



# Violence Against Women

## Study

Syria 2005

The sample of the study was 1,891 families from urban and rural areas of the 14 Syrian governorates.

### **General Findings:**

1. Almost 17% of women handed out their remunerations voluntarily to the head of their families; 4.5% handed it unwillingly; of the latter, 6.3% were in rural areas and 2.6% in urban areas.
2. Almost 14% of families identified the future husband of their daughters. The percentage varied according to women's educational status. It was 10% amongst women who had completed an undergraduate degree and 19% amongst those who had completed elementary education or less. 7.5% of these families chose the future husbands of their daughters against their will.
3. 6.6% of heads of families got married before the age of 15; 6% in urban areas and 7% in rural areas. 38% of women were married between 15 and 19 years of age.
4. 2.6% of women get pregnant before the age of 15; 1.9% in urban areas and 3.5% in rural areas. 29.8% of women got pregnant between 15 and 19 years of age: 29% in urban areas and 31% in rural areas. 5.4% of pregnant women were treated badly during their first pregnancy by their husbands. This percentage increased to 9% in their last pregnancy.
5. 12.4% of the sample had married two wives: 9% in urban areas and 16.3% in rural areas.
6. 17.4% of women had not received any thing from their legal rights of inheritance; 14.7% in urban areas against 20.2% in rural areas. 24% of families compensated women with part of their inheritance.
7. 13% of husbands committed violence against there wives, whereas 1,2% of wives committed violence against their husbands.
8. 6% of husbands don't allow their wives to visit their families or friends of the same sex. 12% of husbands select their wives' clothing without consulting them.
9. 43% of couples fell out with each other over the education of their children.
10. 56% of mistakes that women had been punished for by the heads of the families - regardless the educational achievements of the head of the family - were mistreatment and cursing; 14% of these mistakes were neglecting their households' duties. Husbands beat their wives in 49% of such cases; insulted them in 38% cases and used silence in 8,4% cases.
11. 67% of women had been punished in front of their family members; 52% of the punished women were insulted; 56% were deprived of pocket money and 87% were beaten.

12. 21.8% of women were exposed to some sort of violence. Insult came ahead with 50,2%, followed by beating at 48,2%, then sexual harassment with 14.1, robbery 10.7%, bodily assault 5.4% and kidnapping 2.3%.
13. 71,8% of assaulted women were attacked by a family member; 12,4% by a known person; 7,6% by an unknown person.
14. 76,4% of assaulted women were cursed by a family member. Husbands were responsible on 64% of cases; brothers on 13% and mothers on 7%.
15. 80,4% of assaulted women were beaten by a family member. Husbands were responsible on 54% of cases, fathers on 36% and brothers on 3%.
16. 52,6% of assaulted women were sexual harassment by a male family member; 18,6% by unknown person and 16,5% by a known person.
17. 54,4 of robbed women were robbed by a family member; 21,3% by unknown person and 14,8% by a known person.
18. 73% of bodily assaulted women were attacked by a family member; 11,5% by unknown person and 9% by a known person.
19. 51,4% of assaulted women were kidnapped by a family member; 24,3% by a previously known person.
20. Fists were used against women in 79% of cursing cases; in 84% of beat cases; in 65% of sexual harassment cases; in 63% of robbery cases; in 55% of bodily assault cases and in 84% of kidnapping cases.
21. Sticks were used against women in 23% of cursing cases; in 26% of beat cases; in 20% of sexual harassment cases; in 42% of robbery cases; in 75% of bodily assault cases.
22. Some family members defended the assaulted women and blamed the assaulters in 49% of cursing cases; in 48% of beating cases; in 72% of sexual harassment cases; in 44% of robbery cases; in 38% of bodily assault cases and in 36% of kidnapping cases. In the remainder of cases, family members blamed women, reproached or prevented them from social life or cursed or beat them.
23. Fear of the assaulters, of their own families, from creating problems for their families and from traditions and customs were the main reasons that prevented women from informing their families about the assault they had been experienced.
24. Women informed their families about the kidnapping cases, the robbery, the bodily assault and the sexual harassment cases respectively.

25. Men had been found responsible, basically, in 66% of beating women, in 57% of bodily violence, in 50% of women's relationship outside the family and in praising other woman in front of their wives.
26. Women were found responsible, basically, in 55% cases where husbands killed their wives for adultery, having friendships with other than their husband in 45% of cases. Both parties were found responsible in 66% of divorced cases, in 47% of curse cases and the husbands' marriage form second woman.

**Recommendations:**

1. Condense the awareness-raising campaigns that address men and women to highlight the importance of respecting women's dignity and prestige as well as treating them politely, and to bring attention to the negative impact of disrespecting and mistreating women on women's personality, family and community.
2. Intensify penalties against people who assault women and expanding these penalties to address all sorts of violence against women.
3. Expand the inclusion of the curricula at all educational levels, to include information and knowledge that might enhance the values of equity and equality between sexes, and emphasize the importance of Gender participation and coordination for the benefit of family and community; and to amend the traditional roles, attitudes and behaviours of men and women.
4. Find places to accommodate abused women who cannot find a secured shelter or income, rehabilitating them and intervening with necessary help through the establishment of an "Abused and Harmed Women's Fund" to enable them to face life's hardship.
5. Continue carrying out field research and analytical studies to measure the new variables of all sorts of violence against women, to find out its reasons and their implications on women, family and community.
6. Continue working with all Official and Public parties to cancel reservations on some items of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women CEDAW.
7. Pursue the implementation of the National Plan to protect women from violence in cooperation with the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and the relevant parties.
8. Establish Medical Centres with specialists to provide psychological treatments for the abused women.
9. Continue coordinating with relevant parties to improve the performance of policewomen, in particular equipping them with the necessary training for treating women in special situations.

10. Continue communicating with women and girls at prisons and rehabilitation Centres to provide guidance and counseling, medical and social care, and promoting women's inclusion in their communities.
11. Pursue with the Ministry of Al-Awqaf, to highlighting women's position in Islam through an enlightened religious speech.
12. Concentrate on media messages to highlight the impact of violence against women and its negative results on the family and community as well as cooperating with relevant parties.