

# Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Iraq and Kurdistan Region in the Context of Job Scarcity - An Analytical Study

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## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the status of gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq, with a focus on reviewing existing literature, outlining the methodology employed, analyzing collected data from the World Values Survey, and presenting key findings. The literature review encompasses examining scholarly works, policy documents, and reports on gender dynamics in Iraq, highlighting prevailing challenges and existing initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women. Methodologically, this paper utilizes data collected from the World Values Survey's seventh wave, comprising responses from 1200 Iraqi respondents, including those from the Kurdistan Region. Demographic variables such as age, gender, income level, and educational level are analyzed to understand their impact on attitudes towards gender roles and rights, particularly concerning job scarcity. Analysis of the data reveals significant disparities in opinions regarding gender rights, with a notable proportion of respondents favoring men's prioritization in job scarcity scenarios. Gender-based variances are observed across various demographic categories, including gender, age, and education level, indicating the complex interplay of socio-economic factors in shaping attitudes towards gender equality. Findings reveal the urgent need for targeted measures to address gender inequalities and empower women in Iraq. This study contributes to the literature on gender equality and women's empowerment related to Iraq, offering insights into the prevailing challenges and opportunities for progress towards sustainable development goals.

KEY WORDS: Gender Equality, Women Empowerment, World Values Survey, Job Scarcity, Iraq

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women aims to improve their overall well-being and contribute to nation-building, in addition to improving women's quality of life in society plus economically, experiencing education at all levels and sectors, and participating and cooperating in market and Business decision-making opportunities, and acceptance as equals in society.

In Iraq, women constitute approximately 50% of the population (Zinab A. Abdulraso, 2022).

Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (KUJHSS) Volume 8, Issue 1, 2025.

Received 18 September 2024

Accepted 24 December 2024

Regular research paper: Published 20 May 2025

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The development of Iraq is contingent upon the effective participation of women across various sectors. Without adequate participation from women in education, business development, and decision-making, the country's development faces significant challenges. Women play pivotal roles in generating and educating new generations, as well as in protecting and supporting families. However, numerous obstacles, including civil wars, cultural barriers, and economic crises, impede women's advancement in Iraq. (Younis MS, Khudhiar Lafta R, 2021). These barriers limit women's opportunities for social activity, employment, and overall development.

Economically, only 11.6% of women in Iraq are employed or seeking work; however, 74.2% of men. Iraq ranks 152nd out of 153 countries surveyed globally in the position of women's participation in the economy. Educationally, only 39.5% of women pass the secondary level, whereas 56.5% of men do. Politically, women hold only 25% of parliamentary seats, while men hold 74.8%.

(UNDP, 2020)

Due to limited access to social, economic, and educational opportunities, women in Iraq face pandemic levels of unemployment and stress from staying at home. While numerous studies have explored gender disparities and empowerment initiatives in various regions, few have delved into the specific complexities of gender inequality in Iraq and the Kurdistan region; hence, this study. Let us explore the literature on gender equality and women's empowerment.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The essential basis for grasping growth in society is created by the patterns of women's empowerment, equality between men and women, and job scarcity, especially in areas that are experiencing severe economic difficulties. Equality between men and women is not just an inherent human right but also a pillar of sustainable growth. this is According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) of the UN Breaking down the obstacles that prevent women from fully participating in a variety of fields, particularly the workforce, is necessary to achieve gender parity. ((UN), 2015) According to Kabeer (2015), women's empowerment entails increasing their agency and giving them the ability to choose and have an impact on decisions that impact their daily lives. Economic empowerment of women is being demonstrated to have significant positive effects on society overall, including higher productivity and economic expansion (World Bank, 2021). but a major obstacle to achieving results is the lack of jobs, especially in the context of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, where social customs and financial instability limit female employment options (UN Women, 2020). There is an imperative to better and more effectively integrate the findings with the unique context of Iraq, even if the literature addresses both indigenous and global viewpoints on gender equality. this paper has shown that employment failure disproportionately affects women and has an influence on economic growth, which further entrenches gender disparities (ILO, 2019).

### 2.1 Gender Equality

Gender equality and women's empowerment have been critical areas of research, particularly in the context of the Middle East. (Kavlu, A., & Begum, S., 2022) utilized data from the World Values Survey (WVS) to analyze gender differences in ethical values, revealing that women generally exhibit less tolerance for violence, which could impact their roles in society and hinder their empowerment. Similarly, (Begum S., Musa B., 2023) explored using data from WVS on gender disparities in Iraq's education system, emphasizing the importance of upskilling and reskilling to enhance women's employment opportunities and promote economic

empowerment. Additionally, (Abed, A., & Begum, S., 2023) focused on perceptions of science and technology, which play a significant role in women's access to STEM fields and technological opportunities, essential for gender equality in modern economies. The study used data from WVS. Collectively these studies used WVS data and explored the ongoing barriers to gender equality and the women empowerment of women in the Middle East, which highlights the challenges women face in education, business, and employment.

To provide similar advantages and safeguards for men and women- boys and girls- gender equality promotes equal opportunities and resources for all sexes. However, obstacles including deeply rooted cultural norms, women's restricted access to education and health care, and violence against girls make it especially difficult to achieve gender equality in Iraq. These obstacles make it more difficult for the nation to achieve equality in gender, necessitating particular laws, and modifications in culture to meet the unique requirements of Iraqi women and girls (Eidinger, 2020). True gender equality extends beyond numerical parity and regulatory measures. It entails improving the quality of life for all members of society, irrespective of gender or nationality, with equal access to economic, educational, and decision-making opportunities. (Carolyn Tastad, 2020)

(Attieh, L., & Begum, S., 2022) examined the obstacles faced by female entrepreneurs compared to male-owned enterprises in Lebanon, highlighting the unique challenges that hinder women's business empowerment.

Globally, there has been progress in advancing women's rights, with women holding 26.4% of parliamentary seats in 2021. In Iraq, however, women still face significant political barriers, holding only 25% of seats, highlighting the need for stronger political representation. (UNDP Iraq, 2022).

Gender equality acknowledges that gender roles are culturally constructed, and that socialization influences all aspects of individuals' lives. Efforts to promote gender equality aim to combat inequality in various forms. (Eidinger, 2020).

Resolving the differences in pay and income across men and women is another crucial component of achieving gender parity. In Iraq, where there is a sizable salary discrepancy due to cultural, societal, and economic factors, these differences are especially noticeable. Women in Iraq confront obstacles such as prejudice in employment due to gender, unequal representation in leadership positions, and restricted opportunities in higher-paying industries (Al-Kubaisy, K., & Al-Hashimi, M., 2020). This persistent gender wage discrepancy underscores the necessity for measures targeted at attaining pay fairness and reflecting larger social standards.

Salary disparity refers to differences in pay for the same jobs, while wealth disparity encompasses variations in overall pay due to the same job positions (Carolyn Tastad, 2020).

## 2.2 Women Empowerment

Empowering women is essential for economic growth and prosperity, as it correlates strongly with financial achievements. Iraq's strategic geopolitical location and rich petroleum resources have attracted significant global economic investment, despite historical conflicts and international sanctions. (Kahraman, Serpil, 2022)

Achieving gender equality and empowering women are essential for promoting human rights and development. Iraq's development agenda, Iraq 2030, prioritizes inclusive growth, emphasizing empowerment for vulnerable groups, including women and families. (USAID, 2023)

Iraq is starting a new development program focused on the Iraq 2030 goal. It specified 5 goals: growth in humanity, decent administration, diverse economic benefits, securing the community, as well as an environmentally friendly future. The secure community objective prioritizes empowering females through "suitable growth for family and female and defenseless categories". This goal prioritizes inclusive growth for marginalized populations, such as females, kids, older adults, and those with impairments or specific requirements. Empowering women can improve job opportunities and the distribution of wealth, as a result of country development and feature plan (Planning, 2019).

In South Kurdistan, the "Female Peace Organization" is an organization of female politicians from diverse parties. The organization, founded in 2012, contains about 20 females across various political organizations in the KRG. Those ladies shared similar objectives and agreed to collaborate in advancing the peace movement. Targets include expanding female involvement in making decisions (such as a minimum of one lady in the government) and adjusting educational programs to accommodate gender issues. In KRG, the parliament has a 30% quota, which is a significant improvement compared to other Arab and bordering nations. (Valeria Vilaro, 2018)

Men need to have greater rights when working than women. Females are more financially disadvantaged than males on nearly all global measures. According to trends, the number of females in the workforce has increased slowly and marginally in the past three generations, averaging 51%, globally, however, as little as 21 percent in the north of Africa and the Near East. Men are almost twice as likely as women to work 24/7 for an employer worldwide, and men are nearly three times as likely to be

doing so in South Asia. (World Bank Group, 2024)

Unemployed women without income struggle to meet their needs compared to men. The goal of gender equality has been universally agreed upon, to make sure that women, girls, men, and boys in society have equal opportunities and rights, including equal chances for employment, educational opportunities, decent work, and social activities. (Clinton, Hillary, 2012).

Significant gender disparities in economic values were found in Begum S.'s (2021) research, Gender Variance and Economic Values, which used data from the World Values Survey. A contrast with Iraq's gender and economic values data is required to bolster the case.

Gender Equality guarantees equal treatment, opportunities, and responsibility for all genders. It acknowledges that male and female individuals may not be identical but emphasizes providing equal chances for political, economic, and educational participation without discrimination (UNICEF, 2011).

Conflict cycles, such as the Iranian-Iraqi war in 1980, and economic instability have pushed Iraqi women toward more conservative positions, impacting their societal roles. (UNDP Iraq, 2022). Research published in the International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences explores the critical link between gender equality and women empowerment, drawing on data from India. (Head, 2017). The research reveals the significance of gender equality in realizing women's empowerment and discusses strategies for promoting gender equality in various contexts.

Another study exploring global perspectives on migration and the impact of various factors reveals that the gender, age, and education of the respondent play a significant role in the perspectives. The study used the World Values Survey data. (Begum S., 2023)

The Office on the Status of Women prepared a paper on women's empowerment and gender equality within South Africa's national policy framework, focusing on eight chapters outlining the country's policy structure. (The Office on the Status of Women, 2001).

Another study examines the origins and effects of gender inequality in Pakistan, exploring economic, political, and social challenges from an intercultural and feminist perspective. (Rotter, 2019). It highlights the role of patriarchy in perpetuating gender disparities and proposes strategies to address women's challenges. A study on gender equality in German universities investigates how challenges for gender equality and competitiveness have shaped new courses of study. (Zippel, Ferree, & Zimmermann, 2016). It discusses the adaptation of global gender equality issues in local contexts, emphasizing the importance of vernacularizing gender equality efforts.

A research project focuses on the empowerment of Iraqi women and its impact on quality of life. (Zinab A. Abdulraso, 2022) This study explores the relationship between quality of life, female financial and social independence, and sociodemographic characteristics, revealing correlations between education, income, work, and quality of life. Despite the extensive literature on gender equality and women's empowerment, there remains a notable research gap concerning the specific challenges faced by women in Iraq, particularly in the context of societal, economic, and political constraints.

Existing studies have provided valuable insights into gender dynamics and empowerment efforts globally; however, there is a paucity of research focusing on the unique socio-cultural and economic landscape of Iraq. This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive examination of gender-related issues in the Iraqi context.

There are very few studies that have delved into the specific complexities of gender inequality in Iraq. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing targeted measures and policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Iraq.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of gender equality and women empowerment, research efforts in Iraq have remained limited, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of the factors hindering progress toward gender equality. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the socio-economic determinants and the cultural dynamics shaping women's empowerment in Iraq.

### 2.3 Job Scarcity

A market's restricted supply of job openings is referred to as job scarcity. This is frequently caused by demographic transitions, structural changes in the economy, or economic downturns. Especially in areas with a high rate of unemployment (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2021) this phenomenon may have significant effects on socioeconomic sustainability. In addition to affecting the livelihoods of individuals, a lack of jobs exacerbates already-existing disparities, such as those based on socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and gender (ILO & UNDP, 2019). Job scarcity has been shown to boost competitiveness for scarce employment, which frequently disadvantages underrepresented groups like women and young people (UN Women, 2020). Growth has been hampered by financial instability and violence in areas like Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. Women are especially impacted by the urgent problem of job scarcity, which restricts their ability to enter the workforce and impedes efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment (UN women, 2020). Therefore, giving an address to the scarcity of jobs is essential to fostering inclusive economic growth and guaranteeing that all

facets of society may participate in and gain from growth in the economy (World bank, 2020). Significant socioeconomic effects can result from a lack of jobs in areas impacted by conflict, especially in nations like Iraq where financial instability feeds a vicious cycle of unemployment and poverty. High joblessness rates, particularly among women and young people, are caused by a mix of company loss, relocation brought on by violence, and a lack of investment, according to World Bank research from 2020. The (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2021) also observes that insecure and informal work, which offers little job security and social protection, is on the rise in conflict-affected nations.

Inequalities in access to work are also made worse by job shortages, especially for underprivileged populations. Financial instability and cultural restrictions make it difficult for women to find the job in places like Kurdistan, according to (UN Women, 2020)

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized data from the seventh wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), which is a large-scale cross-national survey that accumulates data on sociocultural, political, and economic attributes across diverse populations. The WVS employs a rigorous multi-stage, stratified random sampling technique to ensure nationally representative data that involves at least 95% of a country's population. The sampling process involves stratification by key demographic variables, such as region, urban-rural distribution, age, and gender, followed by random selection within these strata. Respondents are typically adults in the age group of 18 years or older, with exceptions for younger populations in specific contexts. Regions that are unsafe for data collection or sparsely populated areas comprising less than 3% of the population may be excluded. Sample sizes are determined by population size, with a minimum of 1200 respondents for most countries and a larger sample requirement for countries with high population diversity. This rigorous process of data collection method and criteria ensures that the WVS data are robust, unbiased, and suitable for national or cross-national research. (Haerpfer C. I.-M., 2022). The dataset included in this research had 1200 respondents from Iraq, comprising 608 men and 592 women. The analysis focused on the variables measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree". These variables were treated as ordinal, reflecting their ranked nature without assuming equal intervals between response categories. (Carifio, J., & Perla, R., 2008; Norman, 2010) The central focus of the inquiry pertained to the perception of job scarcity and the belief that men should be afforded greater employment rights than women. Given the ordinal nature of the data

and its potential deviation from normal distribution, non-parametric statistical methods were selected for analysis. Non-parametric tests are particularly suitable for Likert-Scale data as they do not require the assumptions of parametric methods such as normality or homoscedasticity (Laerd Statistics, 2024). Additionally, these tests are robust against the effects of outliers and skewed distributions, ensuring valid and reliable results (Field, 2024)

The paper employed a descriptive statistical approach, and the distribution of responses to this proposition within the sampled population was analyzed. Furthermore, non-parametric tests, namely the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test, were employed to scrutinize potential variations in opinions across distinct demographic strata, including gender, age, educational level, and income level. The Mann-Whitney test was used to compare the distribution of responses between two independent groups, namely male and female, providing insights into whether one group tended to agree or disagree more strongly than the other (Pallant, J., 2020). Kruskal-Wallis' test was used to compare the scenarios involving more than two groups, determining whether significant differences existed in the median ranks across multiple categories (Laerd Statistics, 2024). Descriptive statistics, mean values, and cross-tabulations were applied apart from non-parametric tests in the research.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The following paragraphs provide an analysis of the variables and results.

Table 1 offers insights into respondents' demographics, including gender, age, education level, and income level, in relation to their opinions on job scarcity and gender rights. In terms of gender distribution, 50.7% of respondents identify as male, while 49.3% are female. Regarding age groups, the majority fall within the 30-49 years category (41.3%), followed by 16-29 years (38.9%) and 50 years and above (19.8%). Education-wise, the highest proportion has lower education (52%), followed by middle education (22.1%) and higher education (25.9%). Income level-wise, the majority of the respondents fall within the medium income group (62.3%), followed by low income (29.8%) and high income (7.9%). These demographic breakdowns lay the foundation for further analyzing variations in opinions across different groups.

TABLE 1

Job Scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women – Descriptive Statistics

Factors		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	608	50.7	50.7	50.7
	Female	592	49.3	49.3	100.0
	Total	1200	100.0	100.0	
Age of the Respondent	16-29 years	467	38.9	38.9	38.9
	30-49 years	496	41.3	41.3	80.3
	50 and more years	237	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	1200	100.0	100.0	
Education Level	Lower	623	51.9	52.0	52.0
	Middle	264	22.0	22.1	74.1
	Higher	310	25.8	25.9	100.0
	No answer	3	0.3		
	Total	1200	100.0		
Income Level	Low	358	29.8	29.8	29.8
	Medium	747	62.3	62.3	92.1
	High	95	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	1200	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own Computation data from World Values Survey seventh wave

TABLE 2

Job Scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women – Frequency Distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree strongly	729	60.8	61.1	61.1
	Agree	208	17.3	17.4	78.5
	Neither agree nor disagree	105	8.8	8.8	87.3
	Disagree	100	8.3	8.4	95.6
	Disagree strongly	52	4.3	4.4	100.0
	Total	1194	99.5	100.0	
Missing	No answer	1	0.1		
	Don't know	5	0.4		
	Total	6	0.5		
Total		1200	100.0		

Source: Own Computation data from World Values Survey seventh wave

Table 2 illustrates responses to the statement "Job Scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women" from the world values survey data. Out of 1200 respondents from the country Iraq, the majority of respondents 61% strongly agreeing and 17.4% simply agreeing. However, a notable percent (8.8%). While 8.4% disagree (only 4.4 % strongly disagree) to the statement. Only a fraction of respondents expressed uncertainty. This distribution suggests a significant portion of respondents support the notion of favoring men in scarcity situations, though there is also a considerable divergence of opinion. Further analysis across demographics could reveal more insights into these viewpoints.

TABLE 3

Job Scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women – Gender Crosstabulation

		Gender			
		Male	Female	Total	
Jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women	Agree strongly	Count	392	337	729
		% within Gender	64.7%	57.3%	61.1%
	Agree	Count	105	103	208
		% within Gender	17.3%	17.5%	17.4%
	Neither agree nor disagree	Count	55	50	105
		% within Gender	9.1%	8.5%	8.8%
	Disagree	Count	35	65	100
		% within Gender	5.8%	11.1%	8.4%
	Disagree strongly	Count	19	33	52
		% within Gender	3.1%	5.6%	4.4%
Total		Count	606.0	588.0	1194.0
		% within Gender	1.0	1.0	1.0

Source: Own Computation data from World Values Survey seventh wave

Table 3 reveals that among the male respondents, the highest proportion (64.7%) strongly agree that men should have more rights to a job than women, followed by 17.3% who agree, 9.1% who neither agree nor disagree, 5.8% who disagree, and 3.1% who strongly disagree. Among the female respondents, 57.3% strongly agree, 17.5% agree, and 8.5% neither agree nor disagree. 11.1% disagree, and 5.6% strongly disagree. The cross-tabulation table reveals a distinct contrast in opinion regarding the statement. This suggests that gender-based discrepancy in perspectives, with a higher proportion of males advocating for men's prioritization in job scarcity scenarios while more females express disagreement.

From Table 4, the mean values based on gender, age, education and income level are displayed. There are differences in the mean values. A lower mean value illustrates the agreement for the statement and the higher mean value illustrates disagreement. It can be observed that the male has a lower mean than female, indicating men agree with the statement more than women; similarly, differences exist in every category. But how they are statistically significant is to be proved by statistical tests. The following hypothesis test is conducted to test the same.

TABLE 4

Job Scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women – Mean Values

Factors		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	1.65	606	1.064
	Female	1.90	588	1.264
	Total	1.78	1194	1.173
Age of the Respondent	16-29 years	1.74	467	1.143
	30-49 years	1.85	493	1.207
	50 and more years	1.69	234	1.157
	Total	1.78	1194	1.173
Education Level	Lower	1.67	618	1.082
	Middle	1.86	264	1.268
	Higher	1.92	309	1.248
	Total	1.78	1191	1.174
Income Level	Low	1.82	356	1.198
	Medium	1.75	743	1.142
	High	1.79	95	1.320
	Total	1.78	1194	1.173

Source: Own Computation data from World Values Survey seventh wave

TABLE 5

Hypothesis Test Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1.	The distribution of jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women is the same across categories of gender:	Independent-samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
2.	The distribution of jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women is the same across categories of Age of the Respondent.	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.085	Retain the null hypothesis.
3.	The distribution of jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women is the same across categories of Education level.	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.012	Reject the null hypothesis.
4.	The distribution of jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women is the same across categories of Income level.	Independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.471	Retain the null hypothesis.

Source: Own Computation data from World Values Survey seventh wave

In the above Table 5, the hypothesis tests provide insights into whether there are significant differences in the distribution of opinions regarding job scarcity and gender rights across various demographic categories.

## Gender

The Mann-Whitney U Test indicates a p-value of (0.001), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the distribution of opinions between male and female respondents.

#### **Age of the Respondent**

The Kruskal-Wallis test yields a p-value of (0.085), indicating that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, the distribution of opinions does not significantly vary across different age groups.

#### **Education Level**

The Kruskal Wallis test reveals a p value of (0.012), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is a significant difference in opinion distribution across different education levels.

#### **Income Level**

The Kruskal Wallis test reveals a p value of (0.471), indicating that there is no significant difference in opinion distribution across income levels, leading to the retention of the null hypothesis.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In Conclusion, the empirical journey undertaken in this research has unveiled a multifaceted panorama of attitudes and perceptions regarding gender roles and rights within Iraq Society. A significant number of respondents adhere to traditional notions favoring male dominance in the labor market, a thorough examination reveals intriguing layers of dissent and complexity. Male respondents exhibit a pronounced inclination towards upholding conventional gender norms against their female counterparts. Moreover, disparities in viewpoints across educational level strata reveal the nature of perspectives on gender equality. These findings provide valuable academic insights into the sociocultural fabric of Iraq, urging policymakers and stakeholders to make targeted policies to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. In conclusion, this research uncovered the complex perceptions of gender roles and rights within Iraqi society.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are some recommendations:

#### **Educational Initiatives**

It is recommended that the policy makers should implement comprehensive educational programs aimed at promoting gender equality and challenging traditional gender roles from an early age. This includes integrating gender studies into school curricula and providing training for teachers on gender sensitive pedagogical approaches.

#### **Economic Empowerment**

The policy makers should foster initiatives to enhance women's economic participation by providing access to vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and microfinance opportunities. Additionally, promote private sector organizations to adopt gender-inclusive hiring practices and create conducive work environments for women.

#### **Legal Reforms**

The policy makers of Iraq should bring legal reforms that guarantee equal rights and protections for women in the workforce, including laws addressing pay Equity, workplace discrimination and bring laws to strengthen enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with the existing gender laws.

In addition, there should be community engagement through awareness campaigns, workshops and encourage women to participate in decision making activities. There should be Institutional Supports and International Collaboration, civil society groups and donor agencies to leverage resources, expertise and best practices for advancing gender equality initiatives.

By implementing the above recommendations, Iraq can take significant strides towards achieving gender equality and women empowerment, ultimately contributing to the social, economic and political development of the nation and to achieve the UN target of sustainable development goals by 2030.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The researchers express their gratitude and thanks to the World Value Survey Team for providing the data for individual researchers like us. Without the data, this work would not have been made possible. The researchers express their sincere thanks to the Tishk International University, for providing a congenial environment and support to do the Research.

#### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest.

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