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The Phenomenon of Intimate Partner Violence in Egypt



**Research and Studies Unit in
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Introduction:

Marriage is based on love and cooperation, but the changes that the society is witnessing have had an impact on people's behavior in the context of spousal relationship. Certainly, marriage life is filled of problems between spouses during their daily cohabitation. Thus, life is not ideal for many people, and so forth we find that problems occur at every moment, which is a natural issue emanated from human behavior.

Society's values have been impacted by material values and media production, by which they encourage people to seek revenge, in addition to the conditions of the current era, which is marked by improper use of internet, collapse of moral and societal values, gender inequality, political crises, social and economic instability, and covid-19 pandemic which have all exacerbated the phenomenon of intimate partner violence. These reasons have increased the percentage of violence in the Egyptian society.

Recently, many incidents of violence against women as well as women's violence against men have surfaced. Men in Egypt have been beaten or killed by their wives. It appears that the main motives behind women's committing these crimes are betrayal, mental stress, neurological diseases, and changes in Egyptians' social values, rather than women being violent by nature as social media promotes.

The rapid succession of killing' stories has created a state of panic in the Egyptian society, due to the increased number of crimes and the change of crimes' nature. Although, crimes were almost confined to marginalized geographical areas in the society, and within a social strata that adopts a culture of violence as a result of their social, economic and educational marginalization, these crimes crept into the most influential class in the society: the middle class with its most educated and fortunate segments.

The study attempts to shed light on the current phenomenon of intimate partner violence in the Egyptian society, in order to find causes behind this phenomenon and to provide adequate solutions.



Causes of intimate partner violence

Violence is one of the widespread behavioral phenomena that may not be devoided of the Egyptian society and has remarkably increased in recent times. This phenomenon has become a threat to the entity of the Egyptian family and society.

Definition of intimate partner violence: It is the mistreatment of one spouse by the other, one of whom is predominant and the other is subordinate.

There are many reasons for the phenomenon of intimate partner violence in Egypt, and perhaps the most important of them are: the misunderstanding of the legitimate right of the husband to raise his dependents, where he may think of it as his prevailed right to use violence, such as severe beatings. Other motives of violence come under the guise of responsibility. Domestic violence also has many social motives represented in marital disputes, parents' interference in family affairs, gender inequality, political crises and social and economic instability.

In addition, one of the important causes of domestic violence is the weakness of religious faith. 35% of domestic violence cases are caused by weakened religious faith, absence of a constructive dialogue and lack of consultation within the family.

Moreover, violence is usually increased against women in emergency situations and epidemics. Psychological pressures and the exacerbation of economic hardships are factors that escalated the Egyptian women's crisis. In the meanwhile, the phenomenon of marital violence was linked to the spread of covid-19, which resulted in economic deterioration, home confinement and the fear of the unknown. These burdens along with other hardships have led to people to be psychologically dissatisfied. In addition, the outbreak of the pandemic has also increased intimate partner violence.

The marginalization of women, frequent quarrels, and the constant threat of being divorced harm the wife physically and psychologically and insults the dignity and the modesty of any woman. These conditions lead to the development of a deep-seated desire for women to have revenge and kill as a mean of self-defense,



resembling one of the main reasons behind the increase intimate partner violence phenomenon in the Egyptian society.

The lack of man's income, and his inability to meet the needs of the wife and children, pushes women to violence. Another reason is the man's belittling and insulting of woman, which leads to a lack of respect between spouses, and emotional instability.

In Egypt, women attainment of educational skills and their presence in labor market, and consequently their ability to earn independent income, weaken their positions mainly because their contributions to ensuring family prosperity are less than those of men, due to their unstable positions in the labor market. In addition, women's jobs are less productive with less income than those of men.

Men were thus left with two options: Either to accept equality with women, or resort to violence to subjugate or punish women for challenging men's authority, especially in the absence of effective legislation to confront domestic violence.

Manifestations of intimate partner violence

Egypt witnessed a significant increase in the number of family crimes committed, especially in Greater Cairo (Cairo, Giza and Qalyubia), with a total of 78 family crimes, resulting in the death of 82 family members.

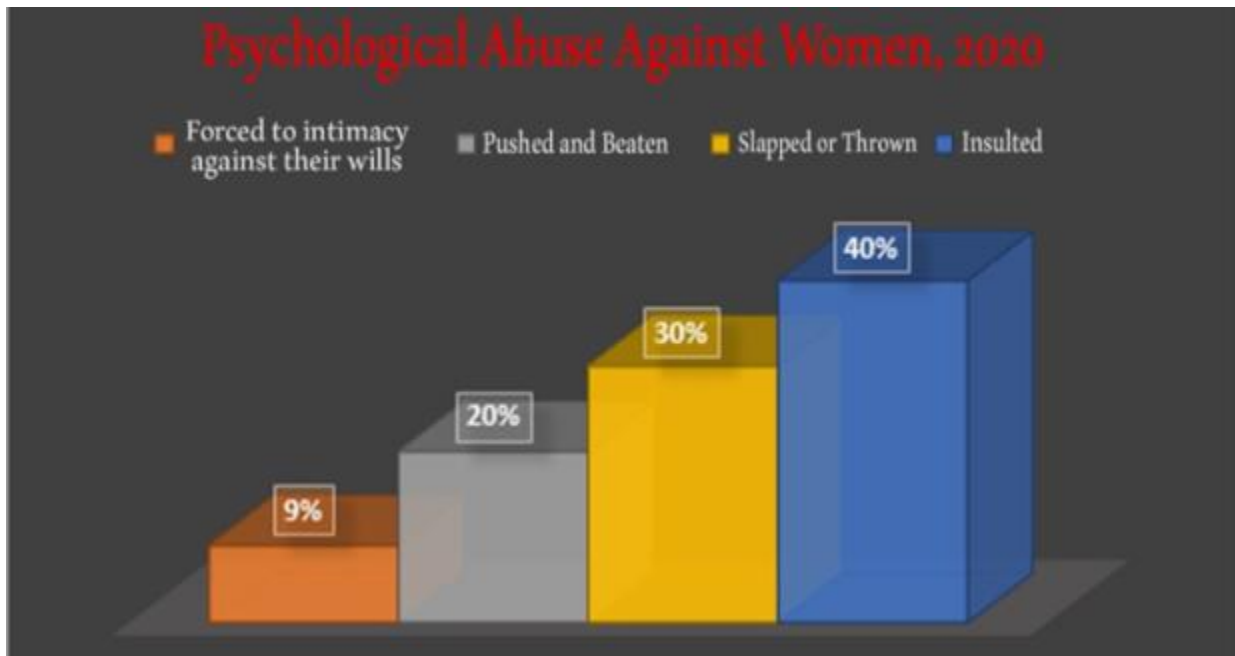
Violence against men is a condition that exists in our society that cannot be neither denied nor hidden. The majority of men conceal the abuse and humiliation they are exposed to by their wives in order to preserve their masculinity, and preserve their images in front of others. We find that psychological violence is the predominant form of violence in Egypt; it alone represents 73% of all forms of violence suffered by men. As for physical violence, which occupies the second place with 20% of all forms of violence, it is committed in 44% of cases in public places.

It is worth noting that women are not the only perpetrators in the series of crimes that have occupied public opinion in the recent period, as there were also husbands who were involved in this series of murders. However, women took the lead in the number of victims with 43% and children 26%, which means that



women and children constitute the absolute majority in the number of victims of 'family crimes' with 69 % while male victims came at the bottom of the list with 31%.

In 2020, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt revealed that psychological abuse came at the top of the list of forms of violence; an average of 40% of women were insulted by their husbands, 30% were slapped or thrown, 20% were pushed and beaten, and 9% were forced to intimacy with husband against their wills.



Moreover, the pandemic has greatly exacerbated these percentages, especially with the increase of the households' burdens. Corona has placed more pressure on the majority of the Egyptian people. According to official data, the income of 70% of workers in the public and private sectors has been negatively affected in the first months of the pandemic's outbreak.



Scholars, Sociologists and Psychologists Experts' Opinions

Households have turned into "dangerous places" for victims of domestic violence during the coronavirus pandemic; the number of victims has increased and medical warnings have recently escalated, raising concerns on psychological disorders and behavioral deviations during the pandemic.

Doctor Najwa Al-Fawal, Director of the National Council for Social and Criminal Research, stated that "violence perpetuated by wife against her husband is one of the indicators of the high rate of violence in the society." Of the most important factors of domestic violence is the absence of role models to youth. Sociologists have also confirmed that violence against women often increases in times of emergencies and crises. In addition, the risk of women facing violence could be increased due to the increased financial burdens placed on families as a result of economic hardships.

Through communicating with many family cases, it was found that this violent behavioral pattern is more visible in newly married partners, during their first 2 to 5 years of marriage. Those partners are the ones who are subject to rapid social change and where relationships often arise between families that are not related to a kinship. These cases are also frequent among families that are characterized by religious cohesion that do not prefer divorce.

A recent study conducted by psychologists revealed that wives are the most affected by marital problems, especially if the two partners continued to follow the traditional methods of dealing with a problem. If the wife already experience a number of pathological symptoms, such as depression, and stress, these symptoms may be further worsened due to the wife's circumstances and suffering from the husband who insists on using traditional methods in solving problems.

On the other hand, family relations specialists confirm that woman's complaint about man's lack of dialogue leads to a change in the expectations of marital relationship. In previous generations, a woman was satisfied in her marriage, when the husband received a decent salary, treated her politely and did not cheat on her. However, the matter differs today as the expectations of happiness are vague, and oblige the partner to satisfy the other partner in all respects; otherwise, the relationship would fail.



The way husbands interact with their wives has destroyed communication means between partners, and rather results in toxic talk. The lack of communications results in the husband separation from his family, and establishment of a new relationship as an alternative to his wife.

Recently, things have become more complicated. The material factor is not the primary reason behind the conducted crimes, it may only be a cause of increasing tension. The primary reason is the accumulation of bad thoughts that are not a result of an instant moment, where these thoughts are exposed during an argument or a quarrel and leads to such crime incidents. In addition, lack of satisfaction of is among the root causes for crimes.

Sociologists have identified the factors of lack of dialogue between partners, which eventually leads to emotional distance and cold feelings between partners. On top of these factors is the selection process of finding the partner, which may be unsuccessful. Unsuccessful selection process results in lack of understanding between partners and leads to divorce.

Sociologists also pointed out that greediness between partners is another factor, whereby each spouse focuses on satisfying his/her own personal desires while disregarding that of the other's. Sociologists have also added that the spouses' lack of both religious awareness and respect for each other are also factors. Also, spouses' different personalities and mentalities are all factors that lead to the marital problems, which may eventually lead to murder.



Cases of spousal violence that have been monitored until the end of July, 2021

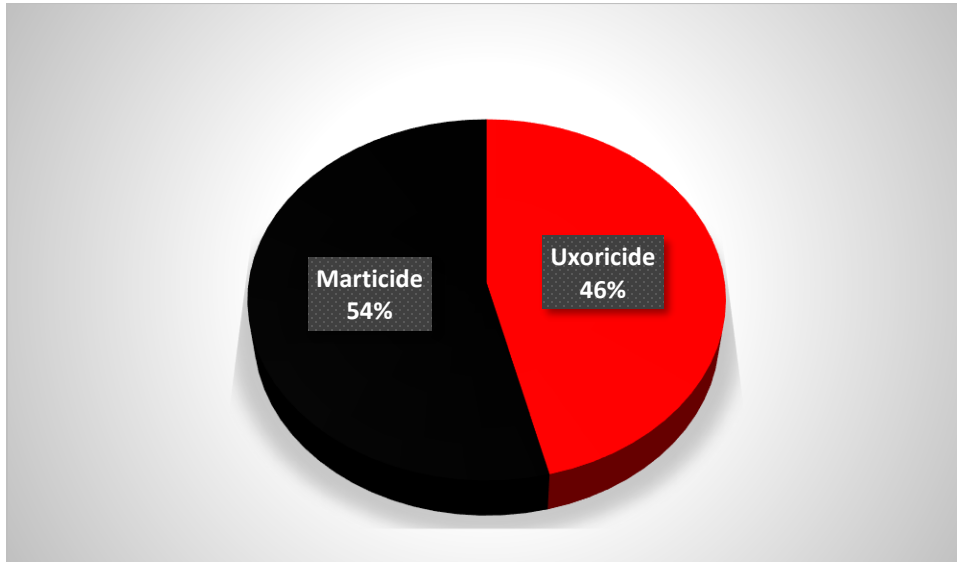
	Date of Incident	Governorate	Victim Husband/ Wife	Summary of the Incident
1	February 2021	Qalyubia	Husband	The victim was killed by hitting his head with an ashtray and then suffocating him with a robe) – The wife revealed that he was constantly assaulting and abusing her
2	March 2021	Qalyubia	Husband	The victim was stabbed to death with a knife as each partner doubted the other
3	May 2021	Qena	Husband	The victim was stabbed to death with a knife due to differences between them
4	June 2021	Qalyubia	Husband	The victim was murdered by adding poison to his juice. The wife revealed that he was beating and her torturing her
5	June 2021	Giza	Wife	The victim, who was diagnosed with cancer, was killed by stabbing her with a stick



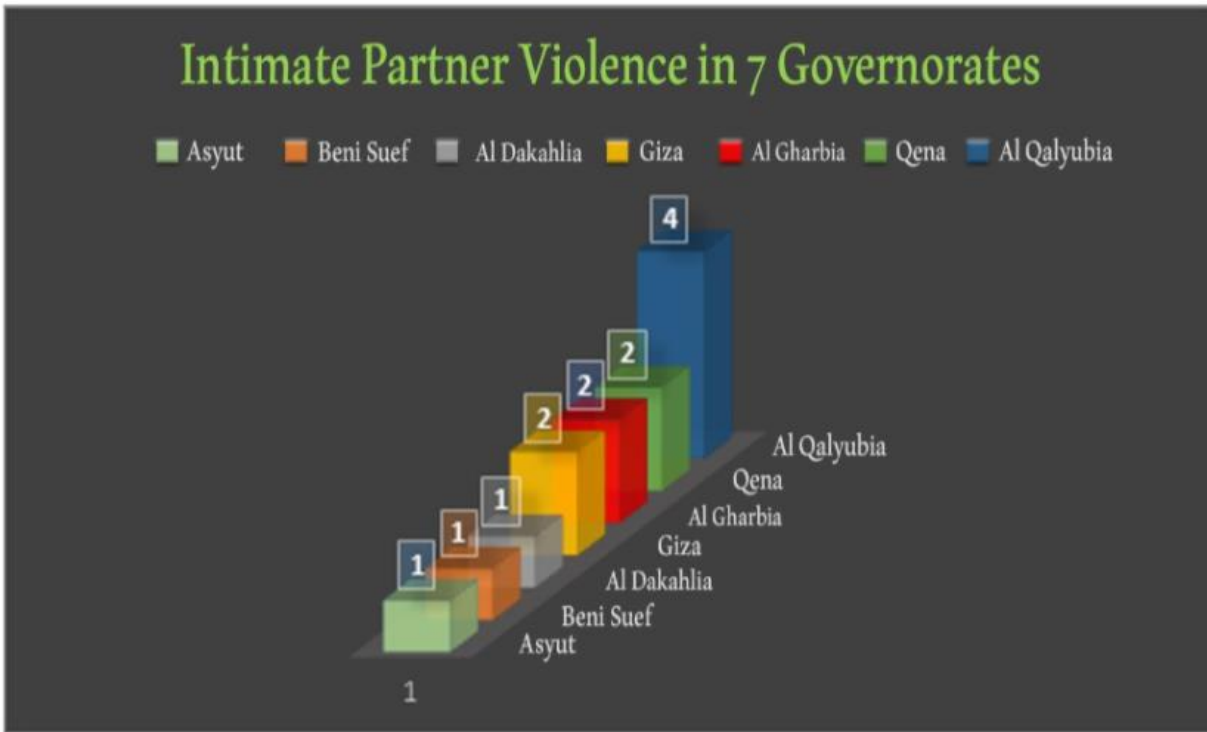
6	July 14, 2021	Assiut	Wife	The victim was stabbed to death due to family disputes
7	July 19, 2021	Qalyubia	Husband	The victim was stabbed to death with a knife due to disagreements over household and holiday expenses
8	July 2021	Qena	Husband	The murderer poisoned her husband and her three children, leading to the death of three children
9	July 2021	Giza	Husband	The victim was strangled to death because of an illegal relationship between the victim and the wife's friend
10	July 2021	Beni Suef	Wife	The victim was stabbed to death for leaving the house and filing a divorce case
11	July 2021	Dakahlia	Wife	The victim was killed by her husband, a dentist, with 11 stab wounds due to an argument between them
12	July 2021	Gharbia	Wife	The husband smashed his wife's head and then slaughtered her
13	July 2021	Gharbia	Wife	The victim was stabbed to death because of marital disputes and household expenses



During the reporting period, cases of wives killing or poisoning their husbands came to (7) out of the total (13) cases that were monitored, resembling (54%), while the cases of husbands killing their wives were (6) cases, resembling (46%) as the following figure shows:



The report monitored cases of spousal violence in (7) governorates; these governorates are among the governorates in which domestic or spousal violence occurs the most, where Qalyubia governorate came as the most governorate in which spousal violence crimes occurred, with (4) cases, followed by Giza, Gharbia and Qena governorates with (2) cases of each governorate. The governorates of (Dakahlia, Beni Suef, and Assiut) came in third place, with one case for each of them, as the following figure shows:



The following is a summary of the cases that have been monitored

1. During the month of February 2021, in Shubra El-Kheima, Qalyubia Governorate, a 37-year-old housewife named (H. A) killed her husband (Saber. M), a 55-year-old employee. According to her, he constantly beat and mistreated her and created fake trust receipts against her. As a result, she left the house for a year until she returned to her husband, two months before committing the crime. After her husband fell asleep, the wife hit his head with an ashtray, causing him to lose consciousness. Then, she strangled him with the robe that he was wearing until he died. She was arrested and is held under investigation.
2. On March 2021, in Al-Khosos area, Qalyubia Governorate, a housewife called "A.M.A.M.", 29 years old, killed her husband "M.SA.", 31 years old, a security guard. He was stabbed with a knife during a quarrel between them due doubting each other's. The accused person was arrested and is in a pre-trial detention. This was the second incident committed by the wife where she had previously stabbed her husband with an iron skewer, but the husband did not report her.



3. On May 2021, in Al-Owaidat area in the city of Qift, Qena Governorate, a wife killed her husband, who was the owner of a cafe called Sayed. D, 40 years old, was stabbed by a knife, due to disagreements that erupted between them before Iftar in Ramadan. The case is under investigation.
4. On June 22, 2021, in the Kafr Shukr Center, Qalyubia Governorate, a wife named "Walaa. MA", a housewife in her thirties, killed her husband, "Mr. K.A.", 56 years old, by poisoning him. According to his wife, the husband constantly beat and tortured her, which led her to kill him by adding a large amount of rat poison in his juice, and then claimed that it was natural death.
5. During the month of June 2021, in the Talbeya area in Giza Governorate, the husband, a "tuk-tuk driver" named "SM", killed his wife, who was diagnosed with cancer. He hit her with a stick on her head and different parts of her body, which resulted in bleeding and severe irreversible shock that affected the brain's functions, leading to its inability to perform its functions and resulted instant death. Investigations proved that the couple had 8 children and there were marital disputes between them. Investigations also revealed that the husband was accustomed to beating her.
6. On July 14, 2021, in Al-Salakhana district, Al-Qusiya district, Assiut governorate, a worker murdered his wife, a 30-year-old housewife, called "N.M.K." because of family disputes between them. Investigation revealed that the wife was in constant quarrel with her husband.
7. On July 19, 2021, in the village of Tant Al-Jazeera in Toukh Center in Qalyubia Governorate, a wife killed her accountant husband (Mohamed Ahmed) following a quarrel between them over the house and Eid holiday expenses. During the quarrel, the husband tried to beat his wife, Reham Saeed, 25 years old, leading the wife to stab his chest with a knife, which she was holding. The wife said that he tried to suffocate her. The medical report stated that there were traces of abrasions and suffocation on the neck of the accused person, Reham. The victims' last post on social media platforms was shared to his wife, saying "she remains my greatest victory. Later, the Public Prosecution charged her with intentional murder and the judge decided to imprison her for 15 days pending investigations. .
8. In July 2021, in the village of Al-Bija in Farshout, Qena Governorate, a 26-year-old housewife added poison to her husband and three children in their drinks. The three children died instantly, while the husband was severely injured, and was transferred to Qena General Hospital. The crime was planned by the wife and her lover, three days earlier. The housewife had a romantic relationship with a driver, 26 years old, and they were arrested after investigation and confessed their crimes.



9. In July 2021, in the city of Osim in Giza governorate, a nurse named Asmaa strangled her husband (Hossam) to death. She tied her husband with ropes and wrapped a scarf around his neck during their intimate relationship until he died. The wife decided to take revenge on her husband after knowing about his affair with her friend. The wife has stolen the jewelry, the mobile phone and ran away. She was arrested 48 hours later.
10. During the month of July 2021, in Beni Suef Governorate, the husband, named "Mahmoud" aged 37, stabbed his wife to death with a knife. He stabbed her in her neck, chest and stomach until she died with 27 stab wounds. He killed her as she left her house and filed a divorce case due to successive quarrels. The husband later committed suicide, by cutting the arteries of his wrist.
11. During the month of July 2021, in the village of Shawa, in the Mansoura Center in Dakahlia Governorate, a 29-year-old dentist named Mahmoud killed his 26-year-old wife, Dr. Yasmine, and stabbed her 11 times because of an argument, leaving her 3 children orphaned.
12. During July 2021 in Zifta, Gharbia Governorate, the 36-year-old husband, "N.W.", smashed the head of his 32-year-old wife, M.T., due to marital disputes, and slaughtered her using a knife until she died in front of her children
13. During the month of July 2021, in the Al-Jumhuriya area, in the city of Mahalla Al-Kubra, Gharbia Governorate, a husband in his 40's stabbed his wife, who is 32 years old, with a knife because of marital disputes and household expenses. Investigations revealed that a quarrel took place in the apartment which led the accused "husband" to stab her in the neck with a knife. The accused was arrested and imprisoned for 15 days pending investigations.

Recommendations and suggestions

- Awareness about "family institution" must be increased, which in return educates children on the importance of both marriage and respect for life partner.
- The necessity to develop psychological and religious aspects within the members of society, through religious institutions such as Al-Azhar and the Church.
- The need to improve the economic situation because of it has a major role in the phenomenon of domestic violence.



- The important role of education in spreading and informing people of how to treat people properly, especially relatives, husbands and wives.
- The country does not introduce comprehensive and drastic legislative amendments against domestic violence, as the penalties for harassment and violence against women are formulated against street harassment by strangers, not within the workplace or at home. Thus, it is necessary to demand a new legislative amendment to protect women in households, as the current legislation equates domestic violence with public violence, and there were many calls for issuing a law against gender-based violence.
- The need to develop and increase the number of shelters, “houses for battered women”, provide them with services on a larger scale, and facilitate their entry procedures.
- Provide hotlines for marital counseling, by the government.
- Highlight the impact of criminal acts found in movies and other media productions, in which the embodied roles are in violation of the law, and should not be implemented on real grounds.
- Form joint committees supported by the state and civil society organizations, comprising social, psychological and legal specialists of all disciplines, clerics, and those concerned with family affairs, in order to determine the aspects necessary to reduce the number of crimes.