different groups and areas.

In the next section, the level and progress of social development will be documented. Whenever possible, comparisons will be made with other relevant reference groups.

Social development in Jordan: 1960 - 1990

In this section, we will present a summary of the change and progress in all social and economic indicators and then analyze the relationship between them. Table 1 presents a summary of the data for social indicators' and Table 2 presents a summary of the data for economic indicators. The data are for the years 1960, 1970, 1980, 1985, and 1990 or for the nearest year available, but not more than on or two years distance.

Table 1
Selected social indicators: 1960/1990 *

Indicator	Year					
	1960	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Infant mortality rate	111	86	82	65	54	45
Adult literacy rate	32.0	59.0	62.0	68.0	75	74.2
Population per physician	5900	2680	2250	1500	1140	1200
Calorie supply per capita	90	92	90	97	121	121
% women in labour force	5.3	5.5	6.1	9.0	11.4	9.9
Secondary school enrollment	0.25	38	50.6	67.3	63	62
Life expectancy at birth	50	54	59	65	64.2	66.9
% population below poverty level	-	-	-	15	15.5	18
Unemployment rates	-	-	-	3.5	6	18

Table 2
selected economic indicators, 1960-1990 (1)

Indicator	Year					
	1960	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
% labour in agriculture	43.9	33.8	28.0	11.5	7.8	7.4
Gross National Product/C*	184	350	520	1470	1560	1200
% Urban population	42.7	49.6	52.9	60.0	64.2	68.1
External debt as % of GNP	-	24.0	33.0	38.7	70.9	94.0

* GNP/C is expressed in US dollars.

Indicators of social development

Health indicators

Infant mortality rates. Infant mortality rates along with life expectancy are two of the most commonly used indicators in assessing the level of social development. As can be seen from Table 1 and Figure 1, a great progress in the reduction of infant mortality rates took place between 1960 and 1990. By 1990, it was reduced almost by two thirds of its level in 1960, and approximately by half between 1970 and 1990. However, the most significant progress was made between 1975 and 1990. Infant mortality rates declined by average reduction rate of 14% between 1960 and 1990. (see Table 3).

Life expectancy in Jordan has risen by 23.4% between 1960 and 1990 (from 50 to 66.9). The greatest gain in life expectancy took place between 1960/70 (8% increase) and 1975/80 (10.1% increase). There was a light decline and loss in life expectancy between 1980/85 (by 1.2%) but it was retained by 1990.

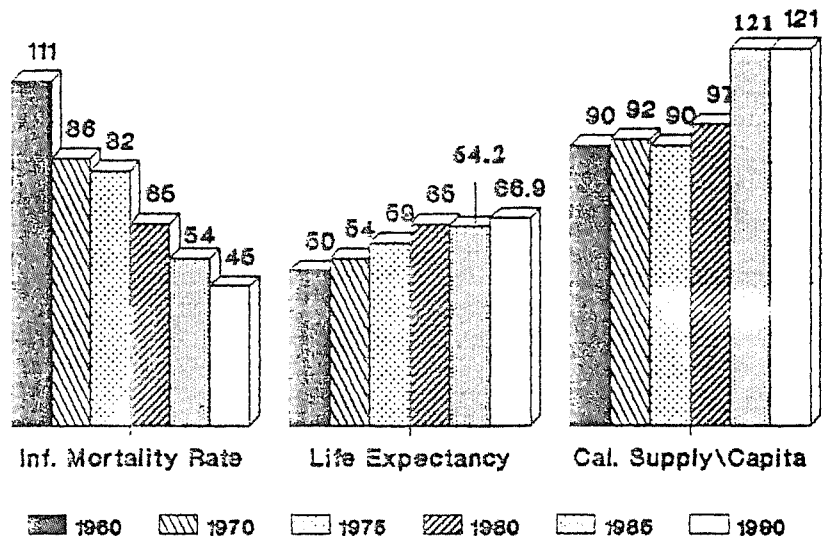


Figure 1: Health Indicators, 1960-1990
 Infant Mortality Rates, Calorie Supply
 Per Capita, and Life Expectancy

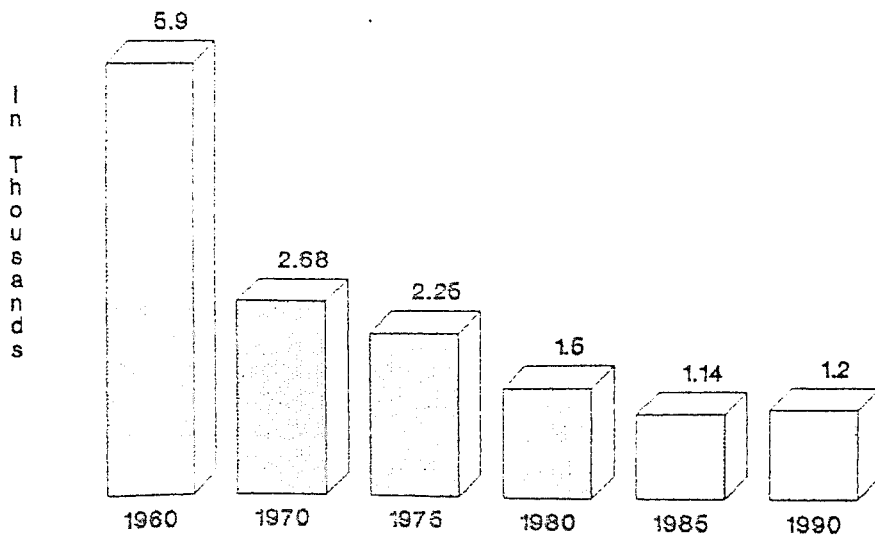


Figure 2
 Population Per Physician: 1960-1990

As for calorie supply per capita as percent of recommended diet, Jordan started off in 1960 with a relatively high value and continued to make progress till 1990. However, a small decline was experienced between 1970/75 and no gain was made between 1985/90. The largest increase was between 1975-1985. Calorie supply per capita increased by more than a third in 1990 since 1960 levels. However, Jordan remains 21% above the amount of the recommended diet.

Population per physician (see Figure 2, Table 3) experienced significant change between 1960 and 1990, but generally remains relatively high. In 1960, there was one physician for every 5900 people. In 1990 it is one physician for every 1200 people. The reduction rate of the number of people per physician was nearly 80% between 1960-1990. This indicates a very positive and significant progress in this area. The most gain took place between 1960-1970 (54.5% reduction rate) and 1975-1985 (28.7%). However, a slight reversal of this trend took place between 1985 and 1990.

Table 3
Percent change in health indicators

Variable	Change	Year					
		1960/70	1970/75	1975/80	1980/85	1985/90	1960/90
Inf. mortality	Reduction	22%	.05%	20%	16%	16.6%	59.4%
Life expectancy	Increase	8%	5.5%	10.1%	-102%	4.2%	28.4%
Population per physician	Reduction	54.5%	16%	28.8%	28.7%	-5.3%	79.6%
Caloric supply/C	Increase	2.2%	-2.1%	7.7%	27.4%	0.0%	34.4%

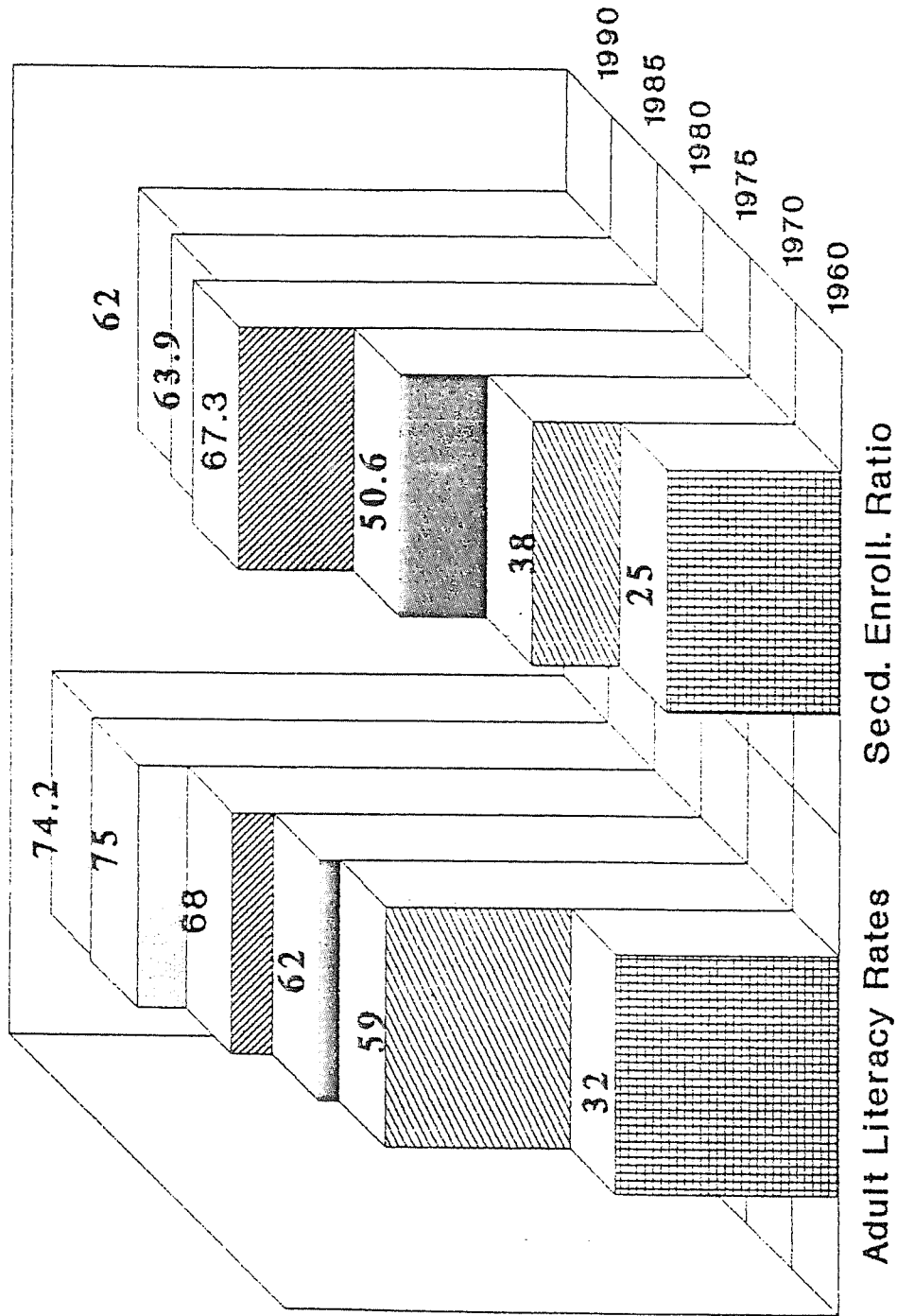


Figure 3: Education Indicators
 Adult Literacy Rates and Secondary
 Education Enrollment Ratio, 1960-1990

Education indicators

Adult literacy. Rapid improvement in education has sharply increased the ability of Jordanian people to read and write. The literacy rates increased by 131% from 1960 to 1990 (from 32% in 1960 to 74.2% in 1990). The greatest gain in literacy took place between 1960 and 1970 and it continued to grow at a relatively high rate between 1970 and 1985 (see Figure 3, Table 4). But as with other indicators, adult literacy experienced a slight decrease between 1985-1990 by 1.0%.

Table 4
Percent change in education indicators

Indicator	Change	Year					
		1960/70	1970/75	1975/80	1980/85	1985/90	1960/90
Adult Literacy	Increase	84%	5.5%	6.5%	10%	-1.0%	131%
Secondary Education	Increase	52%	33%	33%	-3.42	-2.9%	148%

Secondary education. This indicator has experienced an overall significant increase of over 148% between 1960 and 1990, (see Figure 3, Table 4) which is very high by all accounts. The greatest gain in secondary school enrollment was between 1960 and 1980. This trend is slightly reversed between 1980-1990. This reversal is consistent with trends for other indicators of social development.

General standard of living indicators

In spite of the tremendous gain in the above indicators of social development, the remaining indicators do not show such progress. In the contrary, they reveal and uncover a negative trend in the overall progress of social development in Jordan.

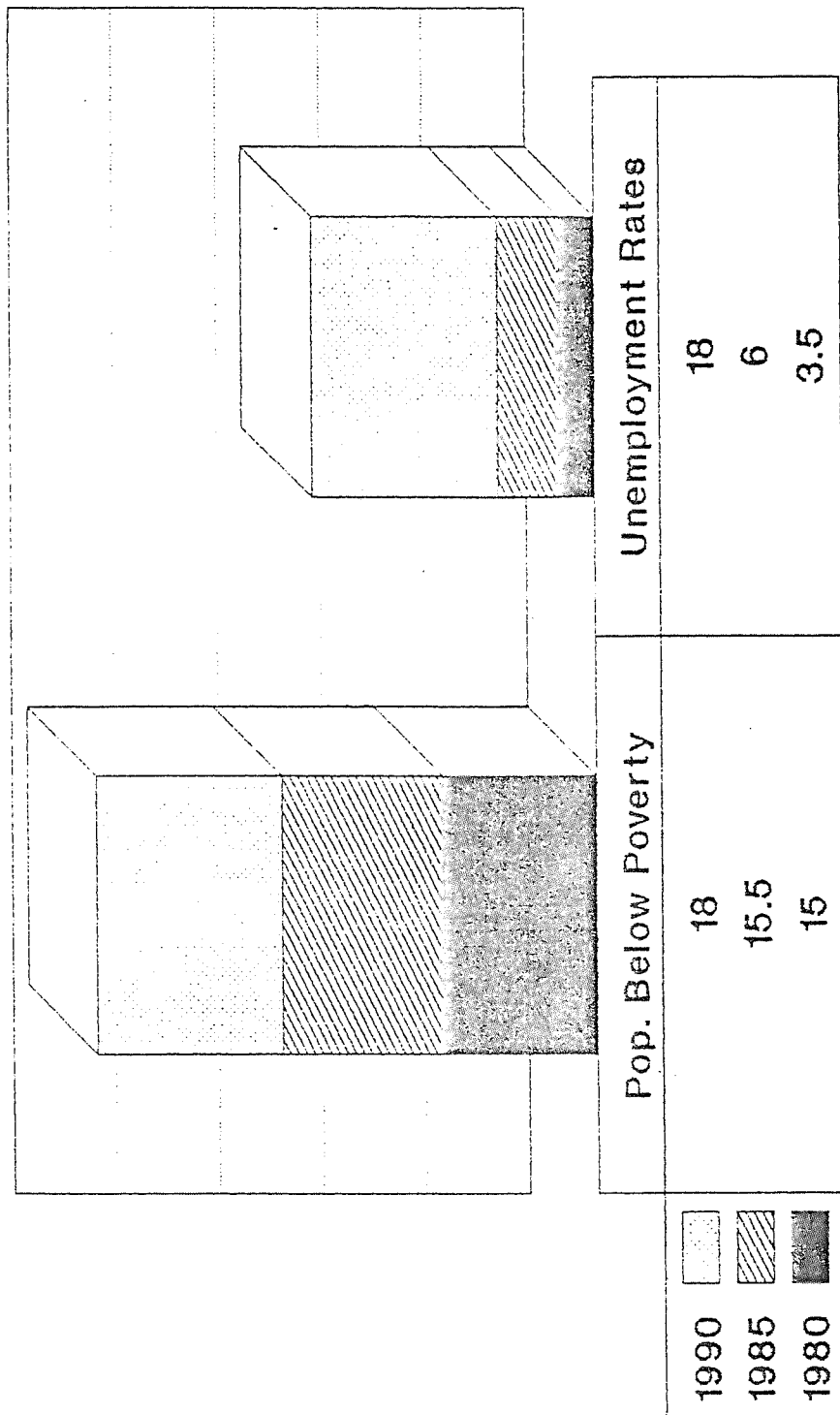


Figure 4: General Standard of Living
 Population Below Poverty line and
 Unemployment Rates, 1980-1990

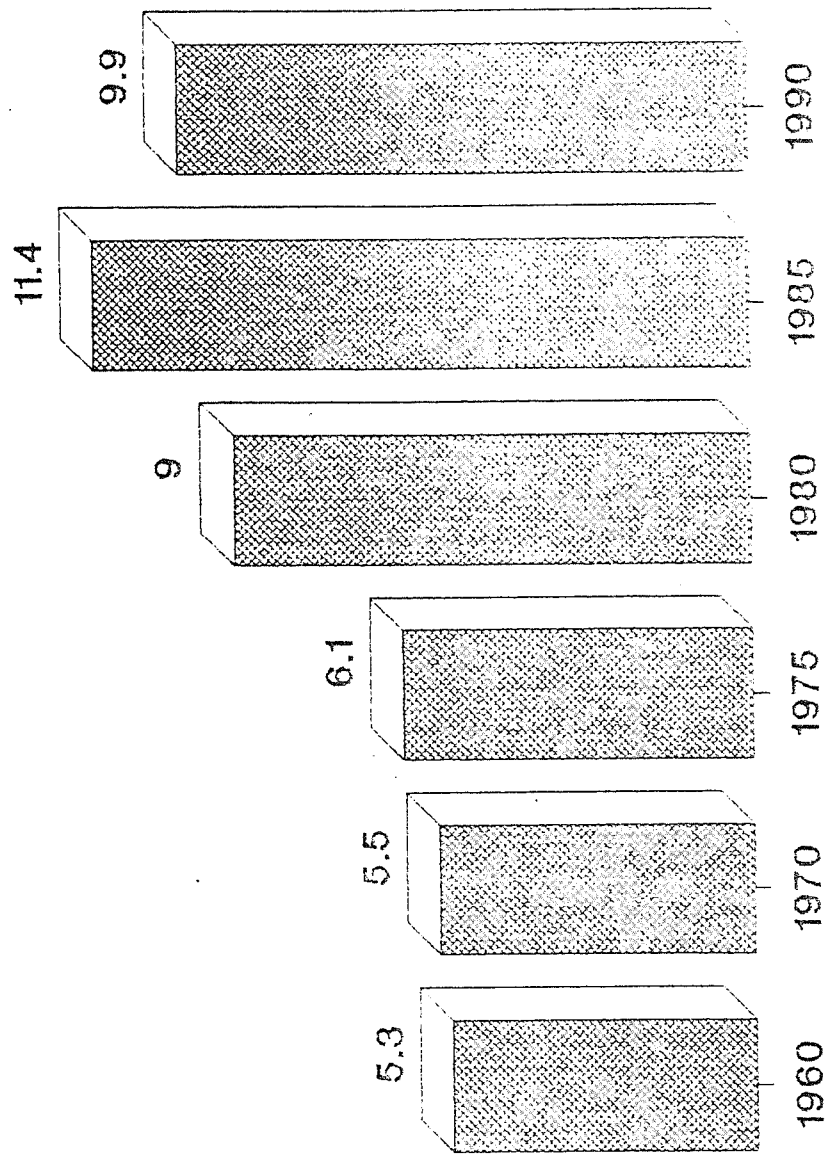
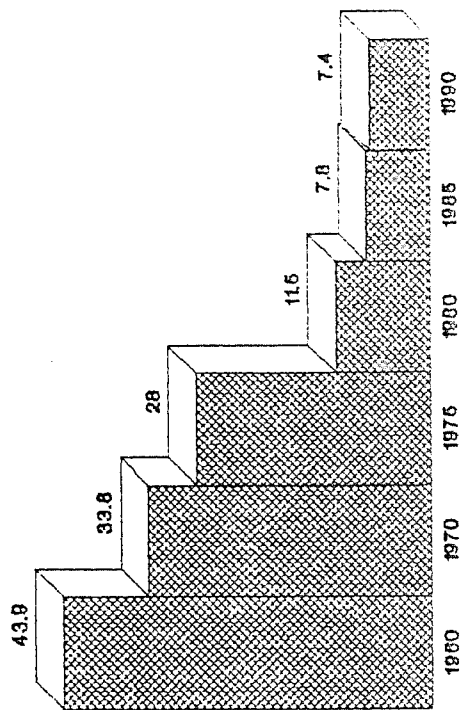


Figure 5
Women's Labor Force Participation
(1960-1990)

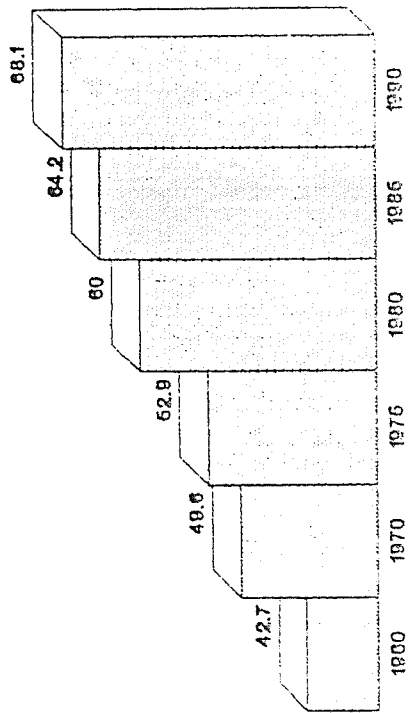
Although data for these indicators is less reliable and might not be totally accurate, it is the only data available. The important thing here is the trend that they reveal (see Figure 4, Table 5), population below poverty data indicate that the percentage of people who are below the poverty line has increased by 20% from 1980 to 1990. It rose from 15% in 1980 to 18% in 1990. The highest increase took place between 1985 and 1990. Unemployment rate has also risen dramatically between 1980 and 1990. It increased from 3.5% in 1980 to 18% in 1990. However, the greatest increase took place between 1985 and 1990. The trends in both unemployment rates and population below poverty rate are alarming and might constitute the greatest threat to the gains made in other dimensions of social development in the last three decades.

Gender inequality

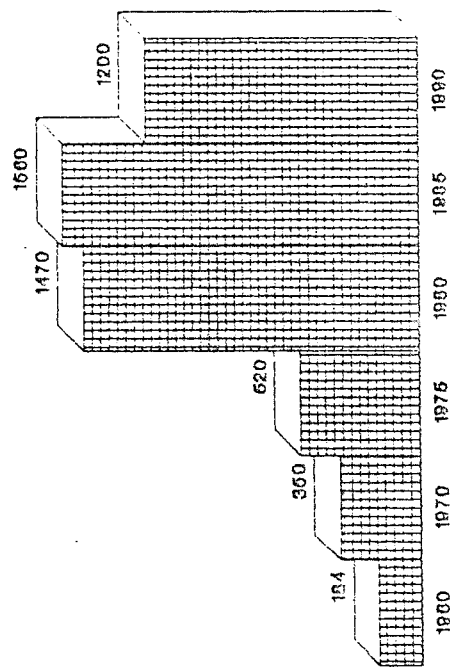
It is hardly possible to talk about social development without addressing gender inequality or women's position in society. Gender equality is crucial to development in general and social development in particular. It is not only that women should be treated equally at all levels, which should be reflected in indicators of social development, but also the role that women can and do play in development. A healthier, more educated, more nourished women means a healthier, more educated, more norished and consequently developed society. Female participation is only an indicator that can be used as a proxy for women's presence in public life. Table 5 and Figure 5, indicate that the overall progress of female labour participation is small and slow. The highest participation rate that women reached in 1985 is only about 23% of the highest female participation (in previously socialist countries) and about 29% of the world average. However, women made some significant gains between 1960 and 1980. Unfortunately, these gains were not sustained between 1985 and 1980. In the contrary, there is a 13.2% decline between 1985 and 1990. The overall increase between 1960 and 1990 was over 81% which is still significant.



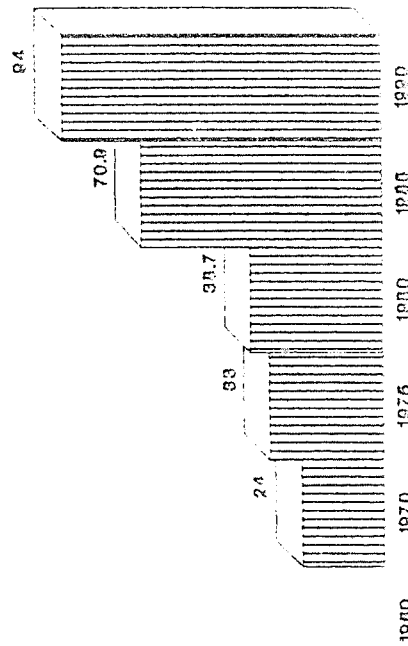
Percent Labor Force in Agriculture



Percent Urban Population



Gross National Product Per Capita



Debt As Percentage of GNP

Figure 6: Economic Indicators, 1960-1990

Table 5
Percent increase for selected indicators of general standard of living

Indicator	Change	Year					
		1960/70	1970/75	1975/80	1980/85	1985/90	1980/90
Population below							
Poverty line	Increase	-	-	-	3.3%	15.2%	20%
Unemployment Rates	Increase	-	-	-	71%	200%	4.4%
Women's Participation	Increase	3.8%	10.9%	47.5%	26.6%	-13.2%	87%

Economic indicators

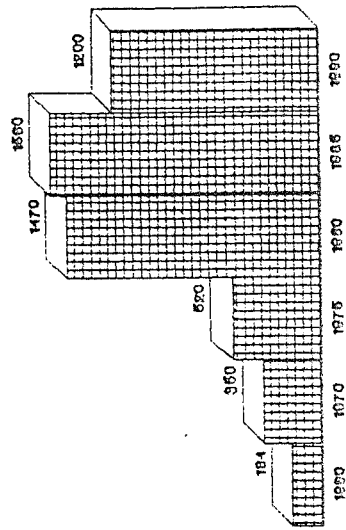
Although we have data for four economic indicators, two of them will be discussed for their direct relevance to social development. These are income per capita and external public debt as percentage of GNP.

Gross National Product per Capita

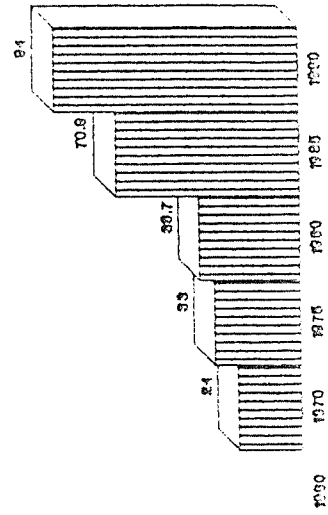
This indicator is important in two ways. First, it is important in its own right because it represents the major indicator which approximates the ability of individuals and groups to command over economic resources. Second, because of its intricate relationship to indicators of social development, GNP/C increase or decrease is likely to have its impact on education, health and other areas.

The increase in per capita in Jordan (see Figure 6, Table 6) has witnessed dramatic growth in the last 30 years reaching its peak in 1985 of US\$ 1560 when it was only US\$ 184 in 1960. The overall increase in per capita income between 1960 and 1980 was 552%. The growth of per capita income was high between 1960 and 1985. However, the trend did not continue since 1985 and there was a decrease of per capita income of -24% in that period. This significant reduction of per capita income will have serious consequences for the level of development in other dimensions also.

Gross National Product Per Capita (1960-1990)



Debt As Percentage of Gross National Product: 1960-1990



Infant Mortality Rates, Life Expectancy, and Calorie Supply Per Capita: 1960-1990

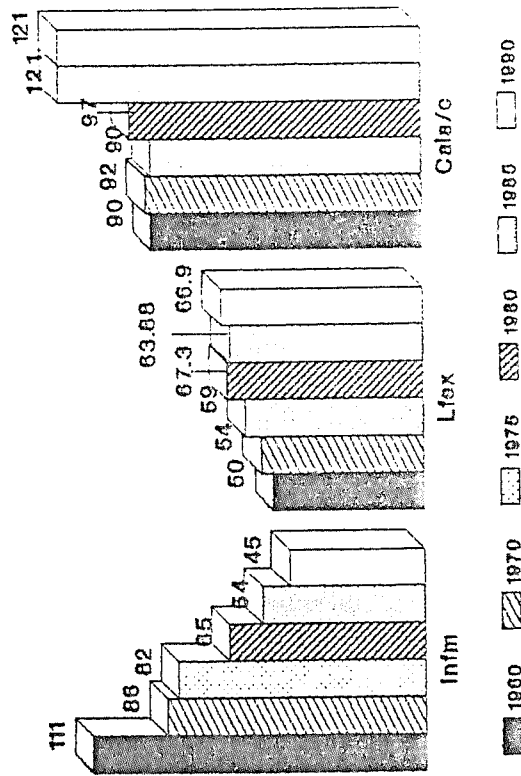
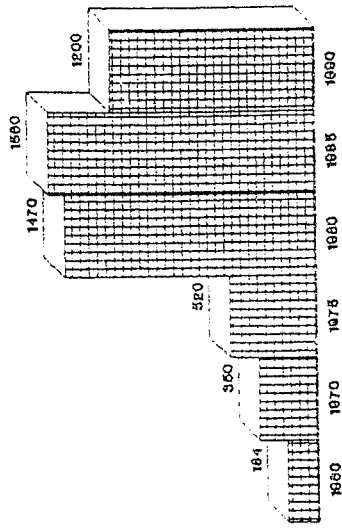


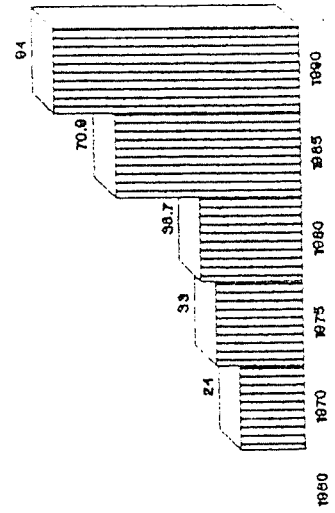
Figure 7

Economic and Health indicators, 1960-1990

Gross National Product Per Capita
(1960-1990)



Debt As Percentage of Gross
National Product: 1960-1990



Adult Literacy Rates and Secondary
Education Enrollment Ratio, 1960-1990

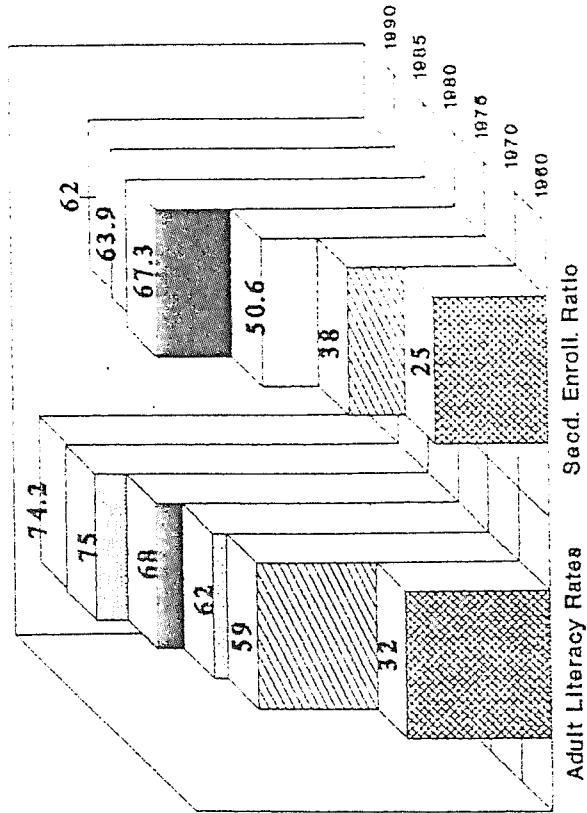
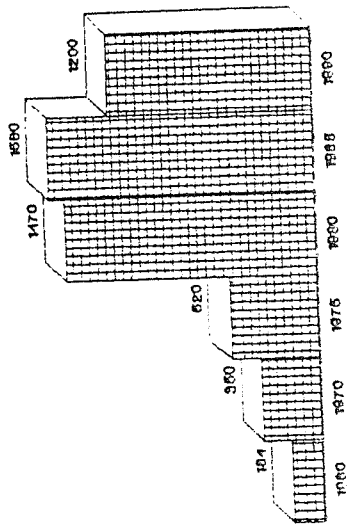


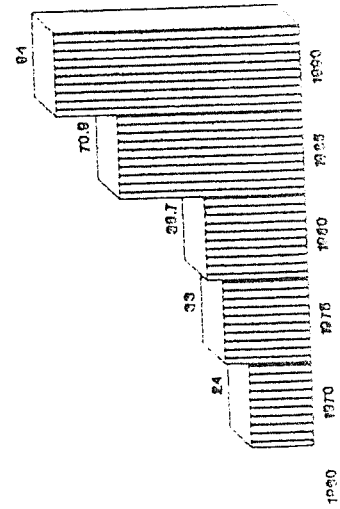
Figure 8

Economic and Education Indicators, 1960-1990

Gross National Product Per Capita
(1960-1990)



Debt As Percentages of Gross
National Product: 1960-1990



Women's Labor Force Participation,
Population Below Poverty Line, and
Unemployment Rates; Various Years

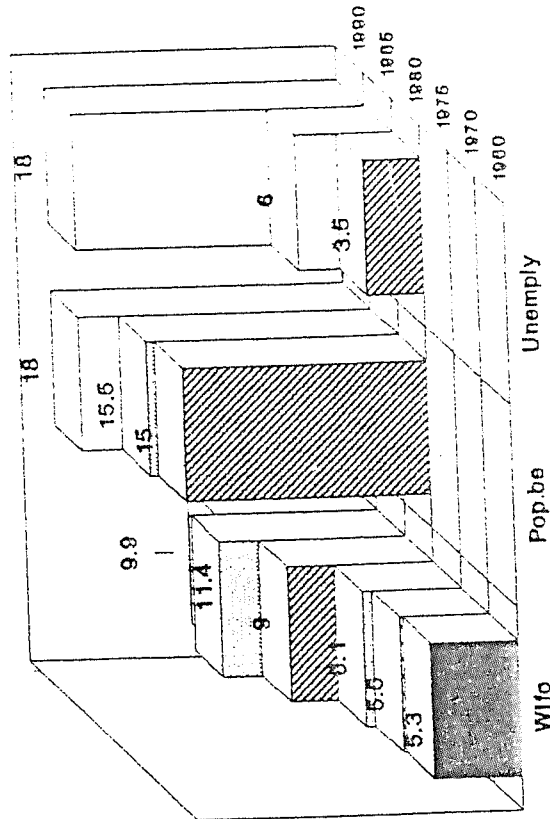


Figure 9
Economic, General Standard of Living
and Women's Labor Force Participation

External public debt.

Figure 5 and Table 6 indicate, Jordan's external public debt as percent of GNP increased very sharply between 1970 and 1990. It grew from 24% to 94% of the Gross National Product which amounts to a 291% increase. The largest increase of external debt was between 1980 and 1990 (it increased by 60% between 1980/85 and by 33% between 1985/90) which incidentally was the decade where growth in GNP recorded its lowest growth rates (it increased by 6% in 1980/85 and declined by 23% in 1985/90). Also the amount of increase in external public debt the smallest when GNP/C increase was largest in 1975/80.

Table 6
Percent increase in selected economic indicators

		Year					
Change		1960/70	1970/75	1975/80	1980/85	1985/90	1960/90
GNP/C	Increase	83%	48%	180%	6%	-23%	552%
External Debt	Increase	-	37.5	17%	60%	33%	291%

The relationship between economic and social indicators

A careful examination of the trends in both economic and social indicators shows that the relationship is strong and direct (see Figure 7 - 9). It is evident that the dramatic increase in GNP/C has had a positive impact on every indicator of social development. It is also clear that when GNP/C fluctuates so do the indicators of social development. The same trend can be depicted for external public debt and social indicators. Its increase did have a negative impact on social development indicators. It can be said that social development progressed the most when GNP/C growth was the highest and external public debt grew the least. The highest growth of social development took place between 1970 - 1985 which happened to be the peak of economic development.

However, social development stagnates or regresses when the economy slows down or declines and when external public debt increases sharply. This trend begins in 1980 but sharpens between 1985 and 1990. Five social development indicators show signs of decline: literacy rates by 1%, secondary education enrollment by 2%, life expectancy by 1.2%, population per physician by 5.3%, and female labour force participation by 13.2%. Two indicators also increase significantly in the same period: they are population below poverty line by 15.3% and unemployment rates by 200%.

Summary and conclusion

This part summarizes the findings of this research, presents the major conclusions, and discusses the implications for future research relevant for development policies.

The first major conclusion that can be drawn is that Jordan has a level of social development that is high by the standards of the Arab region. There has been a strong emphasis on education in Jordan. Literacy rates were raised from 32% in 1960 to 74.2% in 1990. Secondary enrollment ratio also has increased from 25% in 1960 to 62% in 1990. The country has also made considerable progress in health. Since 1960, life expectancy increased from 50 years to 67, and infant mortality rates fell from 111 per 1,000 births to 45, population per physician decreased from 5900 in 1960 to 1200 per physician in 1990, and calorie supply as percent of recommended diet increased from 90% in 1960 to 121% in 1990.

The second major conclusion that can be drawn is that the most significant advancement in social development took place between 1975 and 1985. This period was also marked by significant and steady economic growth. This indicates that the relationship between economic and social development in Jordan is strong.

The third important conclusion to be drawn from the social developmental experience in Jordan is that social development is not irreversible. There are signs that, if they were to continue, will threaten the gains made in social development in the last three decades. With the decline of economic growth since early eighties, there have been a decrease in almost all the major indicators of social development. Life expectancy, literacy rates, population per physician, and female labour force

participation show signs of decline between 1985 and 1990. However, the most significant signs come from unemployment rates and population below poverty line figures. They both increased dramatically between 1985 and 1990. These trends indicate that social development can be reversed.

Some of the factors that need special attention in regard to social development that might contribute to the reversal of social development in Jordan are: the negative economic consequences resulting from the Gulf war and the economic decline experienced before and during the crisis, the influx of large number of Jordanian returnees which contributed to a significant increase of the population which requires the reallocation of resources to meet basic services such as health and education, the structural adjustment program that is being implemented in the country which needs to address the impact of such program on social development, the continued high population growth rates in Jordan which must be lowered if social development is to be sustained or advanced. These factors are not unrelated. Any or combination of them can have negative impact on the level of social development in Jordan.

Policy oriented research agenda for social development

In preparing this report, it became clear that much research is needed in many areas before meaningful policy recommendations can be confidently offered. The following topics of a policy relevant research agenda emerge as a priority.

First, there is a need for a data base for social development indicators. Data on indicators such as life expectancy and adult literacy are not available on yearly basis. Reliable and comprehensive data is not available for unemployment, the extent of poverty and income inequality. This makes the monitoring of the impact of changing conditions' effect on social development difficult. There should be a permanent programme to regularly document or gather data for relevant indicators.

Second, for most indicators, there is only information or data at the national level. There is little information on the various indicators for different social groups, for urban and rural areas, and for major geographical regions. All this information is important for appropriate policy design and for evaluating the effectiveness of policies.

Third. In order to identify cost-effective policies, research is needed about the relationship between inputs and outputs in social development. For instance, it is important to know what combination of health, education, and nutritional systems bring about the best improvement in infant mortality.

Finally, given the fact that the country is undergoing a structural adjustment programme, there is a need for research to assess its impact on social development. Furthermore, research is needed on alternative strategies and policies related to the different social sectors.