Article

Understanding Social Problems in Kuwait: Implications for Local Community Development

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Abstract: Local problems of countries around the world are increasing and are almost similar in terms of psychological disorders and problems. consequently, this study aimed to identify the nature of social problems in the State of Kuwait. Social problems in the State of Kuwait are increasing significantly, which affects local development. Therefore, the objectives of the study are to identify the social problems suffered by Kuwaiti society. The qualitative approach was used, where five female employees out of 11employees were interviewed, and the sample was withdrawn by the facilitated sample method. The results of the study showed that the nature of the problems suffered by Kuwaiti society, which is based on adolescents and children, are: movement disorders, academic achievement, depression, anxiety, as well as family problems, such as: Family disintegration. The purpose of this article is to describe the social problems in Kuwait comprising the understanding of their nature, causes and potential solutions. According to the study results, the study reached a number of recommendations, most notably working to spread and promote community development through social networking programmes, websites, radio and television programmes, and schools, as well as working to hold development and training workshops for community members in order to develop them, enhance their capabilities and development.

Keywords: Social problems; local development; social work; social policy; local community development.

Introduction
Social problems are often viewed as collective problems because their solution requires concerted collective action from elements in the society but are commonly considered to be personal problems of those affected by them (Marwan & Suleiman, 2019). This contribution examines the social problems of one society, Kuwait, and makes suggestions on how they might be addressed by local community development. Social community development is an understanding of personal problems as community problems requiring a community-based collective response and community efforts to assist affected individuals. It is argued that social problems in Kuwait are a consequence of rapid unplanned development and that more community involvement in planning and developing social services would be beneficial. It is further suggested that local community development efforts would benefit from being focused on a few larger community development initiatives rather than having many small competing initiatives.

The Royal Decree was issued by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah may God rest his soul - to establish the Social Development Office for Community Development in Kuwait in 1992, with the aim of addressing the effects of the problems that resulted from the Gulf War in 1990, and rehabilitating the Kuwaiti self and ridding it of impurities and psychological, social and educational suffering,

in order to contribute to building and developing society and making it safe, reassuring and effective (Social Development Office, 2016).

As a result of this noble initiative, and after the launch of the Social Development Office, the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was honoured by receiving a certificate of appreciation from the United Nations, in appreciation of the concept of the Social Development Office and its role aimed at developing and upgrading the human being at the individual, psychological and social levels. resulting from the winds of rapid change that the world is witnessing, in addition to keeping pace with the country's development projects and clarifying its social and development goals (Social Development Office, 2016).

The Social Development Office aims to work in a participatory manner in confronting social and psychological problems, and to work to keep pace with development projects through effective awareness and work as an effective partner in civil society, with a statement of the objectives of social and development projects, and work to prevent changing phenomena such as behaviours alien to society, study and analyse them and develop appropriate solutions to them, and follow up on what has been achieved in treating these cases with advanced methods that suit the specificity and sensitivity of the problem, and study the elements surrounding the situation, whether they are individuals in Family or relatives to identify the effects of the juvenile and work to treat them (Bureau of Social Development, 2016).

Human social problems at the local level in the State of Kuwait cannot be dealt with outside the global framework and thus must be understood within the context of social problems in other parts of the world (Ottesen et al., 2023). If one believes that a problem should be understood not just at the macro-level but also at the micro-level, then there must be some connection between local problems and global problems (Marwan & Suleiman, 2019). Social problems everywhere share basic common characteristics, but they also take on local peculiarities and variations, affected by local historical and social contexts (Nowak et al.,2022). Both the global and local levels must be dealt with in the effort to seek solutions.

The social problems most relevant to Kuwait must be discussed on both a global and a local level. The world's social problems as viewed from Kuwait, or Kuwait's social problems as viewed from the rest of the world, considering as an important basis for the present discourse Kuwait's position as a member of the UN Human Rights Council and a state endowed with worldwide social welfare concern (Al-Ajmi, 2021). Community development efforts must begin with creating an awareness of social problems amongst the local citizenry. Social problems must first of all be understood as problems. Social problems anywhere in the world are difficult to define and comprehend. A problem is social when it concerns a large number of people, and it is social and becomes a problem when it affects people adversely and prevents them from fulfilling their normal social functions. A social problem usually gives rise to another social problem in the sense that it generates social unrest and responses that lead to the exacerbation of the original problem. Therefore, the study seeks to understand the social problems in Kuwait and their impact on local development.

Literature Review

1. Social Problems in Kuwait

The percentage of divorces of Kuwaiti husbands from a Kuwaiti wife increased during the period 2007-2017 to 44.2% compared to marriages (Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice, 59, 2019), and cases of domestic violence increased, as the number of cases of assault on women in prosecution offices reached 11.6% in 2009 (Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice, 2010). In addition to the problems suffered by the elderly, such as depression and anxiety, to the problems of adolescents, such as control disorders and mania for theft (Abdel-Khaleq & El-Gohary, 2014). The fear of the future, the job market, educational challenges, a lack of suitable universities, and the vacuum in opportunities frustrate young people facing these psychological pressures. These factors expose young people to increased pressures and diminish their contributions to the development process. Not to mention the problems of the elderly, due to housing care and their long waiting for a suitable home, as well as the large number of debts, material problems and instalments, which made these problems present effectively and clearly in society (Al-Muhanna, 1999).

This study derives its importance from the importance of the role played by the Social Development Office in Kuwait and the programmes it provides, as the statistics of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice indicate the high rates of social problems facing Kuwaiti society, which may pose a threat to the composition and development of society.

The below table indicates an increase in the percentage of drug abuse problems that include crimes of drugs and psychotropic substances in 2018 by 63.5%, while the rate of divorce in Kuwaiti society for the Kuwaiti husband from the Kuwaiti wife increased in 2017 by 44.2%, and the percentage of electronic cases was 44.7% in 2016, including threats, extortion of reputation, harassment and child pornography, while violence against women in 2009 was 11.6%, and included beatings, serious harm, torture and attempted murder.

Table 1. The most prominent social problems in Kuwaiti society from the period 2009-2018

Problem	Year	Rate
Violence against women	2009	11.6%
E-Issues	2016	44.7%
Divorce	2017	44.2%
Substance abuse	2018	63.5%

Source: Kuwaiti Ministry Justice (2010)

As a result of the above, the need for this study has emerged, the justification for which is:

i.   Identifying the nature of the problems faced by the beneficiaries, as the previous table indicates a noticeable increase in problems despite the presence of social development offices.

ii. The scarcity of studies and research that shed light on the role of the Social Development Office in Kuwait. This study seeks to identify social problems and their impact on the development of the local community and to know the extent to which Kuwaiti society accepts social workers in intervening to solve their problems.

2. Social Problems

Robston (2001) defined social problems as undesirable gaps between ideal societies. Hart (2010) defined problems as disorders that significantly affect society and require social-level regulation. Powell Horton (2018) defined social problems as an undesirable social situation that significantly affects social norms and values. Therefore, social problems are negative attitudes that affect society and the relationships of individuals between each other.

3. Community Development Frameworks

It is difficult to define a single concept for community development, as Abdullah (2006) believes that community development is "the method of social and economic work in rural areas mainly, and depends on the entrance to social and economic sciences to bring about a civilised change in the way of thinking, working, and life by raising awareness of the local environment in this way and encouraging the participation of its members in thinking and preparation, and then implementing projects and programmes for the local environment within the framework of the available conditions on the scientific and administrative levels, to ensure that they are convinced of them, which achieves their continuation, support and development" (Abdullah, 2006,33).

Pawar (2014) argues that social development "encompasses all dimensions of society that need to evolve, so that people can enjoy a better quality of life and better health through both values and principles" (Pawar, 2014, 2). Therefore, social development can be defined procedurally for the purposes of this study as: a set of participatory actions between social, health, political and economic actions that help in the advancement of society and access to better horizons in the form of continuous and stable transformation in all economic, educational and health aspects.

The study of Almoharb and Alnaim (2002) entitled "The Social and Psychological Problems of Adolescents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", aimed to determine the magnitude and quality of social and psychological problems among Saudi adolescents according to various factors: social, economic, and environmental, leading to the emergence of adolescent problems. To achieve the study's objectives, the researchers developed a scale based on items that had previously been verified for the Saudi environment in previous studies to measure the following variables: Religious behaviour, parental treatment, irrational thoughts, anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, fear, and social isolation, and these measures were applied to 1147 adolescents. The study found important results, including: poor social and economic loyalty among Saudi adolescents, and the convergence of the prevalence of social behaviour problems and psychological problems (anxiety, depression, obsessiveness, and hyperactivity) with the prevalence of these problems in other societies, and the existence of a link between social problems and psychological problems.

4. Social Problems in Gulf Societies

Al-Otaibi's study (2022) stated that the social problems facing Saudi society, especially during the Covid-19 period, were centred on marital disputes, anxiety and tension, in addition to psychological and economic problems. In addition, the highest problems in the United Arab Emirates were family problems such as juvenile delinquency, divorce, and weak family ties (Al-Amoush, 2008). Young people in the State of Qatar also suffer from psychological problems, such as anxiety, depression, mental and psychological burnout, intellectual stress, and repression (Malkawi & Olimat, 2023). The rapid changes in the Kingdom of Bahrain also affected changes in Bahraini families, which led to various family problems such as women going out to work and changing their role, relying on domestic workers to raise children, as well as the decline in the financial level, and the interference of fathers in family life (Aldwi, 2021).

5. The Role of Social Development Institutions

Social development institutions serve a critical role in the advancement of societal welfare and the enhancement of community well-being. These entities are designed to address various dimensions of social issues, including poverty alleviation, education, health care, and community cohesion (Amri & Sihotang, 2023). By leveraging resources and implementing targeted interventions, social development institutions aim to foster inclusive growth. These institutions operate through a multi-faceted approach, engaging with different stakeholders such as government bodies, non-governmental organisations, and community groups. Their strategies often encompass policy advocacy, capacity building, and the creation of sustainable programmes tailored to meet the specific needs of various populations (Adekugbe & Ibeh2024).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of social development institutions can be evaluated through their impact on social indicators, including improved quality of life metrics and enhanced access to essential services. By analysing their contributions, one can gain insights into the underlying mechanisms that drive social progress and identify areas for future development.

6. Theoretical Framework: Rothman Model

The application of Rothman's Theory Model within the context of social problems in Kuwait has been explored through various scholarly articles, each contributing to a nuanced understanding of community dynamics and the role of socio-economic factors in health interventions. Woehle (1986) emphasises the interplay between social planning and action in addressing community issues, highlighting the necessity for practitioners to engage in coalition building and the manipulation of political structures to effect change. This foundational perspective underscores the potential for conflict within community dynamics, a theme that resonates throughout the subsequent literature.

Jack Rothman's model includes two basic approaches that can be applied to develop policies in government institutions in Kuwait and the world (Elgamal, 2016). The first approach: Policy practise: includes identifying, analysing, developing, implementing, and evaluating policies that guide the work of the government that provides services to individuals, and the second approach is administrative practice that includes organisational development, so this model can be used to develop social care policies provided

through: evaluating social programmes, planning programmes, and building the capacities of workers in the social sectors (Elgamal, 2016).

The first model of local development is based on the premise that changes in local communities are achieved through the participation and contribution of all members of the local community in setting goals and working with them, and this model appears in community development projects (Al-Omari, 2000). Also, as evidenced by this model, important tools to achieve its goals, the most important of which is empowerment, which is defined as *"The process in which individuals obtain the ability to influence decisions that concern their interests and enable them to obtain their rights and meet their needs and requirements"* (Bessa et al., 2021) .The model also utilizes advocacy, which involves actively supporting individuals lacking power and the ability to influence and defend their interests. This advocacy helps individuals communicate their rights to decision-makers and officials and assists them in solving their problems and meeting their needs (Chater & Loewenstein, 2022).

The second model, which focuses on social planning and technical processes to solve problems in relation to social problems such as health, education or lack and deficiency in various social services, the basis in this model is to bring about a planned and calculated change and is based on the basis that change in society is a change that requires the help or presence of experts in planning who can use their technical skills, and in this model several methods are practised in this model such as persuasion, consensus and pressure through rational processes decisions that achieve the goals of community members (Al-Meligy, 2003).

The third model of social action is practised with marginalised disadvantaged social groups, and works to bring about significant social changes in the basic social development and in the individuals themselves in addition to working on the distribution of power and resources and gaining a greater role in decision-making processes or changes in the policies of official organisations and institutions, and tends to practise this organisation (individuals, institutions) to use the method of pressure and confrontation as strategies to bring about the required change (Abdul Latif, 1999).

Methodology

The study followed a qualitative approach, which is based on a type of scientific research, which assumes the existence of social facts and phenomena adopted through the perspectives of individuals and groups involved in the research (Kand Leigi & Al-Samurai, 2008), an approach that will be based on the case study. In this regard, Brewenton and Millward (2001) stressed that the research methodology must be appropriate to the objectives of the study, so that this approach enables the production of data capable of answering the questions of the study, as well as its ease of use. Accordingly, this study uses the qualitative approach, described by its ability to detect many social phenomena and problems, especially those on which there are not many studies, in addition to its suitability of the studied subject in terms of its sensitivity.

The study population consists of all employees working in the Social Development Office (Al-Mirqab), who provide counselling and psychological and social support to all segments of Kuwaiti society, numbering 11male and female employees. This sample was chosen because of their direct contact with the Kuwaiti community, and their full knowledge of the issues and problems of the local community in Kuwait. Transcript analysis was utiliza, the data were analysed by separating each interview separately, which is called a "transcript," then reading it over and over again, and then the main ideas that summarised the study were obtained (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Table 2. Characteristics of the study sample

Sample	Field of Specialization	Specialization	Job Title
1	Children and adolescents	Social Service	Head of Department
2	Adults	Social Service	Social Work Specialist
3	Children and adolescents	Consulting Services	Social Work Specialist
4	Children and adolescents	Consulting Services	Social Work Specialist
5	Adults	Social Service	Social Work Specialist

The qualitative research methodologies reveals challenges in justifying sample sizes to ethical review boards. The authors examine four sample size determination approaches, pointing out flawed uniformity assumptions. They argue that many analysis models do not fit the exploratory nature of qualitative research, complicating justifications. The critique of Malterud et al. (2016) "information power" model highlights its assumption of homogeneity across qualitative methods and its neglect of the iterative aspect of research (Hall et al., 2024). Additionally, they challenge the realist view that data can merely be extracted, suggesting it overlooks the dynamic nature of qualitative enquiry. A nuanced understanding of sample size determination is necessary, recognising the diversity of qualitative methods (Sim et al., 2018).

The Findings

1. The Nature of The Problems Faced By Kuwaiti Society
The Social Development Office and the consultations and services it provides to the Kuwaiti society, whether for adolescents and children or for adults, were also talked about the most problems suffered by Kuwaiti society and the psychological and social effects that may suffer from cases that were under treatment or new, as it was found through interviews that the quality of the problems revolves around family disintegration, stateless issues, material problems, adolescent behaviour, anxiety and its types. Where the worker on children and adolescents said:

> *"The problems of adolescents and their behaviours are the most problems I face" (Informant 1)*

As for informantt 3 was the same speciality, children and adolescents, she said:

> *"I see for children the most things that cause them problems of movement and mental disorders and genetic problems as well as movement… the nature of disorders affects concentration, attention and memory and thus affect academic achievement as well as learning difficulties" (Informant 3)*

As well as participation No. 4, she spoke more about the type of problems, and mentioned:

> *"The problems of adolescents one of the most common problems that society suffers from. In general, anxiety dominates adults and children of all kinds, and exam anxiety for students, and social situations in each period of time is a certain thing, for example, children and adolescents become distracted… The most problems are anxiety of all kinds and stress" (Informant 4)*

This is in addition to the problems that adult specialists talked about, where they said:

> *"The problems of family disintegration, material problems such as loans and the issue of the stateless… the office is working on a therapeutic and preventive system" (Informant 2)*

> *"There are a too many problems, such as married couples and their lack of knowledge of each other, and the material conditions of some, or the parents' dealings with their children and the difficulties they are going through" (Informant 5)*

Summary of what was discussed during the interviews: Frequent behavioural problems in children and adolescents attending the centre. Children and adolescents suffer from learning difficulties and psychological disorders. Anxiety and stress in children and adults. Family disintegration and financial problems. Financial difficulties, family problems and lack of harmony among family members.

The role of the Social Development Office in community development
Discussed the role provided by the Development Office in the development of the local community, where the informants were asked about the results of the programmes that were presented,

Informant No. 1 said that:

"A lot of benefits the programmes because the consultations are provided with 40 dinars and this is expensive and we have it for free… Ion reviewers prefer and feel comfortable just because someone hears them" (Informant 1)

Informant No. 3 also agreed with her and said:

"No, thank God, the programmes have achieved sweet success" (Informant 3)

In addition, Informant No. 4 spoke in detail and said:

"We provided psychological programmes and provided programmes for cognitive behavioural therapy and children's treatment, and their results were excellent… At the beginning of the opening of the Development Office, batches of employees were sent to study abroad, which gave them preference even in providing courses, and the scientific aspect is very large and important" (Informant 4)

So, it became clear from the informants that services are provided free of charge to all. Success of programmes and services provided from the perspective of caregivers. As well success of behavioral and therapeutic programmes with service recipients. Has been also asked the employees: Is there a capacity from Kuwaiti society to help solve their problems, Informant number one said:

"In awareness, especially that the office inside   the dispensary, it is easy for guests to review confidentially and privately, each guest has a special code in it, without discuss the names" (Informant 1)

Informant No. 4, who specialises in children and adolescents, spoke more about reviewer feedback and said:

"I do not know why, I am surprised by you say this… I am surprised when we settle conferences and even if I hear young people say we are not crazy because parents use these words…I have teenagers who want to come to the office, what has become in this view currently exists, wives resort to us need neutral help away from parents" (Informant 4)

Informant No. 3 also referred to the ethical charter and said:

"We as specialists have an ethical charter that we must be neutral," and she added… *Thank God, in a lot people reviewed us and rested and took sessions, whether for their children or for them"* (Informant 3)

Informants 2 and 5 talked more about awareness and said:

"Females more than males have the ability, and adults of course, young people…The difference in education, age and sex in things, for example, become for the person psychologically educated knows that it is depression, but the uneducated says magic" (Informant 2)

"Society has become aware, thoughts of defect, we consult in our problems" (Informant 5)

It is clear from the hadith that there is full awareness of the public and full preservation of their privacy. Seeking advice from the centre in a neutral manner without interference from any family member. Dealing fully within the scope of the Code of Ethics. Women are more likely to attend the centre. People have become more aware of their consultations and are not afraid of how people look at them.

Discussion

It became clear from the study that the majority of social problems that society suffers from are based on adolescents and children and their behaviours, whether movement disorders, academic achievement, anxiety, fear, depression and other disorders that may be caused by family upbringing as a result of rapid social changes, which cause other problems, such as: movement disorders, which lead to distraction and concentration of the student in the classroom, and this in turn leads to poor academic achievement, which results in a series of family problems. The study's findings resonate closely with the tenets espoused in Rothman's model, which underscores the essential nature of strategic planning in tackling these urgent social concerns. Furthermore, the model delineates how tensions may surface within the complex interplay of family relationships and societal contexts, thereby emphasising the imperative for holistic strategies to address and alleviate these multifaceted issues effectively.

Family problems, such as family disintegration, debts, genetic problems that are transmitted to children, and parents' dealings with children, are a dangerous phenomenon that leads to the disintegration of societies. The family is an integral part of the social structure, so it bears the primary responsibility for controlling social problems within the framework of socialisation, family care and local development, in addition to helping some specialised centres, and thus there is a contribution to community development and the advancement of families, so the treatment of families is reflected on children and their social problems. This finding is consistent with a study (Almoharb & Alnaim, 2002), which indicated that the problems of adolescents may be due to the way families treat their children. According to the study of Suwardi and Saad (2024), the economic situation greatly affects children.

On the other hand, and since there is importance of the role of social organisations in development, because of their effective impact on society and the individual, the current study agreed with the study (Al-Kandari, 2019), as civil society associations and institutions play a role in completing distinctive development projects that focus on social fields and policy-making, along with studying (Othman, Irfan, 2012), in that social projects contribute to the development process by strengthening and empowering local communities, because of their impact. In capacity building and skills development, the social worker also has a role in networking with other parties, in terms of his contribution to development and in the treatment of cases, as well as refining his experiences, and agreed with a study (Maliha, 2016).

Networking with relevant institutions revealed that organisations and social centres play a major role in local community development, but the dialogue with the informants showed that there is a defect in knowing the role of the office and the role of social workers in local development, as the majority of responses stated that there is no a developmental role for the office, which confirms the existence of a defect in the work of the office and a lack of development experiences of its employees, and this is what agreed with the study (Shaker et al., 2017), in terms of a lack of experience in some workers in the field of development, as well as the Rothman model, which saw local development based on achieving changes with the contribution of communities and the participation of individuals (Al-Omari, 2000). According to Ijon et al. (2024) study, establishment of different companies with other organisations is an important factor in mutual communication and cooperation.

In addition, Rothman's methodology is fundamentally centreed around the crucial formulation of effective policies within various institutions. This process is achieved through a systematic approach that includes several key stages: the identification of relevant issues, thorough analysis, comprehensive development, careful implementation, and effective dissemination of these established policies. Consequently, this strategic approach significantly enhances the overall effectiveness and functional capacity of social institutions, ensuring they operate more efficiently and achieve their intended goals.

Conclusion

The study was summarised into a set of recommendations, the most prominent of which were: work to expand programmes and services related to the most comprehensive groups and wider regions to reach the community fully. Spreading and promoting community development through social media programmes, websites, radio and television programmes, and schools. Work to strengthen the role of the Social Development Office among

members of society, so that there is community knowledge of it, by paying attention to the media role represented in television programmes and radio interviews. Work on holding development and training workshops for community members in order to develop them, enhance their capabilities and develop them.

Research issues and practise-based findings are considered. It goes on to bring to light needed areas for further research and likely policy implications of current government and non-government levels. Proposed possible areas of critical community engagement are made. This study represents one of the first sustained research attempts to categorise social problems undergone by the Kuwaiti population. To help realise these ends, aspects of the roles of social centres and the workers And knowing the local problems of Kuwaiti society.

To conclude, as always, there is more research to be done. Hope that these potential projects and suggestions will guide you toward and through fruitful areas of investigation. Researchers should continue to focus their attention on the study of families per sae, on peer relations, on schools and their organisation, on community and neighbourhoods' influences, and on societal and national policy issues. Exploration of links and connections between each of these systems and levels, well aware that new and exciting issues will continue to surface, and that the integration of information is no easy matter.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declare no conflict of interest.

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