

The phenomenon of Violence against Algerian Women " Reality and Diagnosis"

ظاهرة العنف ضد المرأة الجزائرية

" الواقع والتشخيص "

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Abstract:

The phenomenon of violence is increasing and spreading in various regions of the world to the extent that violence has become a form of contemporary life that affects all groups of society. However, there are groups that are harmed to a high extent due to age and gender factors, such as children and women. Violence against women is often used by men in order to impel them to submit to the rational or even irrational will of men or to improve their patterns of behaviour in the family and society. Violence against women occurs in patriarchal societies, that is, societies in which the status and reputation of men are higher than the status and reputation of women, and violence practiced against women receives support and backing and encouragement from the elderly, the state, officials, and sometimes from men of law and religion, because they believe that women must be obedient and subject to the characteristics of their nature and function, which entail submission and obedience to men without any resistance. In order to be obedient, violence is used against them as if it were a legitimate practice and the right of a man who receives social support.

Key words: Violence; women; submission; methods of violence; male domination.

الملخص:

تزايد ظاهرة ممارسة العنف وتنتشر في مختلف مناطق العالم حتى صار العنف وكأنه شكل من أشكال الحياة المعاصرة يمس كل فئات المجتمع إلا أن هناك فئات يقع عليها الضرر بشكل مرتفع بفعل عامل السن والنوع الاجتماعي ، كالأطفال والنساء ، فالعنف ضد النساء يستعمل غالباً من قبل الرجال وذلك لحملهن على الرضوخ والانصياع لإرادة الرجال العقلانية أو غير العقلانية أو لتحسين أنماط سلوكهن في الأسرة والمجتمع ، ويحدث العنف ضد النساء في المجتمعات الذكورية أو الأبوية النظام أي المجتمعات التي تكون فيها منزلة وسمعة الرجل أعلى من تلك التي تتمتع بها المرأة. والعنف المستعمل ضد المرأة يلقى الدعم والتأييد والتشجيع من كبار السن والدولة والمسؤولين وأحياناً من قبل رجال القانون والدين لأنهم يرون أن الواجب أن تكون المرأة مطيعة وخاضعة لخاصية تكوينها ووظيفتها التي تحمل الخنوع والرضوخ للرجل دون مقاومة ولتكون مطيعة يستخدم العنف ضدها وكأنه ممارسة مشروعة ومن حق الرجل الذي يلقى الدعم الاجتماعي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العنف، المرأة، الخنوع، أساليب العنف، الهيمنة الذكورية.

Introduction

The phenomenon of violence against women is an old social phenomenon, that has been closely linked to the Algerian social structure, and to the prevailing system of values in our society. It is the domination of the man and the subjugation of the woman and obliging her to show obedience, consent and acceptance of all his actions and behaviours, otherwise, she will be subjected to violence in order to do so.

In our society, women have been known as inferior and looked down upon in the traditional society, and it persisted to this day. Despite the change that happened in social roles and the status of women and their assumption of high positions in the state, they still be subjected to the phenomenon of social, political and cultural violence, regardless of their contribution to the development process planned by the Algerian state since the independence.

The Algerian woman is considered an integral part of this success and progress, but the woman continues to be subjected to violence and abuse is practiced on her, as she suffers from the problems that these societies suffer from. and violence against women by a man, whether a husband, father, or brother, is one form of violence ¹.

A woman, in the eyes of a man, is only suitable for marriage, childbearing, and doing housework, despite the change in several concepts and visions.

However, this Arab and Algerian man insists on belittling her and rebuking her once she is rebelled against customs and traditions: “Even though the social status of women has changed thanks to education and work in different sectors, this change in reality did not prevent them from being exposed to many social problems, and perhaps the most prominent of these problems, i.e., the problem of violence that she has come to face in different social spaces, such as the streets and various workplaces.

The phenomenon of violence takes social, cultural, and even economic dimensions in light of the violence practiced against women, and even the silence and consent of women to all kinds of abuse that is practiced on them. Therefore, we will try to examine the causes of this violence, its diagnosis, and the extent of its exacerbation and ways to confront it.

- Did social changes contribute to increasing the practice of violence against women?

- Does the patriarchal culture inherited in our society contribute to the practice of all kinds of violence against women?

- How does violence affect the social and psychological status of women?

1-1- Violence Practiced against Women:

Socialists view violence as an aggressive behaviour carried out by a party, which may be an individual, group, social class, or state, with the aim of exploiting or subjugating another party within the framework of an unequal power relationship, economically, socially, or politically that causes material, moral, or psychological damage on an individual, group, social class, or another country. Or, it is a physical or spiritual pressure of an individual or collective that is inflicted on another individual or collective with the intention to do harm. It is a behaviour that conflicts with the values of society. There is a system of violence represented by the person who carries out the violence, the person on whom the violence is inflicted, and then the public who suffers from violent behaviour.

The Dictionary of Social Sciences defines violence as: “The use of pressure or power illegally to the extent that it would affect the will of an individual.”²

Violence is not limited to beating and using physical force on others by deliberately assaulting them physically. Rather, it may be verbal violence, including insults and cursing, that harms the others more than the physical harm. It results in causing greater psychological harm. This behaviour is

contrary to all values and heavenly religions, that are spreading peace, psychological calm, and reassurance between races. Nevertheless, there is always hostile behaviours.

The word “violence” in French also means: “excessive use of force on what is socially familiar?”³

Scholars define “violence” as: “the use of physical force to inflict harm on individuals or properties, and it is also the act or treatment that causes serious harm or interference with personal freedom”.⁴

Violence is close to abuse and its forms. It causes significant psychological effects on the person subjected to violence, but there is a difference in the two behaviours, “abuse includes physical and psychological aspects, while violence is an act that intentionally aims to cause physical distress or threat to another person”⁵.

Severe psychological effects can be resulted by violence on its victims, and the one who committed violence is in a psychological state (hysterical) too, in which he cannot differentiate between right and wrong. He is in a state of accumulation of emotions and internal repression that has persisted for years, which has made him a violent person who practices violence. From the psychological concept, violence is an individual's physical and verbal behaviour characterized by extreme direct aggression, with the aim of causing physical and psychological harm to others. It is a direct and external aggressive emotional tendency directed at the others, directly, materially or verbally. It leads the abuser to think and perceive in an unusual way.⁶

Violence in the procedural sense in this study

It is any behaviour or action deliberately caused by the abuser to the abused, by means of beating that causes him bruises, or verbal violence that causes deep psychological effects that affect him momentarily or permanently, or sexual violence, which is rape. All these behaviours are inconsistent with societal controls and society's values.

The violence studied here is the violence practiced on women in all its forms to force them to submit, or sexually exploit them, which causes them visible or internal harm that contradicts our values and our true religion. There are other types of economic and political violence, but what concerns us in this study is violence against women in its various forms.

1-2- Violence against women

Violence has been practiced on this social type since ancient times. The view of inferiority was associated with women in ancient societies. They were subject to the authority of the men. Who has the right to humiliate, beat and even imprison the women if necessary. A woman in the Greek society was not entitled to express an opinion or even ask for a divorce if she is tired of living with a man. "She was subject to the man's authority to the extent that her right to divorce was taken away from her. If she would escape from home, the man would go after her on the road, captured her, and forcibly returned herhome."

A woman remains a commandment for the man, whether the father, brother, husband, or uncle. She is considered a fool and without reason, and the man is wiser than her. He is more perfect than her in all qualities and in thinking. Thus, "in a man's brain, the rational side controls over the irrational side, as the opposite is what usually happens in a woman's brain."⁷

This indicates masculine dominance in Greek society and the right of the men to exercise authority over women.

In pre-Islamic Arab society, the condition of women was the same as that of Greek society, and even more so. They were killing newborn daughters by burying them at a very young age (femicide), because the birth of daughters for the Arab man at that time was a disgrace to him. He would hide from his people ashamed of this birth. Even if it was destined for a female newborn to be saved from femicide, she would find a dark life waiting for her, full of injustice and violence. Few women found status and sanctity only if they were the daughters of tribal leaders, the chief, or a leader. This was the status, until the Qur'an came and honoured women and gave them a respectable position among their people and enabled them to inherit from one of their parents or husbands, and removed hatred and insult from them. In Roman society, violence against women appeared in the form of making women as instruments of sex and seduction. Since, according to them, the Roman women were cursed with sin because they were females, i.e., deficient in reason, foolish, and treated like a lunatic. The head of the family had the right to buy and sell daughters whenever he wanted, because they were under his guardianship. This guardianship remained with the man until the women are dead.

The Indian women were not spared from violence. Rather, it was practiced on them in the most dangerous types. They had no opinion. They were not consulted, and were not even respected. Actually, in the Indian customs, a woman is buried after the death of her husband and burned with him in a single pyre. Moreover, in the Hindu customs, a woman marries a man and his brothers, and when she gives birth for the first son, he is attributed to the older brother, and the second son is attributed to the second brother, and so on.

This inhuman custom continued from the earliest eras of Indian Brahmin civilization until the seventeenth century.⁸

Indian women are subjected to all kinds of violence and abuse. They live a life of misery and injustice, to the extent that women pay the dowry to men, and it is imposed on them. Indian customs and traditions are hostile to women and never treating them with kindness. To this day, these illogical and unfair customs and traditions remain, serving the men and giving them all rights and absolute authority.

In the Chinese society, the same situation is prevailing: women never remarry after the death of their husbands. Furthermore, women are sold at the lowest prices. "In Chinese law, the rule was that women were worthless and should not be given anything in return of work".⁹

In modern societies, the concept of violence against women has changed with the change in their roles. These women have work to carry out the general production of society after the industrial revolution, which changed the old concepts, and women's access to the markets and factories. They began to receive a salary. "The change in women's status was linked to a radical change in the economic system, in terms of employing women in various fields and on a wide scale".¹⁰

However, this liberation and giving women partial responsibility did not spare them from violence, but rather increased its severity in many ways and forms that threatened women's stability and security.

The violence still inflicted on women in order to confirm that the men still have guardianship and control on them, despite their education and entry into the field of work, and is a means of confirming inequality despite the slogans and chants of equality.

There are many agreements that called for equality and concerned women, such as the Nairobi 1985 agreement, which considered that violence against women as one of the most important obstacles to peace, development and

equality. The conference called for legal steps to prevent gender-based violence and develops mechanisms to deal with this phenomenon.¹¹ It was followed by several agreements and seminars that only could be proceeded with the consent of the men, leaving behind commandments and laws that were not implemented. Because they left the decision to the systems and customs of each society and the traditions practiced in it.

1-3- Violence Practiced against Women in Algerian Society

The phenomenon of violence against women in the Algerian society is as old as human existence in Algeria. The woman obeys the authority of the father, then the authority of the older brother, and then the authority of the husband. She is naturally submissive to the man and to his orders and prohibitions, but there is a difference between one region and another. Such that we find that in Kabyle society, women can go out to work outside the home, bringing firewood, harvesting olives, and fetching water. Whereas, there are tribal regions that completely refuse a woman to go outside her tent and be seen by the neighbours or the cousins.

The traditional Algerian social structure was different between the urban and mountainous areas, and between them and the desert dwellers. The roles of women differed from one region to another, but they remained governed by the paternal authority in the family and could not be liberated. Liberation was unacceptable in the traditional Algerian society, as it does not preserve the chastity and sanctity of women. Thus, the man saw the liberation of women as a disgrace and a departure from social controls. This view did not differ in modern Algerian society, despite the great social, economic and developmental changes. However, the woman's place remains in the house, the tent, or what is left of it in the tribal societies. This is shown by our social reality in general, despite the change in the status of women and their access to work and study, and they reached the highest ranks, they still suffer from marginalization and violence in its various forms. In spite of the changes at all levels in the Algerian societies, they did not bring about a revolution in terms of concepts, that refuse to disappear. Perhaps they are restructured with socialization every time to state that the man comes always in the first position and he is the most capable of managing everything. So that the Algerian mother, until today, prefers to give birth to males over females. Thus, "giving birth to males is considered

the main factor through which the position of a wife is ensured and consolidated in the family".¹²

The Algerian mother's relationship with her son is a solid emotional relationship compared to her relationship with her daughter. He is characterized by distinction, pampering, and absolute sovereignty within the home, to the extent that he can rule over his sister and impose absolute control on her with complete permission from the father and mother. The mother raises the male in the footsteps of his father, instilling in him the values of masculinity, leadership, and power. Here the Algerian mother re-establishes the traditional patriarchal values and masculine authority. In contrast to the girl, whom the mother seeks to indoctrinate with family values and customs, such as housework, decency, and sanctity. The father's relationship with the daughter is a very weak relationship based on obedience and responding to his commands. The daughter can in no way stand against the father's will, or arguing with him or with her older brother or her husband in the future.

Sexual violence was practiced on women in the black decade that Algeria went through in the nineties, to the extent that a large percentage of women wore the veil to protect themselves from being kidnapped or killed by extremist groups in the name of the Islamic religion, and there are many women who were kidnapped and imprisoned in the mountains and became captives and subjected to all kinds of violence, intimidation and abuse. This era generated a kind of coercion on the other in the society. The society refused to get rid of these practices that were imposed on it, and which generated all kinds of violence that were practiced within extremist groups and even among individuals in society as a kind of departure from normal frameworks and social control.

Violence is "the culture and system of a society".¹³

"...because refusing to belong to the culture of society and refusing to comply with its common elements and values among its members, means rejecting its culture, and rejection is the expression of the greatest manifestations of violence"¹⁴

The period of the black decade generated fear and terror, and even new manifestations of violence were formed and new behaviours that are stranger to our society were born, as a result of great pressure exerted on the broad segments of society. It changed the first traditional social controls in the Algerian society in all social constructions such as the family, the street and the workplace.

2. Forms of violence against women

2-1- Sexual violence

It is considered the most dangerous form of violence to which women are exposed, because of the depth psychological effects it results, although it leaves no traces visible. Such violence is often kept secret behind closed doors.

Sexual violence is defined as the offender's resort to using his physical force while having sex with the other part.¹⁵

We deliberately showed this form of violence first, because it is considered a serious form of violence against women, and it is one of the taboos that are ignored in Arab and Algerian families in particular, and it includes cases of honour and indecent assault. It is not possible for an Algerian individual to report this case or stand before the courts. These cases are surrounded by extreme secrecy. Because it offends the reputation of the family and the honour of the father and male brothers.

The psychological effects of this violence remain with women forever, until they cause deep psychological and even social disorders. They cannot establish social relations with members of society again in the context of study or work for fear of such violence. As long as women are sensitive and show signs of fear and depression easily.

This form of violence appears in the streets between young men and women, such as sexual comments, through social media, and even touching a woman's body parts without her consent, as a form of sexual harassment. Perhaps it is due to the change in the nature of society, the spread of social problems, and the different and inconsistent social and cultural mix in the cities, which reduces the social deterrent, such as that found among the people of one village.¹⁶

Because the people of one area know each other very well, everyone knows everyone else, and rape cases are less in a small community than in a big city.

2-2- Physical violence

It is a cruel type of violence that some men use with women. It takes the form of beating, kicking, and pushing, which leaves clear physical effects on the women. These effects may be permanent effects that the women cannot forget or ignore because they are always and forever present in the women's emotions and scratch their feelings and senses.¹⁷

This form takes place when a man loses his patience with a woman, whether she is a sister, a wife, or a daughter, and reaches a state of anger, which causes him to vent his anger on the woman by severe and violent beating to show who is the dominant in the family or home, and to impose his authority and to make his word heard, as a kind of satisfying his desires that he is the supreme and the powerful.

Physical violence is usually practiced for a simple or insignificant reason. Despite this, he vents that deficiency and repression in the woman. In most cases, this creates a feeling of humiliation, and even health problems that get to the extent of fractures and bruises, and many effects that may remain with the abused forever.

2-3- Verbal violence

Verbal violence is one of the most common types of violence, which is the most widespread and widely practiced within the family.

It depends on the social, economic and cultural status and characteristics of the couple. Verbal violence is considered one of the most dangerous types of violence on the psychological health of the wife and the children, although it does not leave visible physical effects, as it stops at the limits of speech and insults.

Verbal violence, especially that practiced on the wife, is embodied in the husband insulting his wife and embarrassing her in front of others by using inappropriate and embarrassing words, and not showing respect and appreciation for her.¹⁸

Insulting a woman is offensive to her person and her position within the family and society. A woman is very sensitive to any hostile behaviour that affects her psychology, and triggers a strong psychological and moral frustration for her, especially if the verbal violence is in front of people, then, it affects her academic and professional career and affects the upbringing of her children.

A woman is sensitive creature to the extent that a good word would raise her spirits, and a bad word would affect her psychology for a long time and she would never be able to forget it.

2-4- Social Violence

Social violence indicates that a woman is a being who cannot be trusted and held to a major responsibility in society, as long as she is creature of questionable honesty, and social integrity, and it is necessary to stay away from her and create barriers around her so as not to infringe on the honour, dignity and chastity of the family.¹⁹

Signs of social violence begin with the birth of a female within the family. Giving birth to a male enhances the mother's status with her husband and enhances the man's status in the extended family and society.

Giving birth to a female does not receive the welcome and joy that receives the giving birth to a male. Everything beautiful is for the male. From toys and new bed to the freedom to go out and play. "The male is the object of the family's admiration and encouragement, in contrast to the view towards the females, whose attitudes and behaviours are viewed with great concern."²⁰

Marginalization accompanies Arab women both within the family and to society. Forms of this social violence are found in the marriage of girls at a young age in eastern Bedouin societies that takes place between families disregarding the laws. Even the governments have not been able to stop this social phenomenon in front of the insistence of the members of the society on imposing this habit. Thus, the results of which are depriving the girl of studies, depriving her of work, and preventing her from forming her personality. Violence against a girlchild is more severe, because her mind is not fully developed, her behaviour is childish, she does not differentiate between right and wrong, and she bears responsibility beyond her age. Additionally, social violence causes family disintegration. This phenomenon leads to the breakdown of family ties between husband, wife, and even children. "When domestic violence is practiced in families, whether from some of their members, or their members revolve in a cycle of violence and counter-violence, that will form psychological barriers, behavioural problems, and internal divisions, leading to estrangement, hatred, and the desire for revenge by the victims of violence against the aggressors".²¹

2-5- Economic Violence

It is a kind of fraud against the woman on the economic and material level, and it is belittling the woman from being an influencer, money maker, or inheritor, especially in Arab societies, where the man must seize woman's money and subject her to his choices, as a kind of domination and emotional and financial control, by means of his professional and social position. Few women find their way to work, as their level of participation on the economic level is very deficient, and the wages they receive are usually incomplete and smaller compared to men's wages, and this is due

primarily to the prevailing masculine view towards women, their work, and their productive ability, and considering them the weakest queens in the society.²²

2-6- Political violence

In Arab countries, women's representation in elections and in elected councils is very weak due to the nature of the social structure that prefers males over women in political representation. Penetrating social and traditional values and customs is really difficult in Arab and Bedouin society.

As for women who are have access to political activity, it can be said that “they are treated with appeasement, as they know their rights, but they remain stagnant without being able to stop the continuous discrimination against them in light of the continued supervision of men over them”.²³

The slogans against the exclusion of women from the political field are all just slogans intended to achieve legal and political legitimacy in representing women politically, without acknowledging their parliamentary representation. Therefore, they remain subordinate to the man and his decisions. Even women do not elect women and prefer men. Because they believe that men are more suitable for the political work, while a woman's place is at home taking care of the children, and she does not have enough time to bear political burdens.

Conclusion

Women are considered the main component of the society. They are the mother, wife and sister. In addition to their important role in the development processes of society that cannot be underestimated. But despite all this, women are still subjected to all sorts of violence by men. As the problem of violence against women has become one of the global issues that no society is free from. Therefore, it is necessary to study the forms of violence practiced against women. Especially marital violence, given that the husband is the first perpetrator of violence against women. Then comes the coercive violence practiced on women by family and society as a whole. Women must be accepted as an effective element in the family before any other institution in order to be the starting point for accepting women in a more just way, to regain their role and status in the society and move away from the role of the victim and male domination.

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