

Social Factors Affecting Violence against Women in the Family with Emphasis on the Role of Authoritarian System of the Family

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify Social factors that influence on all types of domestic violence (with emphasis on the role of authority in family system) of married women in the first half of 1392 (2013) to sue the Justice Department had referred to the survey and the questionnaire was conducted.

Statistical sample included 231 married women who referred to the Judicial Complex (the court) to sample the city Shahriyar are randomly selected. The findings showed patriarchal attitudes, experiences and observations violence of traditional society and the lack of power, influence means - there is violence against women, as well as differences - between violence against women and various ages were obtained.

The findings showed that patriarchal attitude, experience and violence observation, the traditional social system, and the lack of power resources has an affection on the relationship in violence against women and get a significant differences on the relationship between violence against women and different age.

Comparing the results with a similar study, this result in greater alignment hypotheses in the study showed. The end result was that according to the criteria of traditional social system, no matter how unequal relations of power, domination of men over women, the hegemonic patriarchal, class superiority of men over women, and the oppression of women in society is more, and Authoritarian regimes in the formation and spread of violence becomes more pronounced.

KEY WORDS: Violence against women, patriarchal attitudes, experiences of violence, the traditional social system, and lack of power resources.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women has always existed in multiple ways and forms such as burying alive the girl infants, selling them as a slave, assault, capturing, and mugging at home (Ezazi, 2004). Violence against women has a historical background and its primary biological and psychological causes are rooted in superior physical strength of men over women and consequently supremacy-seeking soul of men. However, considering violence against women as a social problem is a new approach, as it has been become a noteworthy issue for many researchers, planners, policy makers, and organizations supporting women's health and empowerment during recent decades in many countries. This is particularly important since it can underlie many social problems and jeopardize the health of families as the most important social institutions. Depending on social, cultural, and economic features of every society, this behavioral abnormality would have different causes and manifestations. Currently, women and children in the most advanced industrialized countries are suffering from the implications and consequences of violence, especially in the family, and available statistics suggest countless disasters in these countries (Noormohamadi, 2010).

Women suffer from the consequences and complications of violence even in developed countries. Violence not only puts at risk their emotional and psychological well-being and balance but affects the whole society. The price that a society pays for such damages is excessive and spreads to other political, economic, social, and cultural areas. Not addressing the issue of women and violence rationally and purposefully will lead to negative responses among the public (Kar, 2008). One of the most obvious forms of violence in today's Iranian society is violence against women. Studies show that, like other societies in the world, violence against women is problematic in Iran. Women who are exposed to violence tolerate various forms of abuse in their individual and social life. Violence against women is a phenomenon in which a woman is harassed by the opposite sex and her rights are violated only because

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of her gender. If such phenomenon occurs in a family and between a couples, it is called domestic violence (Pourreza and Mousavi, 2003; World Health Organization, 2001).

In Iran, because of religious and cultural features, violence against women in the streets, workplaces, and in public spaces is much lower than in Western societies and it is usually hidden, because most women refrain from expressing it due to their modesty and honor. What that makes the necessity to pay attention to this issue more seriously is that violence against women, in addition to causing harmful effects on their personal life, leads to negative consequences such as feeling of insecurity, impairment in social relationships, and direct impact on the upbringing of children. In addition, this phenomenon limits the possibility of benefiting from capabilities and talents of half of the population of our country. Therefore, resolving the legal constraints, planning supportive, educational, and preventive programs, providing the required substrates and contexts for the development of women's empowerment, and providing the necessary legal and social supports are some policies that should be taken into account in strategic planning, because having a healthy society and balanced people is not possible with ignorance of seemingly private relationships within the families (Noormohamadi, 2010).

Now, the question arises that how social factors affect violence against women in the family, what is the relationship between violence against women and the authoritarian system in the family, and how is effective the authoritarian system in the occurrence of this problem. The overall objective of this study is to identify social factors affecting violence against women in the family in the city of Shahriar and secondary goals include studying the effect of patriarchal authoritarian system, economic pressures, family relationships, experience of violence in childhood, and unequal power relations in society on violence against women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Documentary and survey methods were used in the present study. Different theoretical perspectives on violence, in general, and violence against women, in particular, were reviewed by referring to books and references on this subject. Statistical population included women referred to the Justice Department of the city of Shahriar to make a legal complain of being assaulted by their husbands and 120 of them were randomly selected as the sample. A questionnaire was handed out among the respondents to fill out. Content validity and face validity were used to measure the validity of the questionnaire and Cronbach's alpha was used to confirm its reliability. The obtained data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics methods in a computer software.

Data were analyzed by means of SPSS. Content validity and face validity were used to measure the validity of the questionnaire and Cronbach's alpha was used to confirm its reliability. The obtained data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics methods in a computer software.

RESULTS

The first hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between patriarchal attitudes in a society (patriarchal authoritarian structure) and violence against women.

Table 1: Pearson test on the relationship between patriarchal attitudes in a society and violence against women

| Violence women | against | Patriarchal attitudes | |
|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 0/283** | | 1 | Pearson correlation |
| 0/006 | | 0 | Level of significance |
| 91 | | 91 | Total |

According to Table 1, level of significance is 0.006 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between patriarchal attitudes in a society and violence against women. In addition, Pearson correlation coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.283 which shows the severity of the strong and direct relationship between them. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is rejected and hypothesis H_1 is confirmed. In other words, the results show that patriarchal attitudes in a society has a considerable impact on violence against women and the higher the extent and mean of patriarchal attitudes in a society is, the higher the extent and mean of violence against women will be.

The second hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between observation and experience of violence by men in childhood and violence against women.

Table 2: Pearson test on the relationship between observation and experience of violence by men in childhood and violence against women

| Violence women | against | Observation and experience of violence | |
|----------------|---------|--|---------------------|
| **0.465 | | 1 | Pearson correlation |
| 0.000 | | 0 | Level of |
| 91 | | 91 | significance |
| | | | Total |

According to Table 2, level of significance is 0.000 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between observation and experience of violence by men in childhood and violence against women. In addition, Pearson correlation coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.465 which shows the severity of the strong and direct relationship between them. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is rejected and hypothesis H_1 is confirmed. In other words, the results show that observation and experience of violence by men in childhood has a considerable impact on violence against women and the higher the extent and mean of observation and experience of violence is, the higher the extent and mean of violence against women will be.

The third hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between impossibility of the government to monitor the family members and violence against women.

Table 3: Pearson test on the relationship between impossibility of the government to monitor the family members and violence against women

| Violence women | against | Impossibility to monitor | |
|----------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 0.014 | | 1 | Pearson correlation |
| 0.902 | | 0 | Level of |
| 91 | | 91 | significance |
| | | | Total |

According to Table 3, level of significance is 0.902 which indicates that there is no significant relationship between impossibility of the government to monitor the family members and violence against women. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is confirmed and hypothesis H_1 is rejected. In other words, the results show that impossibility of the government to monitor the family members has no impact on violence against women.

The fourth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between economic pressures and violence against women.

Table 4: Pearson test on the relationship between economic pressures and violence against women

| Violence women | against | Economic pressures | |
|----------------|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 0.116 | | 1 | Pearson correlation |
| 0.312 | | 0 | Level of |
| 91 | | 91 | significance |
| | | | Total |

According to Table 4, level of significance is 0.312 which indicates that there is no significant relationship between economic pressures and violence against women. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is confirmed and hypothesis H_1 is rejected. In other words, the results show that economic pressures have no impact on violence against women.

The fifth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between traditional social system (unequal power relations in society) and violence against women.

Table 5: Pearson test on the relationship between unequal power relations in society and violence against women

| Violence women | against | Traditional social system | |
|----------------|---------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 0.525 | | 1 | Pearson correlation |
| 0.000 | | 0 | Level of |
| 91 | | 91 | significance |
| | | | Total |

According to Table 5, level of significance is 0.000 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between traditional social system and violence against women. In addition, Pearson correlation coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.525 which shows the severity of the strong and direct relationship between them. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is rejected and hypothesis H_1 is confirmed. In other words, the results suggest that traditional social system has a considerable impact on violence against women and the higher the extent and mean of traditional social system is, the higher the extent and mean of violence against women will be. The sixth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between lack of power sources and violence against women.

Table 6: Pearson test on the relationship between lack of power sources and violence against women

| Violence against women | Lack of power sources | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 0.308** | 1 | Pearson correlation Level of significance Total |
| 0.003 | 0 | |
| 91 | 91 | |

According to Table 6, level of significance is 0.003 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between lack of power sources and violence against women. In addition, Pearson correlation coefficient between these two variables is equal to 0.308 which shows the severity of the strong and direct relationship between them. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is rejected and hypothesis H_1 is confirmed. In other words, the results suggest that lack of power sources has a considerable impact on violence against women and the higher the extent and mean of lack of power sources is, the higher the extent and mean of violence against women will be. The seventh hypothesis: The extent of violence against women varies depending on their age.

Table 7: ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) test on the difference of violence against women at different ages

| Level of significance | F-value | Mean squares | Degree of freedom | Sum of squares | Violence |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 0.035 | 3.494 | 863.213 | 2 | 1726.426 | Intergroup variations |
| | | 247.034 | 89 | 21986.041 | Intragroup variations |
| | | | 91 | 23712.467 | Total |

According to Table 7, level of significance is equal to 0.035 which is indicative of a significant relationship between different ages and violence against women. In addition, F-value is 3.494 which suggests the significant difference of the severity of violence against women at different ages. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is rejected and hypothesis H_1 is confirmed. In other words, the results show that the mean of violence against women among the women aged 17-33 years old is 76.17% which is the lowest level of violence. This value in women aged 34-50 years old is about 84.96% and in women aged 51-65 years old is about 89% which is highest level of violence. Based on the test results and data in above table, it can be concluded that the extent of violence against women is increased as their age increases.

The eighth hypothesis: The extent of violence against women varies depending on their education level.

Table 8: ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) test on the difference of violence against women depending on their education level

| Level of significance | F-value | Mean squares | Degree of freedom | Sum of squares | Violence |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 0.252 | 1.331 | 351.083 | 6 | 2106.499 | Intergroup variations |
| | | 263.817 | 86 | 22688.232 | Intragroup variations |
| | | | 92 | 24794.731 | Total |

According to Table 8, level of significance is equal to 0.252 which indicates that there is no significant relationship between education level of women and violence against them. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is confirmed and hypothesis H_1 is rejected. In other words, the results show that education level of women has no impact on the extent of violence imposed on them.

The ninth hypothesis: The extent of violence against women varies depending on the income level of their husbands.

Table 9: ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) test on the difference of violence against women depending on the income level of their husbands

| Level of significance | F-value | Mean squares | Degree of freedom | Sum of squares | Violence |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 0.132 | 1.822 | 422.745 | 4 | 1690.979 | Intergroup variations |
| | | 232.029 | 87 | 20186.500 | Intragroup variations |
| | | | 91 | 21877.478 | Total |

According to Table 9, level of significance is equal to 0.132 which indicates that there is no significant relationship between income level of husbands and violence against women. Therefore, according to the data in above table, hypotheses H_0 is confirmed and hypothesis H_1 is rejected. In other words, the results show that income level of husbands has no impact on the extent of violence imposed on women.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Comparison of the results of the present study with findings of previous studies indicates a consistency between them. The findings on the first hypothesis are similar to the results of Pahlavan (2011), Eydi (2005), Tarzi (2006), Heydari (2012), Marabi (2005), Ezazi (2004), Darvishpour (1999), and Schumacher *et al.* (2001) and also are in line with the results of Ezazi (2006).

About the second hypothesis, the findings are consistent with the results of Pahlavan (2011), Kalantari & Hamidian (2008), Ahmadi & Zangeneh (2004), Jenaei (2006), Hosseini (2009), Farhadi (2008), Akbari (2009), Kazemi (2010), Lahsaeizadeh & Madani (2010), Nazparvar (2002), Rabeey (2001), Eydi (2005), Mohamadi & Mirzaei (2010), Gorzaei (2003), Heydari (2012), Marabi (2005), Tong (2003), Schumacher *et al.* (2001), Kim *et al.* (2009), Golz (1998), and Albrych & Huber (1987).

The third hypothesis has not been tested in previous studies and was firstly raised in the present research, so there was no similar results to be compared with.

The results of the fourth hypothesis are consistent with the findings of Hosseini (2009), but inconsistent with the findings of Alipour (2003), Liaghat (2005), and Eshraghi (2006) who showed that 30% of violence against women is caused by weak economic status and poverty.

In terms of the fifth hypothesis, the obtained results are consistent with the findings of Jenaei (2006), Mohamadi (2009), Fattahi (2000), Farhadi (2008), Zamani (2009), Akbari (2009), Mohamadi & Mirzaei (2010), Ezazi (2004), Liu & Chan (1999), and Schumacher *et al.* (2001).

About the sixth hypothesis, the results are consistent with the findings of Raeesi (2001), Liaghat (2005), Jenaei (2006), Alipour (2003), Arefi (2003), Mohamadi (2009), Gorzaei (2003), Ahmadi & Zangeneh (2004), Marabi (2005), Tong (2003), and Golz (1998).

The results obtained from the seventh hypothesis are consistent with the findings of Ahmadi & Zangeneh (2004), Hosseini (2009), Akbari (2009), Esfandabad & Emamipour (2006), Eydi (2005), Heydari (2012), Marabi (2005), Raeesi (2001), and Arefi (2003), but inconsistent with the findings of Lahsaeizadeh & Madani (2010), Nazparvar (2002), and Jenaei (2006) who reported that there is no significant relationship between husband's age and violence against women.

In terms of the eighth hypothesis, findings of the present study are consistent with the results of Lahsaeizadeh & Madani (2010), Nazparvar (2002), and Raeesi (2001), but inconsistent with the results of Fattahi (2000), Raeesi & Jari (2012), Kalantari & Hamidian (2008), Ahmadi & Zangeneh (2004), Eshraghi (2006), Alipour (2003), Hosseini (2009), Akbari (2009), Sedaghat & Zarrinian (2008), Esfandabad & Emamipour (2006), Heydari (2012), Gorzaei (2003), Stickily *et al.* (2008), and Jarkko (2004).

About the ninth hypothesis, the obtained results are consistent with the findings of Tolman and Rosen (2001), but inconsistent with the findings of Hosseini (2009), Heydari (2012), Ahmadi & Zangeneh (2004), Gorzaei (2003), Alipour (2003), Marabi (2005), Sedaghat & Zarrinian (2008), Farhadi (2008), and Mohamadi (2009).

So, it can be stated that most of hypotheses in this study are consistent with the results of previous studies. In addition, the results of this study should be compared with theoretical perspectives, because the present study was conducted based on hypotheses come out of a theoretical framework. Several approaches have been proposed about social factors affecting violence against women and the role of authoritarian system.

The hypothesis that patriarchal attitudes have a considerable impact on violence against women has been adapted from radical feminism theory. The core idea of radical/revolutionary feminists is that gender inequalities,

the most important form of social inequality, is the product of a strong patriarchal system. In this group's idea, any system of masculine dominance (patriarchy) has been always strengthened by some sort of gender-based division of labor. Masculinity is a universal system in which women are under the domination of men. In the context of patriarchy, men and women observe subordination and learn it. It is patriarchy which induces guilt and repression self-bothering and bothering others, and deception and trickery. According to radical feminists, patriarchy is considered less than others issues, while it is the most important structure of social inequality. They argue that culture of women, knowledge of women, and subjective perception of women all have been denied by men and men have always determined that what should be considered as the reality and what should be valued and respected. Masculine science has been employed to legitimize the ideologies which have undermined women and obliged them to do household chores. The results obtained from this hypothesis were consistent with radical feminism theory and reflected its application.

The hypothesis that observation and experience of violence has a considerable impact on violence against women has been taken from Bandura's social learning theory. According to this theory, aggression has a purely imitative, not innate, nature and is acquired through observation. Crawford refers to studies that show wife abuser men have already observed violence against women in their father's home. In addition, the men who have been the target of violence and being scolded by their parents are more likely to abuse their wives and acquire an insecure attachment in their life. This initial damage is highly associated with aggression. The men who were mostly opposed by their parents in childhood are more likely to grow as ill-mannered character when treated with misbehavior and inappropriate verbal reactions. The results obtained from this hypothesis were consistent with Bandura's social learning theory and reflected its application.

The hypothesis that impossibility of government to monitor the behaviors of people in the family has no impact on violence against women was adapted from the theory of social supervision. This theory emphasizes on society-family relationship and argues that not only the society allows violence but also, since family is considered a private area, it is not possible for the government to monitor people in this private area. Within the privacy of home, social attitudes to violence, rights and duties of the spouses to each other, and rights and duties of parents to children are faded away and the society is deprived of the possibility of monitoring. As a result, an attitude will be created in the family that gives a legitimate executive authority and women and children are considered as stimuli for men to exhibit violent behaviors. The results of this hypothesis were not consistent with social supervision theory, which indicates its inapplicability.

The hypothesis that economic pressures have no impact on violence against women was extracted from structure analysis theory. The impact of economic pressures and harsh and convulsive conditions of life caused by the structures on growth, survival, and aggressive relations in the family is emphasized in this theory. These economic and social structures are culpable for the monopoly of sources of wealth, power, and prestige to be mostly in the hand of men and they play the major role in decision-making processes. Since men rule the roost in utilization of resources, it seems to be obvious that they know it their tight be the top authority and resort to violence and aggression as a requirement. Surprisingly, some women more or less acknowledge and believe this right. If structural factors are arranged as community resources are scarce and difficult to access, men will show their masculine role excessively. As a result, men of the middle class and rich families, due to their breadwinning role, may have authority-seeking and possibly fierce expectations and men of low-income families, because of the difficulties of being a breadwinner, may treat their wives with aggressive reactions. The results of this hypothesis were not consistent with structure analysis theory, which indicates its inapplicability.

The hypothesis that traditional social system has a considerable impact on violence against women was adapted from patriarchy theory. What is important and all have a consensus on in this theory is that violence against women is the reflection of a man-dominated society where there are unequal power relations and violence acts as the preserver of these relations. In other words, violence against women guarantees the dominance of men over women in a society. Patriarchy is a paternal authoritarian system which suppresses women through economic, political, and social institutions. Patriarchy takes its power from more accessibility of men to resources and benefits and structure of domination within and outside the home. Patriarchy is a system composed of social relations in which men rule women. According patriarchy theory, violence of husbands against wives is the result of the traditional social system of a society and patriarchal structure of families that are reinforced by patriarchal ideology. According to this theory, it can be stated that accessibility of certain individuals or groups to scarce resources is predestined in the patriarchal hierarchy. Patriarchy is a cultural system that allows men to have more power and privileges than women in the social hierarchy and, its extreme form, gives the right to men to dominate women and children. Hence, if their position is compromised, they can resort to violence and power which is generally accepted by the society. In general, it can be stated that patriarchy is the fundamental structure of all contemporary societies.

The hypothesis that lack of power sources has a considerable impact on violence against women was extracted from William Good's theory of resources. This theory stresses the economic deprivation of men and states that the husbands who have no source of power such as income, high education, and a satisfying job, resort to violence against women as a means to gain power in their family relationships. Based on this theory, family system, like any other social system or unit, has an authoritarian system and anyone who has more accessibility to important family resources can force others to act as he/she desires. When the material and non-material resources that are traditionally in the hands of men as tool are somehow eliminated or reduced, husbands resort to violence against their women and even children in order to rebuild their lost power. According to this theory, it is more likely to observe violence against women among men who have lower income, education level. In addition, job prestige. Alternatively, as O'Brien states, the deeper the social class inconsistency between husband and wife is, the higher the possibility of occurrence of violence against women would be. The results obtained from this hypothesis were consistent with the theory of resources and reflected its application.

Based on the results obtained from testing the hypotheses, it can be stated that violence against women has a significant and direct relationship with patriarchal attitudes, observation and experience of violence in childhood, traditional social system, lack of power sources, and different ages.

Finally, with regard to the overall results of the hypotheses, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between traditional social system and violence against women. Unequal power relations, domination of men over women, paternal domination system, biological inequality between men and women, superiority of men over women, hierarchy, oppression of women, and authoritarian system are some of the features of traditional social system. Authoritarian system is one of varying indicators of traditional social system. According to patriarchy theory, what is important and all have a consensus on is that violence against women is the reflection of a man-dominated society where there are unequal power relations and violence acts as the preserver of these relations. In other words, violence against women guarantees the dominance of men over women in a society.

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