

The Covid-19's Effect on Increasing Domestic Violence During Quarantines

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Abstract:

Domestic Violence or violence against one's partner, or domestic abuse, refers to a pattern of abusive behaviour in a relationship in which one person attempts to control or dominate the other. A variety of forms of abuse can be manifested, such as physical violence, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial control, isolation from friends and family, or intimidation and threats. There is a possibility of domestic violence occurring in any type of intimate relationship, regardless of gender, age, or socioeconomic status. The physical and psychological effects of domestic violence can be severe. In this study the main question is: Has domestic violence been increased during quarantines as a result of the Covid-19? As people were stuck and isolated at home also their freedom was taken away from them, these reasons can lead people to change their behaviour towards their partner, children, family or any other members who live together. In this study, the researcher tries to find out to what extent COVID-19 has affected on increasing domestic violence? Furthermore, for previous studies, two researches were used worldwide for obtaining information about domestic violence. As well as with connecting to Kurdish society the researcher has interviewed director of women's shelter in Erbil and deputy general manager Combating Violence Against Women and Family (CVAWF) in KRG. Moreover, for methodology, semi- structured interview was used to interview five females and five males in Kurdistan for gathering information. Overall, all interviewees and director of women's shelter in Erbil believed that COVID-19 has brought families closer to each other. On the other hand, deputy general manager of CVAWF had different point of view based on survey he carried out that the rate for domestic violence has been increased especially in Iraq.

Key Words: Domestic Violence, COVID-19, Quarantine, patriarchal, social phenomenon.

Introduction:

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Domestic violence (DV) has gained a lot of media coverage over the years all over the world. This research will look at the effect of COVID-19 quarantines upon DV. In recent years, communities around the world have been severely affected by the Corona virus disease. Due to the fear and stress associated with being infected, in combination with the lockdown and prevention protocols, as well as the economic downturn, tension among people increased, which resulted in an increase in domestic violence. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on domestic violence around the world. Due to lockdowns and social distancing measures, many victims were trapped near their abusers, making it more difficult for them to seek assistance or escape dangerous situations. It is important for social science researchers to find out the causes and factors behind increasing DV during COVID-19 quarantine. Domestic violence (DV) is social phenomenon as it has been increased during Covid-19's quarantines. The main question in this research is to what extent COVID-19 quarantines effected on increasing DV? Has DV become social phenomenon in most societies/ world- wide? This research focuses on reasons of increasing violence during COVID-19 quarantine. In Iraq general, and Kurdistan in specific, As well as the immediate and tragic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on health, preventive behavioural responses by households and government transmission control policies are likely to affect Iraqi household livelihoods and welfare in multiple ways (Iraqi Minister of Plan, 2020, P:2).

Importance of this research:

There is constant news coverage concerning DV in the news, social media, television, and in the society, detailing the plight of innocent females and males suffering from DV. Especially, during COVID-19 almost all people stayed and were stuck at home that effected of increasing DV in almost everywhere world-wide. As far as Kurdistan is concern, Kurdistan was one of the regions which affected by Covid-19's. People were quarantined twice, first quarantine was 45 days, and second quarantine was for two weeks according KRG government website (2020).

Project objectives:

The current study examines reasons of domestic violence (DV) by identifying the causes and social factors of DV. It will identify increasing domestic violence during COVID-19's quarantine. In addition, this research focuses on causes and factors helped increasing DV during COVID-19 quarantine.

Research Question:

- To what extent COVID-19's quarantine helped increasing DV?
- Have they reported DV during quarantine?
- Has DV become social phenomenon in society?

Literature Review:**Domestic Violence:**

There has been an increase in domestic violence in recent years world- wide. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence has been a worldwide concern; however, studies of past epidemics and natural disasters that look at their impact on domestic violence reporting and experience show mixed results (Piquero et al., 2021). Lately, research has demonstrated that pandemics and natural disasters reduce violent crime in communities and families, boost family functioning, and enhance prosocial behaviour by maintaining community trust or strengthening cooperation between people (Cerna-Turoff et al., 2019). In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in primary research examining DV in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and identifying emerging issues related to DV within this context (Abdo et al., 2020; Pentaraki & Speake, 2020).

It has been reported that women who are victims of DV are frequently confined in their homes while social protection services are disrupted because of COVID-19 and movement restrictions (Javed & Mehmood, 2020). The "lockdown" at home in response to the pandemic has

exacerbated the problem of violence against women, resulting in what the UN has termed a "pandemic on a pandemic" (Bayu, 2020;).

Contributing factors Due to the large number of factors identified in the review studies that contributed to an increased vulnerability to DV during the pandemic and social distancing measures and environmental frameworks, which are widely used in DV research (Kim, 2021). According to Minister of Plan in Iraqi government and UNICEF's report in 2020 stated that apart from the immediate and tragic health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government's transmission control policies and preventive behavioural responses are likely to impact Iraqi households' livelihoods and welfare in numerous ways.

Based on research was carried out in Erbil about (Social Vulnerability, A qualitative research on the reasons behind social vulnerability in Erbil city) By the researcher (Muzhda Muhammed, 2023). In the research the researcher during her interview came out with the result that during COVID-19 due to economical and not having enough money to provide and cover cost of living, a lot of families had arguments and issues even domestic violence and stress during quarantine.

On 28th of January 2024 the researcher interviewed Ari Rafiq the deputy general manager of Combating Violence Against Women and Family. Rafiq has carried out a survey in 2020, According to survey which 400 forms have been sent through online platforms for 400 participants in Kurdistan. The survey was carried out during quarantine as there was not any official governments offices were open and people were stuck at home. Based on this survey, 59% of the women participants faced emotional and mental abuse during quarantine, 23% faced physical violence. Rafiq (2020) mentioned that during the domestic violence they have contacted hotline 119 for seeking help. Furthermore, he stated that according to United Nation's report in 2020 Iraq was one of the countries where the rate of domestic violence was increased during the COVID-19's quarantine.

On the other hand, on January 2023 the researcher has visited women's shelter in Erbil and interviewed Ms Tvga the shelter's manager/ director. My main question was during COVID-19's quarantine how was women's situation in shelter? Her answer was surprise and unexpected, she has mentioned that all women during quarantine went back home, their families came and forgiven them. Due to stress and fear to loss their lives, families did not let female members in their family to be left out and stay a lone in shelters. Also, she has mentioned no one reported

domestic violence during COVID-19's quarantine, this either due to staying home all the time with their abusers or quarantine made them closer to each other.

Methodology:

As a method to gather information from participants, semi-structured interviews have been used in this study. The reason for this is that during the interview, additional information or additional questions will be raised in order to add more details to the research that will be beneficial to it.

Bryman (2012) stated that Semi structured interviews have been used in this study, as they are believed to be the most effective way to obtain information. Furthermore, due to the fact that extra information or further questioning may be provided during the interview in order to add more details to the research and provide additional benefits for the research, it is beneficial for the researcher.

An individual interview has been conducted one-to-one (face-to-face). During each interview, the duration was between 20 and 30 minutes, and verbal consent was obtained in order to record their voices. Following data collection, The researcher has recorded all interview voices. There was a purposeful sampling of participants in Erbil city, which was selected by the researcher. Choosing this type of sample is important in qualitative research. Due to the extensive amount of information, I gained from interviewing ten participants plus official government managers, I was able to cover all the aspects of this study. The participants were twelve six females and six males.

Additionally, transmitted documents were used to obtain historical background information regarding DV in Kurdistan, as well as new data records regarding DV in Kurdistan during COVID-19 quarantine. Nevertheless, many victims do not report abuse in their homes, making it difficult to obtain accurate statistics (Rafiq, 2010).

Ethical Issues:

In light of the sensitivity of the topic and the nature of Kurdish society, this research may place me in a potentially dangerous position. My research was conducted in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan. As compared to other cities in Iraq, Erbil is a modern city where the law is more strictly adhered to. Erbil has a large number of feminist and women's groups, as well as many

female MPs in the Kurdistan Regions Government (KRG), who have had a significant impact on women's freedom.

The following ethical issues were considered in the conduct of my research project:

Sensitivity: A sensitive issue such as domestic violence should be treated with caution.

Data protection: Protecting data - ensuring that the information I gather is not accessible to others and ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

Safety - When conducting research on this topic, numerous issues may arise that may jeopardize my safety. A researcher may face difficulties and issues during the collection of data about sensitive subjects, either methodologically, ethically, or legally, according to Lee (1993:1). To ensure my own safety, I have conducted a risk assessment.

Confidentiality: Anonymity is essential requirements for any research that is being conducted as identifiable data should not be disclosed to anyone without the participants' consent. My interviewees' identities have been kept confidential. Moreover, as it is essential that researchers should not pass on identifiable data to anyone without participants' consent, any research carried out should guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher has kept the identities of their interviewees private. The coding process was used for example, for females; F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6 was used. And for males, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6 was used.

Through careful data collection and analysis, as well as accurate and objective reporting of research findings, personal values may play an important role in protecting the integrity of ones investigations. Considering the women's personal experiences of domestic violence, I was careful to protect their human rights.

Finding and Discussion

1. What was the Causes of increasing domestic violence during quarantine?

According to interviewees opinions and experiences, staying home for long period of time and taken away their freedom by forcing people to stay home and not coming out was one of the

reasons for increasing domestic violence during quarantine. One of the interviewee's mentioned that being stressful and scared from Covid-19 was pushing people to get frustrated and being abusive towards other members of their family. He added, before covid if he had any issues at home, he was leaving home and going out either to work or to go to cafe with friends as part of stress relief, but during quarantine there was not any escape point to avoid fight with partner as we all were stuck at home. Another female interviewee's stated that staying for longer time with each other made us to know small details about our daily routines like phone calls for longer hours with close friends or watching tv or any specific daily activities we used to do it without their partner know it, but during quarantine these were obvious. On the other hand, one male and one female of my interviewees stated that due to lack of health and financial issues, they had a lot of arguments at home especially when they were run out of food in second week of quarantine. As they were daily worker getting paid day by day, after two weeks of quarantine, their arguments started due to insufficient and food shortages. Also, having children at home was another factor to have arguments, as there was no school children were home and hyperactive as there was no where to go to burn their energy.

2. Do you think quarantine helped to separate families or made them closer to each other? How?

According to interviewees responses, it depends on family's background with each other. Some families quarantine brought them closer to each other but on the other hand there were families were suffered from domestic violence like emotional or physical abuse. Pre covid-19 everyone were busy especially male members of the family were working for longer hours and staying out for almost all day, that made them to miss a lot of their families daily activities, but during quarantine made them closer and have some family time together, like watching movies, playing cards and gardening. However, one of the male interviewee's said regardless made us closer to each other but made me to get angry when I saw her calling her mother and sisters hourly and reporting every single thing to them, that made him angry to find out his wife telling her family everything.

3. If you were married during quarantine, were you helping your partner, were your relationship got stronger? Or vice versa?

All interviewees agreed that their partner helped them for household cleaning, cooking or gardening during covid-19 quarantine.

4. When you were ill, did your partner support you?

All interviewees mentioned that they helped their partners during their illness. Especially male interviewees stated that when their wives sick they were carrying out household cleaning and cleaning. One of the male interviewee's said his wife was 8 months old pregnant when he got covid and then his wife got it, he said because of looking after her and having responsibility towards his wife and her baby, he was unable to stay in bed and relax as he looked after her and did household duties.

5. To what extent quarantine helped to know your partner more and to know your partners characteristic more? Like; being jealous, mean or on demand?

All interviewees agreed that made them to know more about their partners. By staying with each other for 24/7 made them to be aware of their single daily activity like using mobiles, opening fridge all most hourly or watching TV dramas. Furthermore, one of the female interviewee's mentioned that she has been married for 16 years, never realised that her husband was jealous, but during quarantine when she was stuck home in their apartment, she was going to window regularly, she said her husband argued with her as how come she is all the time checking windows and looking outside. Also, she added, never noticed her husband was mean, during quarantine she was observing her how much food she was cooking and how much was wasting.

Another male interviewee said during quarantine he found out that his wife watching Turkish dramas during the day. He stated that never realised that his wife spending her daily routine on watching useless dramas while she can watch beneficial channels or even reading books.

6. Do you know any couple were in a good relationship prior covid-19's quarantine but quarantine made them suffer from domestic violence?

Majority of interviewees agreed that issue was exist prior quarantine between couples, then quarantine made it worse and highlighted the issue. As this is sensitive topic usually people do not share their personal issues that much. However, one of the female interviewee mentioned that since COVID-19's quarantine, arguments between her and her husband has increased since then he goes to details in her daily life's activity and interfering in her decisions. She added, after quarantines, her husband prevents her to talk on the phone while he is home, not letting her go outside that much comparing her life before COVID-19. These changes form her husband's attitude comes after he was stuck home and observed her 24/7 and saw her she was on the phone and checked she was going out a lot. This lady mentioned that corona changed her life, due to her children she is unable to raise her voice or divorce.

Nonetheless, one of the interviewee mentioned that one of her neighbour had issue before covid-19. However, quarantine made it worse and increased fight between them. Once the quarantine was over, they were divorced.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Millions of people worldwide have lost their lives due to COVID-19's virus. After obtaining all the information and data, I have a clearer understanding that COVID-19 has impacted on people's lives during quarantine and changed them. Most information obtained from research and interviewees were controversial as in some cases and data's domestic violence is still carried out in worldwide and also in Kurdistan. However, based on most of my interviewees COVID-19's quarantine made their families get closer and more supportive towards each other. On the other hand, two of my interviewees were from poor family background, they have mentioned that during quarantine fight and arguments were increased among their families.

It is critical to address these social factors in order to effectively combat domestic violence through education, legal reform, and raising awareness about gender equality and human rights. The elimination of this horrible practice requires a change in societal attitudes and the promotion

of gender equality. Additionally, this research provided me with a greater understanding of the public's perception of the reasons for its occurrence.

Moreover, domestic violence is a phenomenon that has been prevalent throughout the world for many years, during COVID-19's quarantine the rate of domestic violence is vary from family to family and from culture to culture. Numerous catalysts influence how many domestic violence are carried out in each region depending on the culture, religion, substance misuse, drug and political climate, along with maleness and patriarchy.

To conclude, the fight against violence against family or children requires some specific steps. First, Government must constitutionalise and nationalize the rights that have been outlined in international treaties and conventions, and it should not be permitted to regularise domestic violence under the guise of cultural, religious, or traditional justifications. Last but not least, providing hotlines to support families who suffers from domestic violence during quarantine or under any other circumstances to make families aware that there is support for them if there is issues.

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