



Summary of the study of violence against
women in the Kingdom of Bahrain
(2005 - 2006)

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Although the phenomenon of violence, is as old as human presence, and despite it being transformed across human history to one of the mechanisms, of unequal power relations between human beings, be that at the level of communities or between classes, or within customs and cultures, or men and women. Despite this, still people do not realize the meaning of violence identically, they agree about some of the features and forms of violence, but disagree on the legitimacy and usefulness, this difference is not only in the field of scientific studies in the form of different theories describing and explaining violence, it's justifications and its effects, or in the area of political practices and justifying its legitimacy, and thus justifying violence as a mechanism to resolve conflicts worldwide, but the difference shows in everyday social life, or as called by social scientists the everyday life epilogue.

Since the seventies of the twentieth century, and with the advancement of women's movements, violence against women in daily life has become a well-known topic, and attention to this phenomenon has increased with the growing availability of statistics in all contemporary societies without exception, in spite of the cultural differences between communities in what concerns the reasons, forms and results of violence against women. Accordingly, the Bahraini community has recognized the need to address this issue through research and study. A statement by the Interior Ministry mentioned that the number of battered women in the Kingdom of Bahrain over the years from 2001 to 2004 is about 1344 cases according to the ministry statistics, including crimes of assault towards women which is about 649 cases, 610 cases of attack on the safety of others, 17 cases of rape, 7 cases of attempted rape, 6 cases of kidnapping, one case of trail abduction, 7 cases of indecent assault, in addition to the crime of verbal offenses which reached about 695 cases, 388 libel cases , 170 cases of insult, 134 cases of threat and three cases of incitement and facilitating prostitution . Hence, this study aims to monitor and analyze the phenomenon of violence against women in the Bahraini society with its multiple fields and different forms.

The subject of the study focused on violence against women in the Bahraini society, particularly since it has different levels according to the area where it is practiced be it in the public or private sphere, never the less there is overlap between the areas, domestic violence is considered one of those areas, as it is a behavior or an act issued by a party of a family against the other, especially from the husband against his wife, within an unequal power relationship between them, where the more powerful party believes that it owns the eligibility (justified socially) not owned by the other, which allows him to control, censor and discipline the socially lower party, in the sense that the husband believes that he has the right to control, censor and discipline his wife when she does not comply to his dictates using of all forms of violence.

According to WHO report, the forms of violence determined in the framework of this close relationship associate with physical abuse, actions of psychological violence and sexual violence; these include various acts of unfair and oppressive authoritarian, such as the isolation of the partner from family and friends, and monitoring his/her movements and actions, and reducing any possibility of obtaining assistance or information from external sources.

The objectives of the study focused on identifying the extent of the spread of violence against women in the Kingdom of Bahrain in terms of its causes and its implications on either the woman or the society as a whole, given the multiplicity of social fields, in which violence is practiced , it has been limited to two fields, namely the fields of family and work, however this does not mean that there is no reference to other social fields which interrelate to the family and work, such as the media , education and legislative fields.

The methodology adopted by the study is descriptive and analytical, focused on case studies and survey; it is based on the facts provided by women who are subjected to violence, police stations, specialists and workers in the field of physical health, psychological and social centers, courts, education facilities and community-based organizations. The reasons, forms and manifestations of the victims of violence have been previewed. The study adopted quantitative and qualitative ways to analysis the data, including analysis of the content of the speech and the data collected. Case questionnaire forms played a key tool for data collection, as well as some in-depth interviews with women subjected to violence.

A framework of the sample selected for the field survey of the cases of (53) individual, was set it, included a stratified random sample representing different social groups of females aged 16 years and above, taking into account as much as possible representation of social divergence. As for social characteristics, the average age of the sample was around 32 years, a quantitative analysis would find of the respondents (34% married), and (divorced 35.8%).

In terms of income groups there is the lower (47.2%) average (37.7%), and the higher (9.4%). The majority of respondents work within the family (60.4%). While the educational situation is (43.4%) of middle education, (30.4%) of higher education, (15.1%) of primary education and (11.3%) of no education. The sample «survey» included 500 persons (50% females and 50% males), spread across all five governorates of Bahrain.

The study was divided into six chapters the first study including, the introduction and methodology in terms of theme, objectives and the manner and phenomenon by which the study was conducted, which included the definition of the concept and determination of a general framework of the case study sample and the survey and characteristics of each. In chapter two cases were examined in terms of statistical and qualitative analysis and the conclusions that have been reached. The third chapter offered result of the survey of the Bahraini society and trends towards the phenomenon, also presented statistical data, analysis and presentation of results, and included some recommendations and proposals. Chapter four approached the phenomenon and the experiences of some Arab countries including Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain and the draft law to combat domestic violence. As for Chapter five it presented the results of the dialogue in terms of the four axes, which focused on the existence or absence of violence against women in the Kingdom of Bahrain, whether it represents a phenomenon, what are its manifestations, and who the perpetrators are and the reasons.

The most important results of the quantitative and qualitative analytical study of the sample of cases summarized as follows:

- Study concluded that the husband is the major practitioner of violence at various levels of income, and the less the level of family income the greater likelihood of violence, the material violence presents the greatest percentage among the different income groups except for higher-income categories, in which the more the income, the more the exercise of verbal and psychological violence.
- The tables explained that most images of violence perpetrated on members of the sample were insults (12.1%), followed by degradation (11.6%) and dispute (9.3%). Rates of expulsion, severe beatings, deprivation of spending, were close, followed by abandonment and ignore, pushing and slapping on the face, and light beating and the least rates were held by voluntary and involuntary confinement, rape, beating with implements.
- Of the main causes of husbands practice of violence against wives, as represented in the sample, is the desire of men for hegemony caused by social upbringing, which is considered the producer of violence from biological terms or is the result of patriarchal social system.

- The sample focused on legacies and cultural heritage and social upbringing as elements responsible for men's violence against women, particularly in the scope of the family, as well as some specific religious interpretations that justify the husband's right to discipline a wife in order to preserve the family and its continuity, guardianship on women as presented by some clergy views is linked to the right of discipline, in the daily practice both draw towards social violence against rebellious and disobedient wives .
- Social changes have an effect. Women's education and her going out to work, and participation in family spending, has reflected on the awareness of some, no longer do women accept the pattern of unequal power relationship with spouses, this led to their insurgency and an attempt to break the traditional image of the obedient wife, and this is what formed another factor in sustaining the acute violence of some husbands against their wives.
- Women's education and work, did not participate in the decline of violence against women, the more the education of the wife and her work disproportionately matches with the husband's the more these differences cause violence against women. Nor did it consolidate the idea of female autonomy and identity as part of the culture, some of the women sampled saw that men resort to violence, as part of the manly composition, therefore the image of masculinity and femininity prevailing in the community of the study is one of the production mechanisms of violence against women, particularly wives. Some women respondents to the responsibility of the mother through social upbringing of men, where re-production of violence against other women, through the acquisition of the ideal image for men.

- The cycle of violence does not end, in which both women and men participate across generations, and find legitimacy in some erroneous religious interpretations and social factors such as fear of divorce and dependence on the husband's income, and questioning of the feasibility of legal proceedings, or fear of losing the custody of children.
- Intercourse is an essential factor in the production of violent husbands against their wives, a percentage not less than (80%) of women in the sample of cases explained the role and impact of disruption of sexual relations with the husband as one of the causes physical and psychological violence, as well as multiple sexual relations outside the framework of marriage. Adultery, combines being a cause of physical violence in the form of direct hitting by the husband to the wife, as it is psychological violence against the wife by violation of dignity and humiliation. Wife beating could be a cover to sexual weakness of the husband or a trail to silence her so as not to expose his infidelity, also men rebuke their wives when they mockery their sexual abilities. Reference was made to the absence of love and sexual harmony and social reconciliation between the spouses as another reason.
- Some women spoke of the betrayal of wives, as a response to their husband's betrayal, which usually occurs for reasons of revenge because the wife feels humiliation and degradation.

- Reference was made to marital rape as the most visible forms of violence, with intercourse it is transformed to a mechanism for humiliation and abuse of spouses, rather than a humanitarian intimate relationship.
- The low level of economical conditions has claimed responsibility for violence, and highlighted the poverty and unemployment as reasons for the increase in spousal violence between lower-income groups. The field study of the cases also indicated that physical violence is practiced among the lower income levels, rather than middle and higher income levels that practiced verbal, psychological violence and control rather than physical violence. There is the impact of drug addiction and alcoholic on spouses, which leads to violence against women.
- The reduction of women's reproductive freedom is a form of violence against women, which stems from male domination, and this issue requires more data in order to be discussed in the community of the study.
- The most visible effects of violence on wives is the illness of women, her inability to work, her exercise of violence on children, her hatred towards the husband, the sense of wasted dignity, and the desire for revenge, hence she becomes more cautious and withdrawn from the society, or more aggressive, and imbued with a sense of powerlessness, and lost of hope and comfort in life, which leads to low self-esteem, as well as loss of confidence in men and remarriage.

- One of the unexpected results was the transfer of some of the experiences of women who were exposed to violence and with it divorce to a factor of motivation and self-confidence and life. Resistance gives other opportunities of social life and achievement, and this image is not focused on in the media, and there is a role for social upbringing that stimulate one's ability to meet these conditions, where the mother plays a role in the formation of girls to resistance to this violence.
- There are three strategies pursued by some members of the sample of battered wives to resist violence, a strategy of silence and survival for fear of scandal, divorce, dependence on the husband's income, fear of unity, the loss of custody of children. Where this group of women refuse to deal with the husband in a way similar to this.
- The second strategy is to resort to the help of others such as the family (father, mother and brothers) in order to obtain divorce, as it is considered the most important sanctuary for battered women. They may not resort to official institutions because of the belief that it favors the husband due to this influence, or for being a man, and some fear going to police stations and courts, since some husbands resort as defiance to call them back to the police stations and courts at all times, and women's reputation in the community of study is the symbolic capital which she seeks maintaining. Most women did not head to

civil society institution for the following reasons: As they do not know anything about it or are not in favor of the performance of these institutions, or because they only have awareness programs and counseling, and their power do not exceed more. The third strategy is to meet violence with violence, where the majority of women respondents refuse to perform violence against men due to religious social customs (flaws) and ethical perspectives and are aware of how battered women that perform violence adopt the qualities of violent and this is not the preferred image by some women, but the sample showed that some of the women explain that it is the best way to counter violence, because of the lack of assistance and as an expression of injustice and revenge.

The most important results of the quantitative and qualitative analytical study of the Bahraini survey on the phenomenon of violence against women summarized as follows:

- The results of the study proved that the majority of respondents assure the existence of the phenomenon of violence against women in the Kingdom of Bahrain, reaching (95%) response of the total sample. The proportion of women is higher (48.4%) versus (46.6%) men, and it is concentrated between married people, although some seek to hide its presence as a phenomenon, it underlines the prevalence of spousal violence.
- Positive responses towards the existence of violence against women were mainly within the income category (BD 200-400), (32.4%) of the total sample, followed by (30%) in the income group of lower than (BD200), that is (62.4%) of supporters, falling within the lower income categories less than (BD200), and the category of (BD 200-400) per month.
- Most supporters of the existence of the phenomenon are in the category of secondary and tertiary education and diploma holders, the supporting rate in the category of secondary education reached (34.6%), followed in the category of university education by (27.4%), and then the category of diploma (16.8%) of the total sample.

The educated are the most emphasizing on the existence of the phenomenon of violence against women in Bahrain, and this reflects the fact that education did not prevent violence against women, or that the educated sectors of society are aware of the unspoken issues, and to more interested in their discussion and treatment, or both together, that is, they practice violence and at the same time seek addressing it. Education did not prevent ill-treatment or adultery or men restoring to deny the mother of her children, ill-treatment is prevalent among middle classes, those of restoring secondary or education, university and this was confirmed by (62%) of the total sample, which calls for review of the content of educational programs on the outlook of women.

- The survey results show that the causes of violence against women, particularly wives, come parallel with the stated by battered women in the cases study on the causes of violence against them, including the lack of religious morals (63%), the low level of education of the husband (43.8%), addiction (43.6%), The upbringing of battered women (31.8%), unemployment, especially for the spouse (20.6%). All these reasons are responsible for men's violence, responsibility lies also upon social institutions, such as family, school, and religious institution.

- (35%) respondents view that wives are responsible for violence against them, due to their stubbornness and disobedience, (29%) of the total sample found that women are responsible in terms of raising suspicions in men in terms of their morals, and about (28%) stressed that adultery by women is responsible for the production of spousal violence.
- The study proved that the party mostly responsible of practicing violence against women according to the survey are the husbands (89.8%) followed by the brothers (18.4%), fathers (16.2%), strangers (6.8%) and far-degree relatives (3%). Behind these percentages lies significance, the marital relationship in the apparent Bahraini society is apparently the pillar through which violence is exercised, according to the size of the sample studied, its social characteristics, and the father's lower rank in the engagement in violence towards women, where brother takes the second place in terms of authority after the husband, and the impact of relatives on the family decreased.
- Most responses concerning verbal violence lay in the category of male and female employees (53.8%), and the percentages were insults (71.6%), followed by degradation (46.6%), using indecent words (40.6%) and satire (21.4%).

- Most of the responses regarding emotional violence were ill-treatment (62.6%) of the total respondents, followed by deprivation of children (45.8%), adultery (41%), abandonment (36.8%), and deprivation of spending (33.4%), and ignore (32.6%), expulsion (30.8%), dispute (28%), confinement (8%), deprivation of inheritance (7.8%).
- Most forms of physical violence, according to the sample responses are beatings (58.8%), followed by rape (43.4%), then light beating (37.8%), slapping on the face (33.4%), pushing (20%), forced practices contrary to public morals (16.4%), beatings using implements (6.8%) and forced abortion (5%).
- The majority of respondents do not approve of the principle of the “discipline by beating is the duty of the husband, father and brother”, where (92.6%) of the total sample of respondents reject this principle and only (7.4%) of the total sample agree.
- Most responses indicated that the three most important reasons for the silence of women and them not reporting violence are as the following: fear about the reputation (86.6%), fear of expulsion from work (42.4%), and a sense of the futility of reporting (30.4%), which means that maintaining reputation is the biggest barrier to women’s self-defense.

- The majority of the sample approved the presence of violence against women in the workplace and public places by (88.4%) of the total sample. Those causing women's harassment fall between three categories: work colleagues, managers, and customers with rates (52% and 42.8% and 27.8%) respectively of the total respondents in the sample. Most responses suggested three types of violence in the workplace: the verbal harassment (55.6%) of the total respondents, humiliation and insults (29.6%), then discrimination in favor of men in promotions and positions (26.6%).
- The findings of total data explained, that women usually tell their parents, the police and the courts when they are subjected to any violence, where responses reached telling parents (69%) of the total respondents, the police and the courts (55.8%, 26.8%), respectively. The sensitivity of the situation of women in Bahraini society imposes referring to the parents at first exposure to any kind of abuse, and secondly to the police, particularly if the damage resulted in violence that must be contained by the police force. The majority of respondents focused on the need to reform judiciary legitimate as a first priority, all these responses were by females and the majority agreed to amend the marital agreement as an entry point to protect women from violence (59.1%) versus (40.9%) of the total sample opposed to this measure.

- Most respondents agreed that issuing a Family Provision law would reduce the incidence of violence against women and the percentage of respondents strongly agreeing were (29.7%), agreed (56.6%), in total (86.3%) of the total sample, which confirms the usefulness of legal reforms and their benefits in solving the problem of violence against the Bahraini woman.

The study concludes / adopts a set of recommendations on the level of legislation, law and the court, first and foremost is issuing a family law, the modernization of courts and civil legal, the quick completion of the procedures related to issues of family disputes and issues of marriage, divorce, alimony, housing, etc., amending the marital agreement and the establishment of a legal age for marriage, the sanctioning punishments towards to the perpetrators of violence. Review of the procedures for reporting cases of violence, and training of staff responsible for the implementation of the family laws including the police, judges and lawyers. As well as legislations governing the procedures of ownership of residential property between the husband and wife, the appointment of women judges, granting women the decision of durations between pregnancies, addressing education and legal awareness programs to women.

At the media and education level, it recommends the amendment and modernization of educational curricula, to promote and adopt enlightened religious discourse, reconsidering the broadcasted media, and urging them to change the stereotype image of women, encouraging women to report, conducting analytical studies on the role of media in consolidating a culture of discrimination against women, and the adopting educational courses that relate to women's rights and combating the phenomenon of violence against women.

At the social and economic level, provision of shelters for battered women and their children, were recommended providing guidance and family education centers in all governorates of the Kingdom of Bahrain, ensuring provision of the expenses of battered women, preparation and participation in local and international conferences, symposia and lectures addressing the phenomenon.

At the level of women's associations and civil institutions, the study recommended that activities not be seasonal or on a small scale, and emphasized the need to identify priorities according to specialization and capabilities, yet not limiting its role and work programs to counseling and outreach, but also rehabilitation of battered women and addressing men to influence them to change their views towards violence against women. In addition, getting access to those affected women, taking into account the culture of our society that focuses on women's reputation as a symbolic capital. There should

as well be cooperation between women's associations and civil institutions in addressing the phenomenon of violence against women, the relationship and communication with the Supreme Council for Women and official institutions relating to the phenomenon should be strengthened, also required is the creation of mechanisms to communicate with the legislature and urge them to contribute in order to reduce the phenomenon through quickly enacting laws and legislations and strengthening and modernizing programs that aim at raising women's awareness of their identity and economic independence and awareness of their legitimate and constitutional rights.