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SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SOCIOCULTURAL CONSTRAINTS AMONG BEDOUIN WOMEN IN NORTH SINAI: SOURCES, SATISFACTION, AND STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

Salah S. Abd El-Ghani¹, Raed Abd Elnasser Salama Hussain² and Tamer Gamal Ibrahim
Mansour^{3*}

¹Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Saudi Arabia.

²Arish University, Egypt.

³Agricultural and Biological Research Institution, National Research Centre, Giza, Egypt.

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Corresponding Author: Tamer Gamal Ibrahim Mansour
(tj.mansour@nrc.sci.eg, tamer_baz@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the present situation on social support available to Bedouin women in the North Sinai Governorate with emphasis on the level of support received, the sources of support, and the quality of support received by Bedouin women in terms of support provided by husbands, family members, neighbors, friends, and coworkers. It also focuses on the relative importance of such sources of support and how they are related to the chosen socio-economic variables. The study will also seek to establish major obstacles that inhibit the access of women to social support as well as record their thoughts about plausible measures that can be adopted to address them. The sample used was stratified random with 317 women sampled, out of a population of about 1,800 in Al-Shallaq village and located in the Sheikh Zuweid district. The data was collected during the first quarter of 2024 using a structured questionnaire and was analyzed using the application of descriptive and inferential statistical tools, such as means, percentages, correlation coefficients, and multiple regression analysis. Results show that the main source of social support is the family, especially the husbands and close relatives, and the neighbors and friends are of little support. The most significant barriers are tribal norms which limit inter-personal relations, traditional customs limiting the movement of women and their communication with the community and poor communication beyond the family unit. Some of the solutions which were suggested by the participants included increasing the awareness of women in the society, particularly among older members, constant educational seminars, and empowerment programs. These are critical interventions that would facilitate the increase of the social support networks of women and improve their resilience to socio-economic pressure.

KEYWORDS: Social Support, Bedouin Women, Empowerment, North Sinai, Support Networks, Traditions and Customs, Social Empowerment, Sociocultural Constraints, Community Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women in Bedouin communities in North Sinai play an important role in shaping the area's growth in all areas. On top of involvement in the economy, they take part in maintaining cultural traditions and bonding the community. They encounter obstacles due to the system, yet they find ways to develop sustainably, while social and cultural blocks still hinder their participation in public affairs. Traditionally, Bedouin women add economic value to their families through working in farming, animal rearing and making handicrafts. Abdel Aziz (2022) discovered that women in North Sinai are contributing by founding small and medium enterprises, supporting local economies and enhancing familial economic independence. Similarly, Degen and El-Meccawi (2009) noted that Bedouin women in the Negev adapted to economic changes by engaging in domestic animal production in urban and rural settings, reflecting similar patterns in North Sinai. Women serve as the guardians and carriers of the cultural heritage in terms of both oral tradition and daily life. According to Jacobs (2020), Bedouin embroidery was one of salient cultural expressions, whereby the craft is used to articulate tribal demarcations, and shared historical memory. These practices demonstrate that women merge the social identity and innovative ingenuity thus strengthening and validating their roles within the community.

Bedouin women are not just the consumers of health services in the health sphere; they play an active role in improving the health outcomes of communities. Sharaby and Peres (2021) stressed their critical importance in easing maternal care provision by meddling between cultural mores and institutional guidelines and so, reducing the barriers to communication that can usually hinder the process of care. In the education sector, the academic mobility phenomenon is an indication that there is a change in the societal perception regarding the gendered participation. As long as cultural and social restrictions are being tolerated, special development programmes and interventions introduced by the state can serve as the change agents. Salman *et al.* (2022) have indicated that women are aware of the psychological, fiscal, and social challenges that hinder their participation, but at the same time, they have recognised the paramount significance of institutional and communal assistance in enhancing their participation in development projects.

Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) criticized how Bedouin women have been continuously relegated to traditional roles arguing that this denies women the

opportunity to grow in their careers and in the society at large. The empirical evidence suggests that Bedouin women have great but considerably not fully utilized developmental potential that could be utilized by becoming more accessible in the form of improved access to education, healthcare services, and leadership opportunities. As a result, the empowerment of the Bedouin women by promoting the same must be viewed as a developmental as well as social need especially since North Sinai is strategically important to Egypt. These aspects highlight the importance of considering the issue of providing effective social support systems by both scholars and policy-makers.

It includes cultural, economic, psychological, and social aspects. Women in communities governed by tribal traditions rely on social community for help when facing family and society. Examples include institutional exclusion, little access to support services and challenges with moving out and working due to social rules made for women. Saeedi (2021) pointed out that there is a strong link between social support and psychological security and better support helps women maintain their mental and social health. For Bedouin communities, family members, especially the males, are the major support, while the tribe both protects and limits them (Al-Sanabani, 2021). It is still rare for women in North Sinai to play a big part in public life. Ali and Abd-Elaziz found that changes in social and cultural traditions prevent as well as barriers Bedouins from joining the wider community which also limits women's ability to access needed services. This is noticeable in the serious lack of health and education resources and the slow response of institutions to women's needs.

International studies highlight that fragile situations may stop women from receiving support which is most common in cases of domestic violence or mental health. It was emphasized by Rakus and Singleton-Jackson (2024) and Briones-Vozmediano *et al.* (2014) that these barriers limit access for parents, but Ryu and Park (2018) indicated that well-equipped and trained family or neighborhood support can work well. Traditionally, marrying relatives within the extended family can shape how each family member supports one another (Yamamah *et al.*, 2012). Such results highlight the need to improve both official and unofficial aid for women to improve their living standards.

With more focus on women's empowerment, a supportive atmosphere for education and learning skills starts with social backing. Kunock (2020) believed that empowering Bedouin households both

raises their well-being and shapes cultural and economic growth in the Bedouin communities. In its turn, it means that the social assistance provided to Bedouin women in North Sinai requires being more than a mere simplified care; it should cultivate a feeling of independence, active engagement, and comprehensive growth.

The interventions of support systems should be consistent with the unique beliefs and situation of a given community. However, women often resort to family and tribal groups to help them because of the low number of cross-boundary structures. Salman et al. (2022) state that one of the major obstacles to the inclusion of women in development programs is the lack of finances, low patience, and conservative traditions, which is why it is necessary to strengthen social support. Similarly, Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) asserts that societal functions of the past inhibit the learning and leadership opportunities of the women and how specific assistance can alleviate the situation in favor of women.

Having emotional and mental support is crucial as it boosts self-esteem and promotes emotional stability (Al-Saeedi, 2021). According to Al-Sanabani (2021), traditional North Sinai often shows familial support as the primary pattern for women there. Even so, missing effective support from institutions worsens the problems women encounter in society and in their jobs. For this reason, researchers must study the sources, nature, and effectiveness of social help for Bedouin women. As a result, the objective of this research is to examine ways in which Bedouin women in North Sinai are supported by family, friends and colleagues and to see how this support influences their attempts to overcome socioeconomic problems. As a result, this research hopes to present findings using data that explain social support for Bedouin women and suggest ways to improve support systems to make a real difference for Bedouin women in North Sinai.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To measure the extent to which Bedouin women perceive receiving social support from their husbands, family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues.
2. To analyze the level of satisfaction Bedouin women have regarding the five aforementioned sources of social support.
3. To determine the relative importance of the different sources of social support among Bedouin women.
4. To explore the nature of the correlational and regression-based relationships between the independent variables and the level of social support received from various sources.
5. To identify the challenges that hinder Bedouin women from receiving social support and to determine their proposed solutions for addressing these barriers.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Social Support and Related Notions Social support is a core concept in sociology and social psychology. It refers to the material and emotional assistance individuals receive from their surroundings, which enhances their psychological and social well-being and strengthens their capacity to cope with stress. Thoits (2011) defines it as “the psychological and material resources provided by others, which are perceived or received by the individual in response to their needs.” It is perceived as a network of relationships that offer a sense of belonging, appreciation, and psychological protection. Al-Saeedi (2021) affirmed its effectiveness in reinforcing self-identity and emotional security, especially in traditional societies that emphasize familial cohesion.

Experts use the terms “social support” and “emotional support” for the feelings side and “social welfare,” for the areas managed through official institutions. Yet, social support covers both casual and official elements and ranges from one type of relationship to another. Traditional and spiritual customs help form the approach, since their beliefs affect the way people behave. In traditional examples, including Bedouin societies, support usually arises naturally from family and community habits and is not as formal as help found in cities.

The Emergence of Social Support In recent years, researchers in both psychology and sociology have paid greater attention to the importance of social support. Social psychology first highlighted the term in the 1970s, when research was done showing that it helps people relax and strengthen who they see themselves as, according to Al-Saeedi (2021). Changes in society and families redrew the way people supported each other, prompting the creation of tools to examine how social relationships contribute to people’s mental health.

The Western perspective saw this concept develop, thanks to health psychology research which showed a key role for social relationships in protecting people's health and well-being (Connell & D’Augelli, 1990). In the Arab world, studies by Al-Saeedi (2021) and Mohamed (2023) place importance on the family, tribe and community as main sources for support. Before anthropology studied it,

psychology grew from people's common religious and tribal ideas of unity and care, not from planned research.

With the advancement of research, social support has assumed a central role in health and social policies. It has emerged as both an independent and mediating variable explaining disparities in mental health and social competence (Thoits, 2011; Salman et al., 2022). In such a way, the notion has been transformed to meet the human need of the presence of relationships that support and provide emotional and social needs, which overlap with the human psychological, social, and cultural aspects, especially in the traditional context of Bedouin communities in North Sinai.

Importance and Goals of Social Support A cohesive society is built by giving social support to people. It improves people's emotional and medical well-being, cuts down on stress and worry and makes them feel more confident and much more like they belong. Being socially supported plays a role in reducing mental health problems and the risk of disorders for many people (Okafor & Rihan, 2023; Connell & D'Augelli, 1990). When there is not enough official support in Bedouin areas, women in North Sinai depend on personal relationships within their family and tribe (Salman et al., 2022). This support strengthens women, lessens loneliness and encourages them to seek work and learning (Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2006). In addition, it allows for stress management, offers crisis assistance and boosts how someone deals with society (Felton & Berry, 1992; Ham et al., 2005). In traditional places, social support tries to help individuals feel more powerful and more able to manage their lives. It strengthens the minds and bodies of women and the elderly, according to Despotović et al. (2019). This tradition further unites families and supports community unity (Al-Sanabani, 2021). Women are empowered economically when given support to create small enterprises and gain financial freedom (Salman et al., 2022).

Types of Social Support Social support consists of five major modalities such as emotional, esteem, informational, instrumental, and network-based. All of these modalities contribute to psychological health, help people to overcome difficult situations. Emotional support, in its turn, as the acceptance and a sense of belonging, has the greatest impact on stress mitigation among them (Felton and Berry, 1992; Al-Sanabani, 2021; Dafaalla et al., 2016; Al-Kahili and Al-Ahmadi, 2022). Salman et al. (2022) indicate that Bedouin women are not willing to take part in development efforts due to the lack of emotional

support. Respect and recognition, as social inclusion that can bring about confidence and esteem support, has been reported in recent studies (Al-Arafi and Al-Hijazi, 2023; Bakr, 2018; Al-Saeedi, 2021). An informational support, including advice and guidance is particularly crucial in crisis situations (Connell and D'Augelli, 1990; Thoits, 2011) and plays empowering role in the case of Bedouin women (Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2006; Abu Zaid, 2022).

Instrumental support provides financial and practical aid, which is required in low-resource environments (Salman et al., 2022; Mohamed, 2023), but shows less efficiency in reducing anxiety than emotional support (Davaridolatabadi and Abdeyazdan, 2016). The network support fosters a sense of belonging due to socially established ties (Hether et al., 2016) and brings the best results when combined with other types of support (Wawrzynski et al., 2021). The forms of support are largely distributed in Bedouin society under the family and tribal systems and thus perpetuate the traditional systems which still insist on women.

Sources of Social Support The social support is generally classified into primary and secondary support. The primary sources include the family, spouses, and close friends, and the secondary sources include neighbors, coworkers, and different institutions. The family ties are the most important support in such traditional cultures as the Bedouin community (Al-Sanabani, 2021); spouses, particularly women who do not work at all, play the central role. Close friends also provide invaluable emotional and informational support, a role that is intensified when the time is one of crisis. Secondary sources, though diverse, tend to have limited impact in Bedouin contexts due to social constraints on interactions beyond the family. Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) noted that these restrictions curtail women's access to external support networks. This category includes formal institutions and organizations, but as Salman et al. (2022) observed, weak institutional presence in North Sinai compels women to rely heavily on informal support systems like family and tribe to meet their everyday needs.

Factors Influencing Social Support During difficult times, mental health and quality of life are greatly affected by social support and this support is affected by various factors connected to the person, environment and relationships. At the individual level, support is influenced by gender, education and socioeconomic status (Strom & Egede, 2012) and women normally feel support more strongly than men do (Vina et al., 2013). Many communities with sensitive environments do not have the needed social

structures. Atukunda and his team (2016) noted that HIV patients living in rural communities have to deal with stigma and food insecurity which reduces the help they receive. According to Kitibwakye et al. (2022), the environment has a direct effect on how effective a support is. Support from people you trust becomes even stronger when facing serious illness (Howie et al., 2023). If children go through neglect in their childhood, it can be harder for them to form useful support networks in the future (Zhao et al., 2019). The authors found that how well students are supported often matters more than the number of people assisting them. To develop successful, culturally sensitive interventions in areas with few resources, it is very important to account for these factors.

Theoretical Perspectives on Social Support

Social support is a major idea in psychology that many theories describe. The Main Effect Model indicates that support consistently helps well-being, regardless of stress and that the more support experienced, the lower one's depression and the smoother their adjustment (Wang et al., 2018; Ren et al., 2018; Rueger et al., 2016; Li & Wang, 2021; Banks & Weems, 2014). The model points out that social support can buffer the bad effects of stress when it happens, as supporting evidence comes from scenario studies after natural and psychological crises (Glozah & Pevalin, 2016; Platt et al., 2016; Tran et al., 2023). According to the Basic Psychological Needs Theory, social support only gives positive mental health rewards when the needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy are fulfilled (Li et al., 2025). Other models distinguish structural aspects (network size) from the quality of support (functional support) and both players are related to the well-being of those who need this help. Overall, these theories portray social support as an interactive process influenced by relationship quality, stress type, and support nature, essential for developing interventions that enhance mental health and social bonds.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant correlational relationship between the degree of social support received by the respondents from their spouse, family, neighbours, friends, and colleagues, and the studied independent variables.
2. The studied independent variables significantly contribute to explaining the total variance in the degree of social support received by the respondents from the four sources studied (spouse, family, neighbours,

and friends/colleagues). To test the validity of these hypotheses, they were stated in their null form.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Study Area and Sample

This study was conducted in the North Sinai Governorate Fig.1, which comprises six administrative centers. One district was randomly selected, and the chosen district was Sheikh Zuweid. Similarly, one of the main villages within the district was selected, which was the village of El-Shallak. The study population consisted of all rural women in the study area who were 18 years old or older, amounting to 1,800 respondents (Local Information Center, El-Shallak Village, 2024). The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) tables, resulting in a sample of 317 respondents, selected randomly.

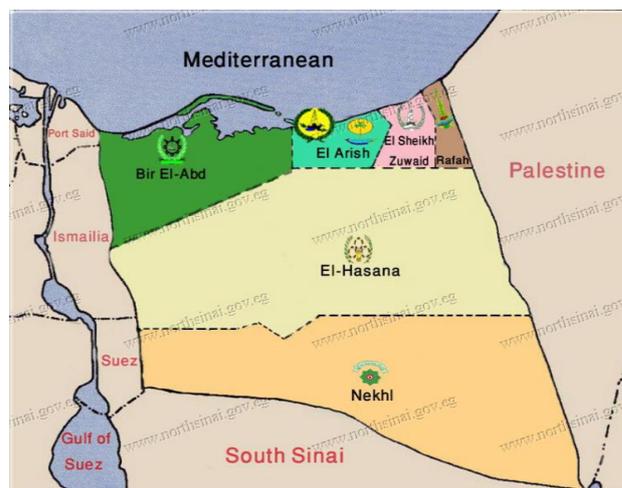


Figure 1: Map of North Sinai Governorate.

2.2. Data Collection and Analysis Methodology

The data for this study were collected during January, February, and March 2024 through personal interviews with the sample population, assisted by trained female researchers using a questionnaire form. This form was initially developed and tested by interviewing 30 rural women from one of the villages in the Sheikh Zuweid Center, namely Abu Tawila village. After collecting the 30 forms, necessary adjustments were made to improve the questionnaire, making it suitable for data collection. Statistical methods appropriate for the nature of the data and in line with the study objectives were employed for presenting and analyzing the results. These methods included frequency counts, percentages, arithmetic means, weighted arithmetic means, Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the

reliability of central variables, Kramer's coefficient, Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple linear regression.

2.3. Research Approach

A correlational descriptive approach was used for this study.

2.4. Measurement of Research Variables

Age The age variable was operationalised by asking the respondents to put down their age in complete years.

Educational Level Educational level was identified through the summation of the years of formal education that the respondents had attended.

Primary Occupation Occupational status was in terms of agricultural work, non- agricultural work and unemployment and assigned a numeric code (1, 2, 3).

Family Size Family size was measured by the number of people who live in the house.

Monthly Income Monthly household income was computed as the sum total of all the sources of income in the household.

Satisfaction with Social Support The satisfaction with social support was assessed using four questions, which referred to the received support by a spouse, family members, neighbours, and friends or colleagues. The scoring was done on a 3-point rating (3, 2, 1). Cronbach's alpha was 0.82. The overall score was a 4 to 12 which was classified into low (1-4), medium (5-8), and high (9-12).

Family Cohesion Family Cohesion was measured based on eight statements with reverse coding done on negative statements with a scale of 3, 2 and 1. The measure of reliability was Cronbach, which was 0.79. The scores ranged between 8 and 24 being categorized as low (1-8), medium (9-16) and high (17-24).

Cultural Openness Items that were included in measuring cultural openness included exposure to media and cultural activities television, print media, seminars, social media, and radio. The items were rated using a 4 point scale (4 to 1). The Cronbach's alpha Cronbach of this scale was 0.89. The overall scores were between 5 and 20 in total and were classified as low (1-6), medium (7-14) and high (15-20).

Informal Social Participation Informal social participation was assessed through ten questions that tested the involvement in community and family life where answers were graded on a scale of 4 to 1. Reliability was 0.73. The total scores were between 10 and 40; however, the scores studied included low (10

19), medium (20-30), and high (31-40).

Social Support Scale The social support scale had 28 questions that were arranged into four sources that included spouse, family, neighbours, and friends/colleagues. The ratings were made on a 3-point scale (3, 2, 1). The overall reliability coefficient for the social support scale was 0.78, indicating high reliability for measurement purposes. The total score for social support ranged from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 120 points.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Description of the Sample Characteristics

Table 1 reveals that the highest percentage of women in the sample (41.15) is between the ages of 34 and 49 years. This generation can be linked to the time of increased familial and social responsibility thus making women during this age bracket more vulnerable to stress and in need of social support. The findings support the observation of Al-Saeedi (2021) that middle-aged women show the most significant demands in the psychological and social support that can help them cope and experience well-being at home. Over 70% of the respondents indicate that they have not received formal education or completed elementary school education thus indicating a low level of chances that girls in Bedouin villages can get to continue their education. Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) states that low education level undermines the empowerment of Bedouin women. This lack of education in turn will limit the power of women to utilize institutional support systems or formal assistance.

Over 50 percent of the respondents indicate no paid work and carry out the traditional family duties, and 32.18% are in agriculture. This tendency is indicative of dependence on home-based and seasonal economic activities, which are also in line with the results of Salman *et al.* (2022), which show that a lack of formal labor opportunities increases the reliance of Bedouin women on informal, family-based support systems.

Just as in the case of other indicators, over three-quarters of the survey respondents are categorized as low and middle-income earners, reflecting the low quality of the area's economy. Al-Tay *et al.* (2014) note that social support is not easily accessed in places where resources are scarce, which our result suggests is true.

According to the study, 43.53% of the respondents say they are very satisfied with the support they get from others, most of which is from family members. The theory supports Al-Sanabani's finding (2021) that families in traditional societies are mainly

responsible for giving domestic and psychological support. The research confirms that almost all respondents (92%) have rather high or at least moderate family unity, as extended families tend to work together and care for each member. Connell and D'Augelli (1990) have written about how the closeness of a family can increase the effectiveness of support provided to someone. As for cultural openness and informal social participation, the data show high levels of engagement in these areas, with more than 80% and 50% of the respondents, respectively. It implies that the conditions increase the chances of obtaining and exchanging social support, and thus lend credence to the view currently

developed by Ryu and Park (2018), who suggested that community involvement is an influential mediator of the building of successful support systems. Considering the above, the results of the current table indicate a social system based on internal solidarity and dependence on the core sources of support (spouse, family) and, therefore, the need to strengthen these networks and expand their boundaries via events dedicated to the economic and educational empowerment. This type of programmes can supplement institutional help, and break the cultural cycle which limits the use of formal support structures by women.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Studied Characteristics.

Variables	F	%	Variables	F	%
Age:			Household Monthly Income:		
(18-33) years	115	36.28	Low Income (1500-2500 EGP)	103	32.49
(34-49) years	130	41.15	Medium Income (2501-3501 EGP)	120	37.85
(50-65) years	72	22.71	High Income (3502-4503 EGP)	94	29.66
Educational Level:			Degree of Satisfaction with Support:		
Illiterate	61	19.24	Low Satisfaction (1-4 points)	56	17.67
Can read and write	67	21.13	Medium Satisfaction (5-8 points)	123	38.80
Elementary	102	32.18	High Satisfaction (9-12 points)	138	43.53
Intermediate	20	6.31	Family Cohesion:		
Secondary	55	17.35	Low Family Cohesion (1-8 points)	23	7.25
University	12	3.78	Medium Family Cohesion (9-16 points)	146	46.51
Main Occupation:			High Family Cohesion (17-24 points)	148	46.24
Agricultural	102	32.18	Cultural Openness:		
Non-Agricultural	50	15.77	Low Cultural Openness (1-7 points)	63	19.87
Not Working	165	52.05	Medium Cultural Openness (8-14 points)	129	40.69
Family Size:			High Cultural Openness (15-20 points)	125	39.44
Small	53	16.72	Informal Social Participation:		
Medium	122	38.48	Low Participation (10-19 points)	43	13.56
Large	142	44.80	Medium Participation (20-30 points)	113	35.65
			High Participation (31-40 points)	161	50.79

3.2. Analysis of Results Regarding the Degree of Social Support Received by Respondents from Various Sources

Table 2 demonstrates that there is a strong difference in the degree of social support that the respondents mentioned concerning different sources. The results indicate that the most salient source of social support is the members of the family, and 64.67 percent of the respondents indicated high levels of support provided by the members of their families, which is the highest rate among all sources analyzed. The given result is in line with the findings of Al-Sanabani (2021), who emphasized that the family, especially in the traditional society like the Bedouin group, remains the main source of emotional and material support, which can be explained by the existence of kinship ties based on the commitment and mutual reliance. In addition, the fact supports

the suggestion made by Connell and D'Augelli (1990) according to which relationships in extended family settings enhance the feeling of belonging and guarantee long-term support.

Concerning the marital relationship, 46.06% of the respondents stated that they got high form of social support of their husbands and this supports the central role of the husband as the support system of the Bedouin family. This finding is consistent with Thoits (2011), who stated that the marital relationship is one of the key sources of psychological and social support, especially in traditional contexts, where the husband often bears the direct economic and social responsibility for the family. On the other hand, results show that relationships with neighbors are the weakest source of support, with 36.28% of respondents reporting low levels of support from this source. This can be explained by the fact that, as Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) noted, customs and

traditions in Bedouin communities may limit social interaction outside the extended family network and elevate tribal privacy, thus hindering the effectiveness of horizontal relationships such as those with neighbors. Furthermore, tribal or family disputes may negatively affect the level of community solidarity among neighbors, reducing their role as a source of support.

In the sphere of friends and colleagues, most of the respondents (59.93%) were identified as moderate in their support, with only 29.98% being supported by friends and colleagues in high ways. These results support the fact that Bedouin women are not engaged in public activities and labour market as much, which is also observed by Salman *et al.* (2022) as a symptom of economic and sociocultural limitations that hinder the involvement of women in the support networks outside the

family. Besides, the patriarchal structure of the society might undermine the effectiveness of professional relationships as a source of emotional or social support.

The findings in general indicate that Bedouin women in North Sinai rely mainly on primary sources of social support, that is, the family, spouses, and secondary sources, including neighbours, friends, and colleagues, have a relatively less significant role. These statistics indicate the urgency of formulating social intervention programmes that put greater emphasis on strengthening family institutions and the growth of safe communal dynamics among women especially in the context of limited institutional support which is emphasized by Rakus and Singleton-Jackson (2024) in research on vulnerable populations.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to the Degree of Social Support Received.

Source of Support	Low Support (F, %)	Moderate Support (F, %)	High Support (F, %)	Total (F, %)
Husband	69 (21.76%)	102 (32.17%)	146 (46.06%)	317 (100%)
Family	13 (4.10%)	99 (31.23%)	205 (64.67%)	317 (100%)
Neighbors	115 (36.28%)	100 (31.54%)	102 (32.18%)	317 (100%)
Friends and Colleagues	32 (10.09%)	190 (59.93%)	95 (29.98%)	317 (100%)

3.3. Results Related to Determining the Level of Satisfaction of the Participants with Sources of Social Support (Husband, Family, Neighbors, Friends, and Colleagues)

Data in Table 3 shows that there are obvious differences between how satisfied participants were with various support sources, highlighting variations in how much help each source gives. It helps us understand how reliant people are on their social relationships and what kind of relationships exist between them. In this case, the family clearly offers the most valuable social support for Bedouin women, as a large group (62.15%) is highly satisfied, while just a small group (2.21%) is dissatisfied. Family members in Bedouin culture share a genuinely close relationship because the family is considered the main support system when traditional institutions are not present, as Al-Sanabani (2021) confirmed. 45.12% of participants mentioned that their husbands are doing a great job, making them feel satisfied, which shows their response to the husband's support exceeds that of the developed countries. In societies where men adopt most of the major roles in society, they become the main source of social support in the family, as pointed out by Thoits (2011).

In contrast, the results reveal a lower level of satisfaction with the support provided by neighbors,

friends, and colleagues. For instance, 31.86% of the participants reported low satisfaction with the support from neighbors, which is the same percentage that expressed high satisfaction, while the highest percentage was found in the medium satisfaction category (36.28%), indicating a fluctuation and inconsistency in relationships with neighbors. This may be attributed to the tribal structure of Bedouin society, which may impose cultural restrictions on inter-family relations, especially those not directly related by kinship. This explanation is supported by Abu-Rabia-Queder's (2006) study, which suggested that relationships outside the family in Bedouin environments are often governed by strict social norms that limit free and open interactions, particularly for women.

In terms of the support provided by friends and colleagues, the empirical evidence demonstrates the least satisfaction level in this area and 36.95% of respondents are less satisfied and the percentage of highly satisfied individuals did not exceed 23.62%. The latter is the result of the limited involvement of Bedouin women in the life of the community and organized activities, and therefore limits their social network to the family. The observation is agreeable with the study by Salman *et al.* (2022), which reports that Bedouin women often are not linked to interactive structures beyond the family context,

which can be explained by current cultural standards or by economic and educational barriers that prevent them to enter into the institutions of the civil society or the labor market.

The results mentioned above help to emphasize that the level of satisfaction of a Bedouin woman with social support directly depends on the distance between the source and the intensity of the relationship. Stronger, more personal relationships, like relationships with family members and the spouse, are associated with higher levels of satisfaction; on the other hand, a stronger social distance or lack of interaction, such as relationships with a spouse or colleagues, are related to reduced levels of satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the argument by Al-Saeedi (2021) that the factor of personal perception of support is the factor that

affects the psychological and social reactions of people, in which the importance of the perceived support efficacy could outweigh the numerical extent of the received support. The results, in accordance, reinforce the need to increase the social support base of Bedouin women by making their presence in the public space more active and creating a more open interactive environment beyond the family unit, without sacrificing the cultural sensibility. Furthermore, we must also heed the urgent compulsion of mobilizing the role of non-governmental and developmental organizations as the bridges to redefine the concept of support to the phase further beyond family to the community as a whole hence helping in the idealization of genuine social empowerment of the woman in Bedouin settings.

Table 3: Level of Satisfaction of Participants with the Four Studied Sources of Social Support.

Source of Support	Low Satisfaction Level (1-4 points)	Medium Satisfaction Level (5-8 points)	High Satisfaction Level (9-12 points)	Total
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Husband	72 (22.71%)	102 (32.17%)	143 (45.12%)	317 (100%)
Family	7 (2.21%)	113 (35.64%)	197 (62.15%)	317 (100%)
Neighbors	101 (31.86%)	115 (36.28%)	101 (31.86%)	317 (100%)
Friends and Colleagues	116 (36.95%)	125 (39.43%)	76 (23.62%)	317 (100%)

3.4. Results Concerning the Relative Importance of Social Support Sources for the Participants

The results in Table 4 show that there are clear differences in the prioritisation of sources of social support by participants, indicating the differences in the amount of trust and social value in the Bedouin milieu. The first place was given to family members where 64.67 per cent of the respondents confirmed that these persons are the main source of support and only 4.10 per cent did not show agreement. The high median value of 2.59 supports the central role of extended family in the Bedouin society and is consistent with the results of Al-Sanabani (2021), who suggested that strong kinship bonds form the primary channel of emotional and material support in situations where few alternatives exist in an institutionalized form.

The second most ranked position went to the husbands who were supported by 46.76 percentage of the participants and the mean of 2.24, highlighting their expected responsibility as emotional and material providers. This trend is in line with the observation by Thoits (2011) that marriage relations are a key source of support in a traditional family set-up. Third in rank were friends and colleagues, which also had a 2.20 mean, but 59.93 percent said that they remain neutral in terms of relationships, so these

relationships are not well established as support mechanisms. Salman et al. (2022) related this trend to poor participation in the workforce and cultural issues that restrict the external network of women.

Friends and colleagues were ranked the third and had an average of 2.20. A large percentage of the respondents (59.93) reported that they were indifferent to this source, which suggests that these relationships are yet to possess the properties of a dependable or workable support system. This finding can be linked to the fact that the Bedouin women are not strongly integrated into the labor force or the social institution, a problem that Salman et al. (2022) identified, stating that such cultural and social prohibitions do not allow women to expand their support systems outside the nuclear family. The last relative importance was given to neighbors, where only 32.1833% of the participants recognized them as a support system with 36.2833% refuting this position. In line with this, this source recorded a low mean score of 1.96. These results indicate the absence of trust in the horizontal relations in the local community and indicate that past social tension or tribal conflicts between families, a point made by Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006), might also serve as the cause of a neighborhood relationship in the tribal society not being always a reliable bonding factor,

and, at times, may cause social tension because of conflicting interests and relationships.

These findings suggest that women in North Sinai are selective in using sources of support that have close familial connections (family and husband) but the sources of support in the community (neighbors and friends) are put in the secondary place. The statistics show a non-liberal social order, which

favors the familial connection over the larger networks. Further, the results indicate the need to build social trust and broaden the understanding of support to include broader types of assistance than the family, which prompts the need to create awareness programs and community interventions to transform the culture of social interaction in these environments.

Table 4: Relative Importance of Social Support Sources for the Participants.

Social Support Sources	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Rank
Husband	146 (46.76%)	102 (32.17%)	69 (21.76%)	2.24	2
Family	205 (64.67%)	99 (31.23%)	13 (4.10%)	2.59	1
Neighbors	102 (32.18%)	100 (31.54%)	115 (36.28%)	1.96	4
Friends and Colleagues	95 (29.98%)	190 (59.93%)	32 (10.09%)	2.20	3

3.5. Results Related to the Nature of the Relationship between Study Variables and Social Support Sources for Bedouin Women

1. Correlational Relationships between Degree of Social Support received by the participants who come under (Husband, Family, Neighbors, Friends/Colleagues): Quantitative variables measured on a Likert scale The results in Table; 5 also indicate that there are important correlational relationships between numbers of independent variables and the degree of social support that the participants received, through different sources. Such results demonstrate the dynamic interaction of the sociocultural and demographic features of the participants and the support they receive in the environment. The analysis is needed because it would help to comprehend the active social structures of Bedouin society and the extent to which the contextual variables have an effect on the patterns of support.

As far as social support by the husband, the findings indicate that it has strong positive and significant relationship at the level of 0.01 with age (0.455), size of the family (0.398), monthly income (0.562), family cohesion (0.712) and informal social participation (0.349).

These relations indicate that older wives who are in bigger families, have more income and possess good family cohesion and social involvement have better support by their husbands.

This trend is consistent with the results of Thoits (2011), who has pointed out that the success of spousal support directly depends on the maturity, duration and stability of a relationship and the participation of a woman in social issues has a positive effect on how she views her partner as supportive.

Regarding the family support, the findings

demonstrated that it was significantly and positively correlated with age (0.621), family size (0.419), monthly income (0.314), family cohesion (5.43) and informal social participation (0.614) which were statistically significant. These results highlight the remaining importance of family as a main source of support, particularly in aging women, when the family size grows, and the kinship bonds get tighter. This aligns with the research of Al-Sanabani (2021), who revealed that the extended family system lives in Bedouin areas is still one of the main pillars of support, especially in old age when they need emotional and moral support the most.

Conversely, the correlation between social support by neighbors and multiple variables was weak and significant relationships were found only with age ($r=0.419$), cultural openness ($r=0.409$), and informal social participation ($r=0.471$), without any significant correlations found between the variables. This is a point that highlights the choosy and withdrawn quality of the neighborliness in traditional societies. It resonates with the argument by Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) that the tribal affiliation or even direct kinship frequently preconditions such relationships, which is why it is not spontaneous like in the case of urban societies.

As to the support of friends and colleagues, statistically significant correlations were observed with age ($r=0.503$), income ($r=0.298$), cultural openness ($r=0.526$), and informal social participation ($r=0.582$).

Such results point to the notion that women who have more socially and culturally appropriate behaviors, either through the education or community practices, have the most chances to develop helping relationships beyond the family system. This is in line with the focus of Ryu and Park (2018) on cultural and social interaction as an

ingredient to the growth of informal support networks.

It is important to note that no significant correlation was found between the variable of degree of satisfaction with social support and the support provided by husband, family, or friends, but there was a significant but slight relationship with the support provided by the neighbors ($r = 0.312$). This is an indication that satisfaction does not always

correlate either with the level of actual or quantitative support but can be considered as an experience or subjective perception or qualitative analysis of the relationship.

The interpretation can be used to justify the claim by Al-Saeedi (2021) that personal perception of support is a separate concept that should not be confused with tangible support.

Table 5: Simple Correlation Coefficients between Social Support Scores and Independent Interval Variables.

Independent Variables	Husband Support	Family Support	Social Support from Neighbors	Social Support from Friends
Age	0.455**	0.621**	0.419**	0.503**
Family Size	0.398**	0.419**	0.017	0.065
Monthly Family Income	0.562**	0.314**	0.018	0.298**
Satisfaction with Social Support	0.015	0.003	0.312**	-0.019
Family Cohesion	0.712**	5.43*	0.133	0.102
Cultural Openness	0.06	0.003	0.409**	0.526**
Informal Social Participation	0.349**	0.614**	0.471**	0.582**

**Significant at 0.01 * Significant at 0.05

According to such observations the results show that social support in Bedouin setting is affected by a combination of social and cultural variables of which the age, the family size, income, family cohesion and informal social participation are of the greatest effect whereas those like the cultural openness have a greater influence on support beyond the family.

Such results suggest implementation of developmental policies that increase community engagement and foster cultural inclusiveness since they have a direct relationship to broadening the scale of social support among women in traditional societies.

Based on the statistical results presented in Table (5), which reveal statistically significant correlations between the level of social support and several independent interval variables, particularly age, monthly income, family size, family cohesion, cultural openness, and informal social participation, it can be said that the field data provide sufficient support for accepting the research hypothesis, which posits the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the independent interval variables and the level of social support received by Bedouin women from various sources.

Specifically, the research hypothesis is accepted for the variables that showed significant correlation coefficients at the 0.01 or 0.05 levels, while it is rejected for the variables that did not show any notable statistical significance, such as "satisfaction with support" concerning the husband or family.

Therefore, these results enhance the credibility of

the analytical model used in the study and emphasize the importance of incorporating social and demographic characteristics into understanding the dynamics of social support in Bedouin communities.

3.6. The Level of Social Support from (Husband, Family, Neighbors, Friends, and Colleagues) and the Study Variables Measured at the Nominal Level.

The results presented in Table 6 show statistically significant relationships between some nominal independent variables (education level, primary occupation) and the level of social support obtained from various sources. The Chi-square (χ^2) test and Cramér's V coefficient were used to measure the strength and direction of these relationships within the context of analyzing the impact of the social characteristics of the respondents on their responses to social support. In this context, the data indicate that education level is a significant factor affecting the level of social support women receive from both their husbands and families. The Chi-square value for the relationship between education and support from the husband was 52.13*, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, with a Cramér's V coefficient of 0.591, indicating a relatively strong relationship. Similarly, the Chi-square value for the relationship with family support was 49.14**, which is significant at the 0.01 level, with a Cramér's V coefficient of 0.391. These results suggest that higher education contributes to improving the quality of

social support women receive from their husbands and families, either by enhancing effective communication or by increasing mutual understanding and respect within the family. This finding aligns with what Thoits (2011) mentioned, namely that education helps in developing social skills and the ability to express needs, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of support provided by the partner or family.

Concurrently, the results showed a significant relationship between primary occupation and social support from the husband ($\chi^2 = 47.02$)* and family ($\chi^2 = 35.06$)**. This supports the hypothesis that women working in productive or formal occupations receive higher levels of family support, due to the family's appreciation of their economic role or because of changes in traditional family dynamics. Moreover, women's employment may help expand their social networks and enhance their independence, leading to recognition and support from their husbands or families, in line with the findings of Salman et al. (2022) on the impact of women's economic empowerment in boosting support from the family. In contrast, the relationships between education level or occupation and social support from neighbors or friends, and colleagues did not show significant statistical relationships. The Chi-square values were

low, and Cramér's V coefficients were weak (less than 0.15), indicating that these horizontal social relationships are not significantly affected by the woman's educational or professional status. Instead, they are more influenced by factors related to social engagement, social acceptance, and possibly cultural openness. This observation supports what Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) stated, that relationships outside the family context remain restricted in tribal communities due to customs and traditions that limit women's engagement with the public sphere.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the results provide clear support for accepting the research hypothesis, which posits a statistically significant relationship between nominal variables (education level, primary occupation) and the level of social support, particularly with regard to support from the husband and family. On the other hand, the lack of statistical significance in relationships with neighbors and friends partially rejects the research hypothesis concerning these sources. These results highlight the centrality of family ties in shaping social support for Bedouin women and underscore the need for further in-depth studies to explore the cultural and social determinants of support outside the family context.

Table 6: Chi-Square Values for the Relationship between Nominal Independent Variables and the Level of Social Support.

Social Support	Nominal Variables	Support from Husband	Support from Family	Support from Neighbors	Support from Friends & Colleagues
	Education Level	$\chi^2 = 52.13^*$	$\chi^2 = 49.14^{**}$	$\chi^2 = 12.41$	$\chi^2 = 9.107$
		Cramér's V = 0.591	Cramér's V = 0.391	Cramér's V = 0.149	Cramér's V = 0.131
	Main Occupation	$\chi^2 = 47.02^*$	$\chi^2 = 35.06^{**}$	$\chi^2 = 8.06$	$\chi^2 = 14.05$
		Cramér's V = 0.432	Cramér's V = 0.405	Cramér's V = 0.133	Cramér's V = 0.109

**Significant at 0.01 * Significant at 0.05

3.7. Analysis of the Factors Affecting the Level of Social Support-Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Model

The output of the step-wise linear regression process reveals that the variables that have an impact on the degree of social support available to Bedouin women in North Sinai depend on the source of the support. **Spousal support had the greatest explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.494$) with five independent variables** age, family size, monthly income, family cohesion, and informal social participation explaining about 49.4 % of the variance. Of these, age played the highest predictive role indicating a positive relationship between aging and marital stability (Thoits, 2011). Next came family size and income of the household implying that bigger

families and better financial ability increases responsibility and ability of the husband to support. Although the family cohesion and informal social engagement had less explanatory power, they were statistically significant and supported the processes of mutual support in marital relationships (Connell and D'Augelli, 1990; Salman et al., 2022; Ryu and Park, 2018).

In terms of family support, the model established that three factors that included age, family cohesion, and informal social participation had an explanation level of 43.5% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.435$). The age proved to be the strongest variable ($b = 0.416$), which means that older women are more likely to get an adequate level of support provided by the family members, probably because of their higher position in the family or the rising social expectations

regarding the care (Al-Saeedi, 2021). Good family cohesion also had a positive influence on the measures of support and this established that the implication of tight family organization in enhancing emotional and material support in traditional societies is true (Connell and D'Augelli, 1990). Even though the informal social participation described a relatively small share of variance, the standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.721$) indicates a qualitatively significant effect, which means that socially active women have a higher probability of having active and supportive relations with their families (Ryu and Park, 2018; Al-Sanabani, 2021).

With regard to neighbor support the analysis showed that age, cultural openness and informal social participation explained 40.2 per cent of the variation. The strongest predictor was age (Partial $R^2 = 0.310$; $\beta = 0.150$) as older women are given a higher social status and trust in general. Cultural openness ($\beta = 0.211$) also proved to be a significant factor, which presupposes that women who are involved in the cultural material and discussing the issues publicly have much more possibilities to form their community connection. The proportion of the variance attributed to informal social participation was only a small proportion (Partial $R^2 = 0.012$), but it is statistically significant, which indicates a facilitative nature of informal social participation in horizontal social interaction (Ryu and Park, 2018). These findings are consistent with previous descriptive studies that proved the neighbors to be the least helpful source of support, which promotes

the necessity to strengthen horizontal networks in Bedouin society.

Support from friends and colleagues was influenced by age and cultural openness, with these two variables jointly explaining 34.6% of the variance. Age was again the most significant factor (Partial $R^2 = 0.321$), indicating that older women are more inclined to develop stable social ties beyond the family, either as a substitute for declining familial support or as an outcome of accumulated social capital. Cultural openness ($\beta = 0.230$) was also notable, reflecting the role of media exposure and participation in cultural activities in expanding non-kin social relationships (Kunock, 2020). These findings are consistent with earlier results, which showed that support from friends and colleagues remains moderate at best due to prevailing cultural restrictions on women's engagement outside the family or tribal context. In summary, the regression models demonstrate that familial sources of support—particularly husbands and extended family—exhibit stronger statistical associations than more distant, horizontal sources such as neighbors and colleagues. Key predictive factors across models include age, cultural openness, and informal social participation. These results underscore the primacy of kinship-based support in Bedouin society and call for culturally sensitive strategies that enhance women's engagement in social life and promote awareness, communication, and participation as pathways to empowerment.

Table 7: Results of Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis between Independent Variables and the Degree of Social Support Received by the Respondent from Her Husband.

	Variables	Partial Regression Coefficient	Standardized Partial Regression Coefficient (Beta)	Cumulative R ²	Change in R ²	t-value
Social Support Received by the Respondent from Her Husband	Age	0.716	0.217	0.327	0.327	4.25**
	Family Size	0.445	0.146	0.405	0.078	5.70**
	Family Monthly Income	0.001	0.208	0.457	0.052	3.19**
	Family Cohesion	0.166	0.145	0.480	0.023	6.07**
	Informal Social Participation	0.523	0.146	0.394	0.014	4.02**
F-value = 37.09** R² value = 0.494						
Social Support Received by the Respondent from Family	Age	5.134	0.416	0.243	0.243	3.80**
	Family Cohesion	1.211	0.310	0.376	0.143	4.05**
	Informal Social Participation	0.122	0.721	0.435	0.049	2.97**
F-value = 32.325, R² = 0.435						
Social Support Received by the Respondent from Neighbors	Age	0.023	0.150	0.310	0.310	3.05
	Cultural Openness	0.050	0.211	0.390	0.080	2.09
	Informal Social Participation	0.036	0.130	0.402	0.012	4.16
F-value = 47.05 Coefficient of Determination (R²) = 0.402						
Social Support Received by the Respondent from Colleagues	Age	0.37	0.120	0.321	0.321	2.07**
	Cultural Openness	0.055	0.230	0.346	0.025	3.05**
F-value = 34.05 Coefficient of Determination (R²) = 0.346						

3.8. The Problems Faced by Bedouin Women and Proposed Solutions from the Participants' Perspectives

The results of Table 8 demonstrate that the challenges faced by rural women in North Sinai are deeply rooted in a complex traditional social structure. Tribal loyalty and rigid customs and traditions represent the most frequent issues, with percentages of 94.95% and 93.69%, respectively. These high percentages indicate that the tribal environment continues to shape the behavioral framework of individuals, particularly women, restricting their ability to engage in social support networks outside the family and clan. This aligns with the view of Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006), who discussed the dominance of tribal norms over the public sphere, which consequently marginalizes rural women in developmental and social fields. Additionally, the issue of misunderstanding and disharmony among friends (79.81%) suggests that horizontal relationships, which are supposed to form an important source of informal support, suffer from fragility and weakness. This is consistent with the previous results indicating a low level of support from friends and colleagues (Table 7). This explanation is further reinforced by the high percentages of problems related to participation restrictions, such as the prohibition of women's involvement in organizations (63.09%) and limited employment opportunities (43.53%). Collectively, these issues point to a pattern of systematic social isolation that reinforces women's dependence and

imposes near-complete reliance on family-based sources of support.

On the economic side, issues such as low income (62.46%) and limited job opportunities (49.21%) complement the image of compounded challenges that hinder women's empowerment and reinforce their dependence on family support. Literature, such as Salman *et al.* (2022), has shown that the absence of economic independence leads to a decline in women's self-confidence, reducing their ability to build diverse support networks. Also noteworthy are internal marital issues, such as the control of in-laws over the marriage, excessive jealousy, and the husband's weak personality, which appeared in nearly half of the cases. This indicates that even the closest source of support (the husband) may be ineffective due to imbalances within the family, as reflected in the variance in support levels from the husband in Table 7. Based on the above results, it is evident that the barriers to Bedouin women's access to social support are not limited to resource scarcity or lack of education. Rather, they extend to imbalances in the cultural, social, and economic structures, which create a compounded marginalization reality. Therefore, effective interventions should not be limited to economic empowerment or job creation; they require comprehensive cultural approaches that reassess inhibitive values, encourage community dialogue, and support women within the family and local community system. This will ensure the expansion of the social support base and enhance women's psychological and social independence within this specific context.

Table 8: Key Problems Facing Rural Women That Prevent Social Support, According to Their Perspectives.

Problem	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Tribal loyalty	301	94.95
2. Rigid customs and traditions	297	93.69
3. Lack of understanding and harmony among friends	253	79.81
4. High illiteracy rate among women in the study area	202	63.72
5. Restriction of women's participation in organizations, only in the most limited circumstances	200	63.09
6. Low income	198	62.46
7. Limited job opportunities in the region	156	49.21
8. Tribal enmity and conflict	152	47.49
9. Excessive tribalism and jealousy of the wife	149	47.03
10. In-laws controlling the marital life and the husband's weak personality	143	45.33
11. Restriction of women's ability to work, only in the most limited circumstances	138	43.53

3.9. Suggestions from the Participants to Address the Challenges Faced by Bedouin Women in the Study Area, According to Their Perspectives

As the results of Table 9 show, there is a high

awareness rate of Bedouin women concerning the areas of intervention that may alleviate the barriers to their access to the social support. The most prominent proposal that was made, which was continuous awareness campaigns of the importance of women and the aged women, got a 98.43%

approval, and then the proposal of organizing regular educational seminars was also endorsed by 94.06 %. This trend implies that there is internal awareness that the process of improving the status of women is not only dependent on the external efforts (e.g. state programs, institutional interventions, etc.) but also requires a shift in existing attitudes and culturally specific roles of the Bedouin people themselves. The given observations are in alignment with the claims of Salman et al. (2022), who state that the development of awareness among women and the local population about the roles of women can be regarded as an essential step towards the improvement of social engagement of women and the expansion of the available support system.

The strong focus on cultural and social aspects can be traced in the recommendations of the respondents, as 83.37 % of them support the idea to develop specific awareness programs that should consider Bedouin customs and traditions. This does not imply that women are disowning their cultural milieu per se, but rather, they are attempting to change it internally so that the changes do not contravene the value system that already exists in the society. Also, 79.18% of them population indicated the developmental projects to enhance the income and living conditions, which heightens their recognition of economic empowerment as a key area to empower women to be more independent and participate in society. Such perceptions are supported by regression analyses which indicate that there is positive correlation between income, cultural openness, social participation and the perceived level of support. Suggestions related with literacy and adult education also received high priority with 78.55% and 63.72%, respectively votes being approved respectively. This also confirms that educational attainment and social empowerment are closely related. The research found the illiteracy level of women to be one of the major impediments to

mobilizing their social functions.

It is also worth noting that several recommendations were made that touched on the male-dominated family unit such as enhancing awareness among men on their family roles (56.47 0.13) and making women strive to work by convincing them about the need to do so by the family (47.95 0.13). The proposals are indicative of a tactical style where women would be interested in recruiting men in the change process instead of fighting them, a mature understanding of the role of men in the support system. Thus, these suggestions confirm that real empowerment of Bedouin women is not possible by one type of interventions based on economy or education, but these interventions need to be complex and multifaceted, which will begin with cultural awareness and will end with the broadening of social support systems, but without the discourse of constraints and marginalization of Bedouin women.

It is also noteworthy that some suggestions addressed the male-dominated family structure, such as raising awareness among men about their familial roles (56.47%) and encouraging women to work by convincing their families (47.95%). This indicates that women are seeking to engage men as allies in the process of change rather than confront them, a mature approach that reflects a sophisticated social awareness of the role of men in the support system.

Therefore, these suggestions confirm that true empowerment for Bedouin women does not occur solely through economic or educational interventions but requires comprehensive and integrated approaches, beginning with cultural awareness and ending with the expansion of social support networks, all within an environment that respects the uniqueness of the Bedouin community and its values, without perpetuating constraints and marginalization.

Table 9: Suggestions from the Participants to Address the Challenges Faced by Bedouin Women in Gaining Social Support.

Suggestions	F	(%)
1. Continuous awareness of the importance of women, especially the elderly	312	98.43
2. Organizing regular and intensified educational seminars on ways to assist women	298	94.06
3. Developing awareness programs specifically for Bedouin communities that consider their social conditions and customs, aimed at helping them change rigid traditions	263	83.37
4. Implementing developmental projects in these areas to improve women's income and living standards	251	79.18
5. Working on women's literacy through actual literacy classes, not just nominal	249	78.55
6. Promoting adult education among women to avoid any embarrassment	202	63.72
7. Addressing and resolving tribal conflicts as well as issues between neighbors	187	58.99
8. Improving relationships among neighbors and fostering a spirit of cooperation between them	182	57.41
9. Raising awareness among men about their roles and duties toward their families	179	56.47
10. Helping Bedouin women to work by convincing their families of its importance	152	47.95

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study are able to reveal the multi-faceted truth of the issue of providing social support to Bedouin women in North Sinai Governorate. Family unit especially the extended family and the spouse develops as the most effective and dominant source of support and the other sources of support, such as neighbors, friends, and co-workers, have low impact. A number of challenges to the realization of a wholesome social support was discovered chief among them being tribalism, traditions and lack of mechanisms of communal understanding. Such findings highlight the need to have holistic developmental and cultural interventions. Further, the information shows that the empowerment of Bedouin women is not achievable without the increase of formal and informal social support systems, and the expansion of the community involvement with the help of the increased awareness and the formation of the supportive cultural and institutional environment. The inclusion of women in local development projects is therefore a significant measure towards community integration and the promotion of social justice in an environment where discrimination and structural injustices are the order of the day.

The research provides new understanding of social support among Bedouin communities and creates a theoretical framework towards comprehending more areas like institutional support and how education and economic mobility affect the support systems of Bedouin women. In this respect, it implies the implementation of reasonable social actions that would be specific to the Bedouin setting, and thus, would allow women to participate effectively, achieve protection, and feel respected.

4.1. Research Limitations

1. **Geographical Scope** This research is limited to the Northern Sinai region, where the social support for Bedouin women in this specific area has been studied. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to all Bedouin areas in Egypt or other countries.
2. **Sample** A sample of Bedouin women from Northern Sinai was selected, and this sample may not necessarily reflect the full diversity of other Bedouin communities in Egypt or areas with different cultural characteristics.
3. **Time** Data was collected in 2024, meaning that the results could be influenced by future social, economic, and cultural changes.
4. **Methodology** The research relied on field tools

such as surveys and interviews with participants in the study community, which limits the data to the subjective experiences and personal perceptions of the participants.

5. **Local Interpretation** The local conditions in Northern Sinai may have a direct impact on the nature of the results, which could differ in other areas with different cultural or social contexts.

These limitations are factors to consider when interpreting the results of the research or attempting to generalize them to different communities or contexts.

4.2. Future Directions

1. Carry out comparative research regarding more Bedouin societies in Egypt and other places to examine the arrangement of the social support systems and define both general and specific patterns.
2. Conduct longitudinal research to follow the temporal changes of the social support processes and to evaluate the long-term effects of the empowerment interventions.
3. Explore the effects of educational and economic empowerment initiatives on women and their social inclusion and the support systems.
4. Evaluate the role of institutional and policy-based assistance, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, in order to assess performance and suggest ways to improve it.
5. Using digital means to expand support networks and overcome the barrier of geography and social isolation among Bedouin societies.

4.3. Recommendations

Encourage cultural sensitivity on female roles and, hence, retain the Bedouin identity and gender equality.

1. Popularization of the culture of women role in addition to preserving Bedouin identity and enhancing gender equality.
2. Encourage the creation of women community support groups in order to strengthen the social solidarity and resilience.
3. Offer specific educational and vocational training programmes in order to increase the economic and social empowerment of women.
4. Increase economic opportunities by job creation projects and funding women-led projects.

5. Implement non-discrimination policies that will ensure women can equally access critical resources and services.
6. Enhance access to education, information and economic opportunities of women through the use of digital technologies.
7. Develop sustained monitoring and evaluation procedures to evaluate programme effectiveness and improve on the same.

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