



## The Meaning of Financial Resilience in Coping with Poverty among Bedouin women

Dr. Nuzha Allasad Alhuzail

The School of Social Work, Sapir Academic College, Israel

### Abstract

The changes in the Bedouin sector of the Negev Desert since the establishment of the Israeli state have had far-reaching implications on Bedouin women. These implications come through as the loss of traditional sources of employment as well as the lack of suitable alternative employment.

Like many women in traditional, patriarchal societies, Bedouin women are trained to make do with little, and to be obedient, subservient, and passive. Thus, they are marginalized, excluded from public life and the labor market. This exacerbates the economic inequality between Arabs and Jews, institutionalized, *inter alia*, in the "Arab enclave", which lacks industrialization and is allocated fewer resources by the Israeli state.

In this context a qualitative study was conducted among twenty Bedouin women living in poverty who had participated in a microfinance program. The study found that a sense of control characterized those who had participated in a microfinance program and had developed a source of income for themselves and their families. The feeling that everything was under control was a key factor in enhancing the family's resilience and, gradually, the community's resilience too.

the study shows women have succeeded, albeit slowly, in creating employment for themselves and family members. Becoming earners raises their status within the family; they are respected for increasing the family's honor, and their opinions become important.

**Key Words:** Poverty, Bedouin community, microfinance program