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Study on the Personal and Societal Problems of Youth in the Kuwaiti Society

ABSTRACT

An empirical study was conducted on a representative sample of 1794 students, both male and female, with the explicit purpose of determining their dominant personal and societal problems that primarily influenced their behaviors, and moulded their attitudes in the Kuwaiti society. The study, primarily targeting the youth sector of the society, included students representing two educational institutions, Kuwait University, and the Institution of Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, recording their responses on a pre-coded questionnaire that included a total of 75 questions, of which 28 items specifically concerned personal problems and another 47 addressed major social concerns. The responses were analyzed using SPSS version, and the results significantly provided revealing insights into some of the most significant issues that constitute the core of the problems currently affecting the youth in the Kuwaiti society. The study found an overwhelming gender consensus on such significant issues as prevalence of excessive leisure with no constructive avenues or outlets for meaningful pursuits, the deep-rooted 'wasta' system that perpetuates preferences, the lack of social justice which leads to denial of fairness, and the prevailing social environment that precipitates deep emotional stress.

When compared with similar youth-related studies elsewhere, some of our findings were clearly indicative of those universal issues that are significantly affecting youth in many cultures and societies, especially concerning the spheres of excessive leisure or free time with absence of useful avenues to chanelize their energies through constructive pursuits. However, some of the problems that our study revealed are typical to Kuwaiti society, particularly the operation of the "wasta" system and "unjust" practices, which along with the excessive free time, is creating an alarming scenario, indicative of the social environment under which our youth are being nurtured, groomed and socialized. Considering that youth are the most important pillars of the society, our results underlie a critical need for the policy-makers to formulate specific youth-intensive policies that encourage responsibility, stimulate a healthy and positive attitude, and make them effective contributors and partners in the national and social development. The study also perceives a clear need for a wider, more comprehensive study to examine the youth priorities and prevailing obstacles to their personal and professional growth to determine broad patterns and values that characterize youth in the Kuwaiti social context.

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