

Chapter 4:

Violence Against Women

Introduction

The building of a balanced and solid society begins with the family, which is the foundation of society. Society is confirmed and supported through the presence of various institutions in the educational, cultural, social and political sectors, among others. As women represent a family's fundamental element, violence against them creates an obstacle to the formation of an ideal society, the achievement of equity and the realization of development goals.

Violence against women is considered to be an international, Arab and local issue; therefore, it has been discussed in several meetings and conferences, such as in Mexico in 1975, the Second International Women's Conference in Copenhagen in 1980, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1984, the Third International Women's Conference in Nairobi in 1985, the International Declaration for Eliminating Violence Against Women in 1993 and the Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995.

The international work methodology from the 1995 Beijing conference declares in the 24th paragraph the necessity of taking integrated measures to prevent violence directed against women and of studying the causes and consequences of this violence and the efficiency of the procedures taken as a result of it. This includes eliminating the trade in women and helping victims of prostitution.

Definition of Violence Against Women

The United Nations defines gender-related abuse as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of

liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Violence against women includes physical, sexual and psychological violence. That which occurs in the family can include beating and the sexual abuse of female children, the rape of wives, female circumcision or other traditions that harm women, violence between unmarried couples and evidence of profiteering through the abuse of females. Also included is the physical, sexual and psychological abuse occurring in society in general, such as sexual abuse; sexual solicitation; abuse in places of work, educational institutions and other places; the trade in women; and prostitution.

Violence against women includes all the types of abuse used by fathers, brothers, husbands, employers and other men against women. Some agencies define violence as "Any behavior that comes from a person attempting to control another person or causing their submission using terror, humiliation or physical abuse".

Many scholars look at the phenomenon of violence as an educational and social disease that begins in males' childhood, in which their upbringing plays a significant role in their later violence. Boys who see their mothers humiliated and beaten by their fathers for silly reasons often initiate the same behavior at a later age. The violence against women they see as youths creates a strong tendency in them to perform acts of violence against young females in their social environment. The older they become, the more the violence increases. So long as women represent the weaker sex for men in unequal societies, this violence will explode, with horrible consequences for women.

In many cases, married and unmarried women who have been the victims of violence become easy prey for psychopaths and people with bad tempers who negatively affect their spiritual and physical health, their

work and their children's upbringing. As a result, their continuous feelings of worry, nervousness and depression negatively affect all family members and increase the probability of divorce and dissolution of the family.

This chapter includes the causes and reasons of violence against women and the legalities that were issued against those who practice violence against women. It also discusses the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for protecting women and the family, women involved in crimes, all types of violence against women and trends in families regarding violence against women.

Causes of Violence Against Women

There are many reasons for and causes of violence against women, according to statistics and studies. They include social, economic and legal factors. They can be divided into the following categories:

1. **Economic reasons:** Financial burdens and difficult economic conditions are one of the main explanations for violence in the family. Heads of families often direct their frustrations at their families, and wives are the first to bear the brunt of this violence. Long- and short-term unemployment plays a role in creating this phenomenon, as well. The variance in husbands' and wives' economic levels may also play a role in creating disagreements between them that lead to violence against the women of the family.
2. **Social reasons:** This includes divorce, polyandry, having a large number of children, living in extended families, family disagreements, family difficulties and the social struggle between men and women as a result of the Jordanian family structure which distinguishes between the roles of men and women and usually gives the advantages and privileges to males.
3. **Faulty concepts:** These are the flawed notions related to one's social role, such as the concept of the husband's right to beat his wife and the necessity of the wife offering obedience to her husband and patiently bearing his abuse. They

also include the popular concept that men have the right of custody, whether they are husbands, fathers or brothers. These concepts play a role in creating and enhancing violence against women, and they will be presented later in detail.

4. **Psychological reasons:** These factors include psychological problems, depression, stress, low feelings of responsibility toward the family, lack of emotional satisfaction in childhood and feelings of worry and desperation, which all can lead to violence.

Legislations Regarding Violence Against Women

The legalities concerned with women rights are represented in the Jordanian Constitution and the laws derived from it. They can also be found in the guidelines presented in the National Convention on July 9, 1991. Their texts are general, but they include implied indications of women's rights as well as legal and executive procedures, all of which need to be interpreted in a practical manner.

The Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was issued in 1952, and it ensures the principles and rights of all Jordanians and that males and females are considered equal before the law with no discrimination in their rights or duties, despite their differences in religion, language or race (Item 6/1). The state ensures equal opportunities for all as well as the right to occupy public positions and guarantees that public jobs and positions will be assigned based on one's efficiency and qualifications (Items 22/1 and 22/2).

Organizations for Protecting Women and the Family

A number of institutions and organizations are working toward the protection and custody of the family, in general, and women, in particular, in Jordan.

These institutions' vested interest is to study women's status and eliminate all types of violence against them. They include governmental organizations such as the Family Protection Department and the Ministry of Social Development. They also include

non-governmental organizations such as the Jordanian Women's Union, the Jordan River Foundation, the National Council for Family Affairs, the National Institute for Women's Solidarity and the Family Awareness and Guidance Center.

International organizations are also involved, such as the United Nations Development Program and the United Nations Fund for Women. There are also many ministries and institutions working in this field like the Ministry of Health, the Jordanian National Commission for Women, the Queen Zain Al Sharaf Institute, the National Center for Human Rights, the International Center for Human Rights, the World Health Organization and the Society for Family and Childhood Protection.

Governmental Organizations

1. Family Protection Department

In 1997, the General Security Department established a unit that was later developed into a new specialized department and called the Family Protection Department. The department works as a team with all related governmental and non-governmental institutions and deals with two types of cases: sexual attack on both males and females (regardless of the victim's age and whether the attacker is or is not from the family) and cases of family violence and negligence affecting children.

The Department receives all proclamations and notifications regarding family violence affairs and sexual attacks directly from victims or their supporters as well as from security centers, ministries, governmental institutions and telephone hotlines.

The Family Protection Department deals with these cases with total confidentiality to preserve victims' privacy. Cases are dealt with according to the type of abuse and the victim's sex by a qualified team with police and academic experience.

There is cooperation and coordination between the Family Protection Department and a number of institutions and organizations. This includes the Ministry of Health, where specialized doctors are delegated from the National Center of Forensic Medicine and the National Center for Psycho-

logical Health to investigate victims inside the department, when needed, so they can avoid the stress and suffering they could encounter in general hospitals. Medical reports issued on these cases are subject to approval by law. The Department also cooperates with the Ministry of Social Development and the Jordan River Foundation to follow up on some cases in order to ensure that attacks do not continue. Furthermore, there is cooperation between the Department and the Jordanian Red Crescent Hospital to provide various free medical services to all needy victims.

2. The Ministry of Social Development/ Department of Social Defense

The Ministry of Social Development plays a significant role in eliminating and preventing crime through the Social Defense Department. It executes a group of programs and activities that aim to aid those dealing with hardship based on the concept of protecting society from the dangers of crime through cooperation with specific sectors.

There are centers throughout the Kingdom that work to harbor and rehabilitate those of both sexes who are involved in violence so that they can be reincorporated into society. Al Khansa Center, in the Zarqa governorate, is an example of one of their centers which is responsible for girls' custody and rehabilitation. It receives girls from all parts of Jordan.

Non-Governmental Organizations

There are many active and effective non-governmental organizations working in the field of women's rights which are involved in study and research as well as in the attempt to document the hardships women face. Additionally, they run educational and awareness programs and/or provide services to aid women.

These organizations attempt to eliminate all types of violence and discrimination against women by using data from their studies to guide their work and measure improvements, evaluating their efforts and building their capacity to address these issues. Among the most important non-governmental organizations in this field are

1. The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) is one of the first semi-governmental commissions established in the Arab world to promote women's issues. Established by a Cabinet decree in 1992 to express Jordan's International commitment to the advancement of women on one hand and to work as coordinator between the governmental and non-governmental organizations working for women's advancement on the other.

JNCW's responsibilities broadened in 1996 with the Cabinet's decree to charge it with defining policies and legislation related to women and identifying priorities, plans, and programmes in both governmental and non-governmental sectors in order to implement them effectively. These responsibilities can be summarized in the following five main areas:

1. Defining general policies and legislations related to women's issues, participating in setting the national development plans and setting development plans for sectors concerned with women affairs
2. Enhancing communication, exchanging information and experience and performing activities related to women's advancement, which included among others representing the Kingdom in all dealings pertaining to women's affairs at national, regional, and international levels.
3. Proposing new policies and legislation to further the cause of women as well as studying existing policies and legislation to ensure that women are not discriminated against.
4. Preparing the National Strategy for Women, working on updating and developing it and following up on its implementation.
5. Formulating networks to ensure the active involvement of the broad and diverse range of institutional and individual actors working toward the advancement of women and to promote dialogue among the many different public and private institutions endeavoring to bring about gender equality, In addition to formulating the Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination committee.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women works to achieve its goals by facilitating communication between ministries, public institutions and non-governmental organizations and institutions. Within this context communication network with the governmental organizations was established and the ministries and official departments' focal points were assigned. The NGOs Coordination Committee was also established so that both can work as executive divisions for the JNCW under the supervision of the General Secretary.

As for the role of the JNCW in eliminating violence, the issue of violence against women in Jordan comprised one of the main areas of the National Strategy of Jordanian Women. JNCW led a large effort comprised of Jordanian public and private institutions and individuals involved with women's issues to formulate a national strategy for women in Jordan. The National Strategy determined the actions that should be taken in coordination with governmental and non-governmental organizations to eliminate violence against women. It included the importance of defining violence against women, its types and forms, as well as calling for legislative amendments. The legal committee of the JNCW reviewed several laws discriminating against women including the penal code article (340) which sentences those who commits honor crimes reduced penalty, the committee also recommended to amend these articles which discriminate against women.

The JNCW participated in launching a campaign to eliminate violence against women in 1998. which included several workshops which discussed this subject and its influence on women and society in general. It also discussed the actions that should be taken to eliminate this phenomenon or reducing it and its social impact.

2. The Jordanian Women's Union

The Jordanian Women's Union was established in 1945, and it has local, regional and international relations. The Union's primary objective is to promote Jordanian women to a higher level in society as well as to activate their role. Additionally, the Jordanian Women's Union strives to

1. Organize and unite Jordanian women's affairs to protect women's rights and development as well as to enhance their role in society
2. Stand up against all forms of discrimination against women
3. Integrate Jordanian women in local social development, enhance their social position and empower them to invest their creativity and energy in a better way
4. Eliminate legislation and economic, social and cultural obstacles which allow for negligence regarding the women's rights documented by international authorities (such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Jordanian Constitution, etc.)
5. Activate Jordanian women's role so that they are better allowed to perform their duty to enhance Jordan's independence, stabilize its democratic procedures and protect its sovereignty and national culture
6. Support and stand up for Arab women and cooperate with them to achieve their common objectives
7. Advance solidarity with women from all around the world with regard to their equality

In 1994, the Jordanian Woman's Union worked through the Committee for Fighting Violence Against Women to come up with the idea to start a telephone guidance line. It began operations in 1996 along with a house that hosted women who were victims of violence or had experienced violent threats.

Telephone Guidance Line

The telephone guidance line began through the work of sociologists, psychologists, lawyers and volunteers. It was introduced through newspaper advertisements which defined its aims and objectives. The hotline focuses on the following three areas:

- * Telephone reception: all cases are received by a social specialist who specifies the nature of the problem and transfers it to specialists who define how a case is reviewed and studied. Cases can be dealt with by telephone only in instances where women refuse to come to the center or declare their identity.

- * Interview: victims come to the center when they are unable to talk of their problem on the telephone. Their cases are confidential so that they can feel comfortable while being interviewed.

- * Fieldwork: specialists will often visit women when they are unable to come to the center or call. Fieldwork is used in cases in which there are tough circumstances that make it difficult for women to make contact with specialists.

Additionally, the hotline, offers three types of services:

I. Social services:

This service is offered through the phone, by which the social specialist listens to the case, specifies the problem and intervenes through follow-up. These cases require victims to trust the specialist enough to declare their identity so that the problem can be better solved. There are cases in which victims' names are known and their problems studied and others in which victims refuse to declare their identity and prefer to talk to specialists in order to assuage their pain and attempt to solve their problem alone. The latter types of cases make up 20% of the calls to the hotline.

Physical violence cases are dealt with as follows:

- A. Acquiring the medical report. In some cases, the medical report is obtained through cooperation with the Department of Forensic Medicine without the necessity of going through the Security Department. Attackers are directly contacted even if they are fathers, brothers or husbands.
- B. Transferring the victims of particularly violent cases to the Specialized Security Center upon their consent and following up on them.
- C. Transferring cases to legal systems and following up on judicial procedures.
- D. Working with victims to author covenants or contracts to help protect them from other violent attacks.

Additionally, the hotline pursues and studies cases of marital disagreements. Social specialists attempt to further conversation and a cooperative spirit between the

husband and wife so that they can depend on themselves to solve their disagreements and avoid future incidents.

2. Psychological services:

These services attempt to do the following:

- Psychological rehabilitation for victims of physical and sexual violence
- Psychological evaluation for women who come to the center and preparation of psychological therapy plans
- Transfer pathological cases to the therapy activities prescribed by the doctor
- Follow up on school drop-out cases

3. Legal services:

The legal services are comprised of the following:

- Telephone consultation, which is provided when quick consultation is in order or information is needed to predict the occurrence of violent incidents. The largest number of consultations is related to the personal status law, the nationality law, labor law, the social insurance law and the legal procedures used in courts.
- Legal follow up, which involves following up on cases through writing up applications presented to the courts and being present with victims step by step so that their lawyers are knowledgeable of all the details and the cases are supported at a high level. When victims are not defended and the law does not require them to have a lawyer, volunteer lawyers adopt their cases. Depending on the victims' financial status, legal fees are sometimes paid by the Union and sometimes paid by the victims.

In 2002, the total number of cases from the three centers of Amman, Baqa'a, and Madaba reached 900. Since the hotline's establishment, it has received 6115 calls.

Women's Safe House

The lack of specialized places for women victims of violence and violent threats was the prime reason that the hotline was established.

The Jordanian Women's Union, through the National Committee, decided to establish a shelter for women facing violence in order to save efforts spent looking for a safe place

for them. Up until that point, the Union had been taking risks at times in putting victims in the houses of employees and volunteers.

In August 1999, the safe house was opened and began receiving cases from the telephone guidance line and other institutions such as the Family Protection Unit. By 2002, 145 cases were received, and the average length of stay ranged from one week to three months. From the beginning of 2003 to mid-October, the house received 75 cases.

The Union works with all legal and other means to establish its goals and objectives and to rehabilitate women through the transfer of knowledge, experience and skills as well as through research, fieldwork and the involvement of Jordanian and Arab women. It also attempts to coordinate with all the many movements working to activate Jordanian women's role, achieve their rights and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against them.

3. The International Institute for Women's Solidarity

The International Institute for Women's Solidarity was established in Jordan in 1998. It executes many programs and courses on human rights and violence against women and girls. The Arab Center for Resources and Information, which was established in 2000, is considered one of its most important programs. The Center's primary goal is to participate in the efforts directed at eliminating violence against women and girls through its different programs and website and it also aims to enhance communication, interaction and exchange of experience between those involved in the sector.

4. The Family Education and Guidance Center

The Family Education and Guidance Center is part of the Housewives' Society, which was established in 1982 with the aim of solving individuals' social problems and finding suitable ways to help them increase their feelings of satisfaction. The Center's objectives are to help families to have a better life through its focus on educational, psychological, social, legal and health support and to assist those who engage in harmful acts against others. The Center offers family guidance

programs, studies and workshops on various social and family issues.

5. The Jordan River Foundation

The Jordan River Foundation was established in 1995, and it is headed by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah. It is a non-profit national institution that aims to enhance the dynamism of Jordanian society through encouraging sustainable social, economic and cultural programs that are derived from national needs and priorities that focus on empowering society and the individual.

The Foundation's primary goals are to perform a leading and effective role in enabling Jordanians, especially women and children, to improve their quality of life and work for a better future for all of Jordanian society.

It works on many programs that fulfill the needs of its target groups. This includes the safe house that was opened in 2000 in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and the Family Protection Department. The Jordan River Foundation is the first foundation in the Arab world that provides protection and rehabilitation to abused children and gives advice to Jordanian fathers, mothers and individuals. Its safe house provides temporary care for girls from infancy to the age of 14 and for boys from infancy to 8 years old, and it offers daily therapy services for those in other age categories. It also runs the Jebel Nasser center, which was established in 1998 to help child and family abuse victims in East Amman.

Data Resources

The data in this chapter is from studies made by institutions and organizations working in the field of domestic violence.

The Queen Zain Al-Sharaf Development Institute authored a public opinion study that attempts to deeply understand the phenomenon of family violence in Jordan by looking at the views of different groups of society. It used a limited sample but employed deep research (the Qualitative Research Approach) in order to closely examine individuals' comprehension, sensibility and unguarded opinions on the subject. The data for this study was collected through three phases:

1. Open Interviews With Homogeneous Groups

In this phase, individuals were interviewed within focused groups, the number of individuals in each group ranged between 5-8. The interviews in this phase covered all groups of society while taking in to consideration the following variables:

- Sex (male and female)
- Education level (high, medium and low)
- Place of residence (urban, rural or badia)
- Age (18-24 years and 25 years and above).

There were 18 groups interviewed, with 58 females and 45 males. Additionally, three groups of professionals involved in family protection issues were interviewed to specify their concepts on family violence. Their number included 6 males and 6 females. Research interviews covered the following groups:

1. Teachers and educational guides
2. Social specialists
3. Lawyers
4. Security employees
5. Forensic doctors and pediatricians
6. Guidance counselors
7. Victims of family violence

2. Semi-constrained interviews with homogeneous groups:

The interviews in this phase were directed through an interview schedule and included questions specified according to the researchers' opinions from the previous phase. Ten semi-constrained interviews were conducted with ten concentrated homogenous groups. The interviews included the four variables under study. There were 27 interviews for females and 35 interviews for males.

3. Semi-constrained interviews with dissident groups:

In this phase, four constrained dissident groups were interviewed with the aim of more deeply investigating the individuals' intellectual frameworks in relation to domestic violence. The goal of the interviews was to better specify the differences in individual characteristics and views. There were 18 interviews with females and 35 with males.