



# "precarious Feminine Labor and the Growth of Gender-Based Violence"

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## **Abstract:**

Feminist discourse in the Arab world today is considered an influential structure within the intellectual and emotional system that organizes our lives. It has imposed itself as a tool for analyzing and understanding social, economic, and political events, starting with the family and extending to the political system as a whole. Feminism thus appears at the heart of the fragility our region is experiencing today, and it is a field of knowledge that cannot be bypassed; rather, many questions must be raised through which the central cumulative action of any cognitive and institutional field is carried out, especially after many problems have emerged that prevented the establishment of social justice on a gender basis, nourished by a patriarchal culture.

There is certainly a need today to open an open discussion and undertake participatory work in order to study the dilemmas that prevent improving the status of women in society and protecting them from all forms of violence, especially those categories that practice precarious professions that make them vulnerable to multiple forms of violence.

In this context, we present a research paper entitled "Precarious Feminine Labor and the Growth of Gender-Based Violence," in which we adopted the case study method to delve into the phenomenon of violence among women in precarious work and to uncover its causes, forms, and ways to reduce it.

**Received:** 11 Jan 2025

**Received:** 24 Feb 2025

**Accepted:** 08 March 2025

## **Introduction:**

The phenomenon of gender-based violence is a global phenomenon that has invaded human society since ancient times, and it was not confronted until the end of the nineteenth century, when some European feminist movements rose up against gender-based violence and demanded social justice and political rights. Then demands gradually developed toward opposing the phenomenon of gender-based violence in all its forms. Such movements spread within Arab society, and Tunisia is among the first countries in which feminist associations appeared to struggle against gender-based violence since the 1990s, finding in the package of constitutional rights the best support for it. But despite that, the rates of this phenomenon remain high according to the results of the field research conducted in Tunisia on the phenomenon of violence against women in the summer of 2009, which concluded that 32.3% of women in Tunisia are exposed to violence in all its forms. This required intensifying research work on this phenomenon to uncover its causes and its most important repercussions and to try to reduce it and its effects on the individual and society. We carried out this study relying on the case study method to address this phenomenon among vulnerable categories for which it is difficult to rely on quantitative approaches to access the causes of the phenomenon and its results.

### **The Problematic:**

The research topic addresses the phenomenon of gender-based violence, which becomes particularly acute among vulnerable groups that live in material deprivation that makes them accept work under conditions in which most of the rights applied in employment are absent, thus becoming victims of many forms of violence. We will identify them through the case study through which we will try to answer the following questions:

- What are the reasons that led to the growth of gender-based violence among women working in precarious sectors?
- What are the most prominent forms of violence against social gender among this group?
- What is the cycle of gender-based violence?
- What is the Tunisian state's strategy for preventing gender-based violence?

### **Study Hypothesis:**

Deprivation, cultural heritage, and lack of awareness of the concept of violence contributed to the growth of the phenomenon of violence against working women.

### **Concepts:**

Precarious work: This includes the category of self-employed workers, contributing family workers, and persons whose chances in formal work arrangements are limited; they therefore lack decent working conditions, appropriate social security, and a real opportunity to make their voices heard through unions and similar organizations. Precariousness, from an economic point of view, means insufficient income; it also means instability in social status at the level of work and income, i.e., the inability to satisfy the individual's basic needs<sup>1</sup>.

Feminism: Many researchers believe that feminism appeared in the West in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, as a reaction to a patriarchal paternal system that entrenched prevailing cultures carrying a negative image of women, diminished their status, and squandered their rights. That discrimination resulted in social tension under a harsh capitalist system and deteriorating economic conditions. Historically, feminism went through several waves beginning at the end of the nineteenth century until today:

- First wave: Feminism focused on demanding legal rights such as the right to vote and the right to fair working conditions;
- Second wave: Focused on social gender and what is associated with discrimination against it and violence in the private and public sphere;
- 1 Al-Hiwar Al-Mutamaddin-issue 1680, the global and trade-union movement-21/9/2006-12:11.
- Third wave: Concerned with layers of oppression, meaning that women may suffer discrimination due to sex, race, and class together;
- Fourth wave: An extension of the approach of diversification and liberation from any prior stereotypical molds linked to feminist thought itself.<sup>2</sup>

Violence, linguistically: 'violence' ('unf) is harshness in dealing with something and lack of gentleness<sup>3</sup>; it is the opposite of gentleness. One says: he acted violently toward him /against him; to be violent is to not be gentle in one's conduct. 'He took the matter violently' means he took it by force.

Definition of violence from the perspective of sociology: Violence is a phenomenon accompanying humanity since ancient times. Ibn Khaldun believed it to be a natural inclination in human beings<sup>4</sup>: "Among the morals of human beings are injustice and aggression of some against others..." In the same context, he spoke about the Bedouins' raids on the sedentary and about ('asabiyyah),

which expresses an innate readiness that drives the individual to support his blood relative and defend him. Hobbes spoke of human nature, which is in a constant state of competition and domination, and expressed this in the phrase "the war of all against all." As for Marx and Rousseau, they acknowledged the existence of violence, but it is not a nature in humans; rather, civilization and the unjust distribution of wealth created it. Durkheim considered the cases of violence found in societies to be the result of the transformation from simple societies to complex societies, while Parsons discussed violence in its symbolic, non-sensory dimension, which achieves results stronger than those achieved by direct (material) violence. He spoke of symbolic violence practiced by ruling classes, which exploit in that all the capabilities of the state, especially the media and the school, to pass their economic, social, and ideological project. He criticized Marx for not giving this violence the attention it deserves, for it also dominates economic relations, methods of consumption, and the quality of consumption. Bourdieu says: "Symbolic violence is a gentle, sweet, and non-sensory violence; it is invisible to its victims themselves, and it is a violence exercised through purely symbolic ways and means, i.e., through communication, inculcation, and knowledge."<sup>5</sup>

Gender-based violence: It is violence exercised on social gender, and its victim is the woman because she is a woman; that is, it is violence on the basis of sex. Law No. 58 of 2017, dated 11 August 2017, is based on combating violence against women based on discrimination between the sexes and eliminating all its forms: physical, psychological, economic, and sexual, pursuing perpetrators, and caring for its victims, women and children (male and female).

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2 An article about feminism is available at the link: [QdEc/ws.bitly://http](http://QdEc/ws.bitly://http)

3 Ibn Manzur, *Lisān al-'Arab*, Dar Sader, Beirut-Lebanon, Volume Two, Part 9, 2010.

4 Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun*, edited by 'Ali 'Abd al-Wahid Wafi, Part 2, 3rd ed., Cairo, Dar Nahda.

5 Pierre Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*, aux Éditions du Seuil, 1998, p.88.

### **Research method:**

We will adopt the case study method through which we will present a case of violence, and through her experience we will try to understand the forms of gender-based violence, its most important causes and stages, and we will look into ways to prevent violence against women.

### **Definition of the case study method:**

It is one of the descriptive studies and a method of descriptive research that provides the researcher with quantitative and qualitative data about multiple factors related to an individual, an institution, or a small number of individuals in order to reach a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon.

### **Case presentation:**

Zainab is a woman in her thirties who dropped out of school at the secondary stage. She comes from one of Tunisia's central governorates. Zainab headed toward a coastal city where job opportunities are available due to the abundance of tourist units, restaurants, and cafés. Zainab worked as a cleaner for an employer in the private sector. I asked her about the relationship with the employer. She said that at first her employer treated her in a special way marked by kindness and gentleness, and he would follow her with his gaze wherever she went and say words expressing great admiration. When he was alone with her in his office, he would touch her face, hair, and hands, then move to sensitive areas of her body such as the buttocks and chest. He would shower her with material gifts such as presents and money. After a while, he lured her into having sex. When she resisted, he expressed his desire to marry her and convinced her of a customary marriage as a first stage until he got rid of his wife. She accepted out of fear of his anger and

of being dismissed, since she had no other resource besides her wages. The Fātihah was recited in private; he gave her an amount of money as a dowry and told her she had become lawful to him. He used to warn her against mixing with the rest of the workers and talking to them, claiming they envied her and wished her ill. His ways of having sex were violent. When she became pregnant and signs of pregnancy appeared, he forced her to get rid of the fetus or else he would dismiss her from work. She gave up her pregnancy at a health institution through a medical abortion and regretted not using contraceptives; she had made a mistake by having sex without protection.

### **Justification of the method:**

Women and girls at work are exposed to several forms of violence despite laws and international agreements that oppose violence and seek to limit all violations women face in general and in the workplace in particular. Accurate statistics may not be available about violence exercised against women in different professional environments, which may be due to the lack of studies addressing this topic across various sectors, especially precarious ones, or perhaps due to the difficulty of communicating with this group during work. Even the available data on gender-based violence in Tunisia goes back to the field research on

violence against women conducted in Tunisia in 2009 under the supervision of the National Office of Family and Population (a health institution that has worked on preventing violence against women since the last century). Therefore, I adopted the case study method for a worker practicing precarious work whom I met as a sociologist in an individual awareness session on preventing violence against women. Through this case I wanted to reveal the types of violence faced by women working in these sectors and to identify some unspoken practices that may not appear with full accuracy in comprehensive fieldwork based on quantitative research tools.

### **I-Stages of violence through the case:**

Based on what the victim narrated, I will begin by defining the stages of violence that every abused woman goes through, regardless of the forms of violence practiced against her, her level of knowledge, or the abuser. I will use what the victim narrated to define these stages.

1. Seducing the victim: This is the first link in the chain of gender-based violence. The abuser begins by seducing the victim and surrounding her from all sides, showing her how strongly he is attached to her so that she believes his love and attention. He may justify not giving her space to act freely by saying he loves her and is jealous of her; he claims it is his right, and she may even take pride in it and boast about it at times. This is a method used first by the lover, as well as by the brother and the father under the pretext of intense love and fear for her from strangers. In our example, the employer transgressed his role as employer and began to feign love and intense concern. Seduction appeared in his pursuit of her with his looks and his special gentle treatment so that she would believe his love and attention, making it easier to “catch” her later.

2. Isolating the victim: Isolation means cutting her off from those around her. How many lovers ask their girlfriends to delete their online accounts, reduce communication with girlfriends, and not communicate with males. As for the father and brother, they may forbid the girl from going on trips with friends, studying with them, or attending mixed gatherings. In the case study, the employer asked her not to talk and communicate with the rest of the workers. This is a kind of isolation from the outside world. They justify isolating her from others by claiming they know things about friends, especially males, that she does not know, and that it is better for her not to accompany them because they might harm or exploit her. She believes them, because they succeeded in casting doubt on her ability to communicate and protect herself, her self-confidence is shaken, and then the next stage comes: devaluation.

3. Devaluation: The abuser tells the victim that she does not know what he knows about the dangers of the outside world, that she lacks experience and shrewdness, and that she is not capable of dealing with others who might exploit her kindness, most of whom wish her ill. With these words, victims believe the abuser and see him as a savior from misguidance. A woman or girl can fall into these stages regardless of her knowledge level and age, because the abuser persists in humiliating her until she loses confidence in herself and becomes captive to his demands. Many girls have cut their online relationships in response to a lover's or brother's request; even those who keep their

accounts delete their photos, submit to his control over the type of posts, reduce female friends, prevent males from accessing the page, and even give him passwords so he can monitor them, especially private messages. In the example given, the victim appears compliant, responding to all requests, such as the request for marriage and for abortion, matters that require thinking, but when a woman is abused and stripped of agency, such decisions are made without reflection just to please the abuser. She may even blame herself and feel that the fault is hers and not the abuser's, leading to the next stage: reversed guilt.

4. Reversed guilt: Despite the barrage of violence, the abuser makes the victim justify the violence and sometimes blame herself. Her inner voice says the abuser is not wrong and is right, and she is the one who fell short. She feels remorse and blames herself. In our case, reversed guilt follows the victim: she blames herself for not taking contraceptives and pardons him for the crime of abortion, making responsibility for pregnancy only hers, whereas this is not a trivial matter and should be discussed jointly before it occurs. Other examples: some victims say, "If my clothes had been modest, he would not have abused me," or "My request came at an inappropriate time and his mood was bad," or "I should not have gone out then or gone to that crowded place," so as not to be subjected to violence.

5. A climate of fear and terror: The abuser's increasing domination and refusal to admit guilt makes the victim live in fear and terror. She becomes trembling and unable to decide despite questions in her mind: Should she continue the relationship with its risks to her health (sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy), or end it? If she ends it, will she keep her job or be fired? Her precarious situation and the violence imposed on her make her weak and stripped of will. Meanwhile, the abuser is characterized by strength and control; his mood depends on a few words, and his behavior becomes accustomed to violence over the simplest things. The victim then continues to submit to his desires, even if harsh, such as insisting on a non-legal marriage for mula or requesting an abortion.

6. Ensuring impunity: This is the last link in the chain of violence, leading back to the first link and to persisting in the vortex of violence and not exiting it unless the victim becomes aware of the forms of violence imposed on her and tries to challenge and stop it. At this stage, the victim may show anger when violence escalates and threaten to complain or litigate; the abuser rushes to appease her so she relinquishes her rights. This is common among spouses: when a wife sees her husband, leaves the home, and demands alimony, the abuser uses every means to dissuade her, seeking to restore relations to nullify her rights and evade punishment. In our case, the victim is ignorant of the law and lives in deprivation that makes her submit so she is not fired, despite being a victim of many forms of violence. So instead of suing him, she went to a health institution and underwent a medical abortion. She will return to "square one" and her life will continue the same if she is not supported by specialists. Hence the term "cycle of violence": it is a closed cycle that passes through the same stages, and when it reaches the last stage it returns to the first stage again.

## **II-Forms of violence imposed on women through the presented case:**

An observer might assume that women in work environments are mainly exposed to sexual violence and blackmail. But after recounting some information from the affected woman, we can conc

lude that this case, and many like it, live in a vortex that combines many forms of violence. We list them, based on her indicative words.

1. Sexual violence (Violence Sexual): A behavior the abuser uses to satisfy a sexual desire, or threatens to carry it out without the victim's consent, i.e., by coercion. Coercion is not only physical; it may also be psychological, by threatening to harm her family, or emotional, by threatening to abandon her after she becomes attached to him, or by intimidation through looks and body movements. In some cases, the abuser may force the victim to drink alcohol or take narcotic pills. Among the most important forms of sexual violence are:

• Stalking: A repeated behavior aiming to intimidate the victim and monitor her in reality: surrounding her with looks, directing certain gestures (winking, smiling, or threatening), waiting for her in places she passes by or goes to, following her up to physical contact, or insisting on obtaining her personal data such as name and phone number. There is also online stalking through social media, especially repeated phone calls, electronic messages, comments on posts, and repeated friend requests; the content may include images, recordings, or words with sexual insinuations.

• Sexual harassment (Sexual Harassment): A sexual behavior occurring in public places, workplaces, or within the family. The harasser usually has a position of authority (manager, teacher, guard...). Sexual harassment takes several forms, including verbal (words with sexual insinuations) or behavioral, feigned attention, jealousy, and seduction; promises of money or marriage; or direct threats to cut off the romantic relationship or the economic relationship if she refuses.

Sexual assault (Sexual Assault): Any sexual behavior or act occurring without the victim's consent, carried out using physical force or any other pressure such as emotional or economic pressure, to force her to submit. It takes many forms such as physical touching, kissing, forcing the victim to watch pornographic films, and attempted rape<sup>6</sup>.

From the case presented, we infer that most forms of sexual violence were practiced against the victim, from stalking by looks, to surrounding her and luring her into the employer's office, to committing sexual harassment through words and acts such as touching sensitive areas, then moving to the illusion of marriage and reaching rape through violent and repeated methods, resulting in an unwanted pregnancy.

2. Economic violence: Preventing her from working, disposing of her salary, seizing private property, depriving her of inheritance, preventing her from enjoying personal documents, or not giving her full work entitlements. This appears clearly in precarious jobs when women accept work without social coverage, allowances, or leave, and without regulating

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<sup>6</sup>World Health Organization, link (<http://bitly.ws/Qddq>), date accessed: 5 August 2023.

working hours. In some agricultural jobs (harvesting and olive picking), working hours are not fixed and continue from sunrise to sunset with a short midday break, and wages are lower than men's wages despite equal effort. In this case, we observed economic violence in the form of threatening to deprive her of work if she did not respond to his sexual demands at first, and demanding an abortion at a later stage.

3. Physical violence: Behavior practiced against an individual, including punching, slapping, and kicking, and it may involve sharp tools or hard objects. It is common in marital violence and is the most widely recognized form of violence, so much so that some reduce the word "violence" to physical violence and ignore other forms. It is visible, easy to observe, and its damages are easy to assess. It is widespread in society and is practiced especially against women in their homes, against domestic workers, and in other precarious professions. Women may remain silent due to pr

essure from relatives and friends under the pretext that "most women are beaten and you are not an exception," or "preserving her home and children." A woman in precarious work may remain silent due to threats, fear of losing her job, or ignorance of Law 58, which protects women from violence in all its forms and enables them to litigate because of violence inflicted against them.

4. Psychological violence: The pain caused to the victim by sexual, economic, and physical violence, as well as verbal violence through negative words aimed at insult and abuse, or behaviors such as neglect, contempt, and indifference. It is hidden violence that is difficult to prove, but it leaves many tragedies for the victim and may lead to depression and thoughts of suicide. Therefore, it must not be underestimated and should be treated by specialists in psychiatry and psychology.

### **III-Causes of gender-based violence:**

Precarious social situation: From the case we infer that she is a single woman displaced from one of the inland cities, unemployed, without academic certificates, working in tourist units, without a breadwinner or housing, factors that increase her vulnerability and explain her submission to the violence she experienced.

The economic factor plays a major role in the spread of violence against women. A woman may remain silent when violence comes from her employer; therefore, women in precarious jobs are more exposed than others because their rights are stripped and because the employer can manipulate their work when he makes demands. In our case, the employer threatened her job when she refused, so she complied with his demands so as not to be deprived of work and wages, because she was a stranger in the area and had no family except her work income. With jobs scarce, especially amid political and economic crisis, rising prices, and the high cost of living, she finds herself forced to continue working and to submit to all forms of blackmail, including sexual blackmail, with serious and varied consequences.

Patriarchal cultural heritage that entrenches severe violence against women through some popular proverbs that glorify the male over the female, and through customs and rituals

that boast of the male and diminish the female, reaching in the past to practices such as female infanticide, circumcision, and "tasfiḥ" in some areas. It also entrenches a culture of silence about violence to avoid scandals that could harm the family's reputation. Many women were forced to return to the marital home to avoid divorce and the breakup of the family, and especially to preserve the family's 'honor' at the expense of the woman's psychological well-being, patience, and health. Returning to the place where violence occurred is considered an unsafe refuge for the woman and her children. Many women returned to the marital home and left it as a lifeless body after violence escalated to the point of killing.

Lack of dialogue: The popular proverb says, "A kind word breaks the dry stick." <sup>7</sup> A kind word captivates the heart and soul and makes even a hard stick soften until it breaks out of respect and reverence<sup>8</sup>. From this proverb we infer that the best shield against violence is constructive dialogue aimed at persuasion through argument and evidence, not insult and abuse, so that agreement can be reached despite differences of opinion. Habermas addressed communicative action as a social act established between participating subjects, producing interaction that develops the objective and human dimension of human reason. Thus, instead of the concept of subjectivity used by modern philosophy as a starting point for building a rational world, he proposed "intersubjectivity." <sup>9</sup> Rather than the individual self being isolated from others, Habermas stresses the necessity of intersubjectivity: all selves entering into free, continuous rational dialogue to achieve social and intellectual emancipation. This communication leads to understanding without coercion and is a means to avoid violence of all kinds, avoid fanaticism toward a single truth, and respect differing viewpoints.

It is communication for the sake of dialogue and for affirming a self that is connected with others to establish new social relations that do not care for ready-made molds of beliefs, ideas, and morals. Liberating oneself from a demeaning view of women, seeing them as mere sexual pleasure, and trampling their rights creates a tense climate that casts its shadow over society and affects the well-being of individuals. Violence against women, whatever her status, whether a factory worker, a daughter at home, or a mother in a family, negatively affects everyone in their place. A girl or woman who lives in a violent climate will be affected in her upbringing, develop a fragile personality, lose confidence, and prefer isolation out of fear that violence will recur. She will become fragile, unable to build a family and properly care for children, broken by repeated violence. Therefore, it is necessary to

7 Nahla Shuja' al-Din, "Seventy and Seventy Proverbs from My Village," *Al-Thaqafa Al-Sha'biyya*, issue 27, 2014.

8 Popular Culture, Issue 27, 2014, p36.

9 J. Habermas, *Théorie de l'agir communicationnel : Rationalité de l'agir et rationalisation de la société*, tr. J.-M. Ferry, Paris, 1987.

reconsider how women are treated in general, especially Eastern women who have been harmed by a patriarchal environment, and to reconsider methods of speaking with women, considering them free individuals who must be respected and addressed properly, because "dialogue without commitment to minimal ethical controls leads to chatter, clowning, or childish behavior."<sup>10</sup>

Habermas set scientific rules for these ethics to establish a successful rational dialogue between selves, because communication is not random activity. There are conditions for communication in daily life that require activating interaction among instrumental-cognitive, ethical-scientific, and expressive-aesthetic dimensions in order to achieve understanding. Atiyyat Abu al-Su'ud summarized these conditions as follows:

- Communicative activity takes place between two or more individuals within a lived-world context, and every person capable of speaking has the right to participate in this communicative activity.

- Interaction among participants in dialogue occurs through language, and through it a type of understanding is reached by employing sentences and expressions.

- The goal of communicative experience is to reach agreement among participating selves, which requires convergence of viewpoints.

- The communicative activity or communicative process must have democratic dialogue.

- The presence of conditions that ensure consensus, which is only reached through the power of the better argument; therefore, the strength of evidence and proofs on which communication is based is necessary.

- Communication must be freed from forms of pressure, control, the domination of one party over another, and external coercion<sup>11</sup>.

The victim's ignorance of the concept of violence and the diversity of its forms: This leads to silence, non-rejection, and non-resistance. The concept of violence may be limited to physical violence only, in addition to the fact that other types of violence often lack evidence, such as some cases of harassment and psychological violence, especially in a patriarchal cultural environment where the family contributes to entrenching violence by pressuring the victim to silence and not approach authorities, particularly in some cases of sexual violence such as rape and pregnancy outside marriage, because that is considered a scandal and a disgrace affecting the family's reputation. It may be silenced, or the aggressor may be forced to marry the victim in some legislations that colluded with the aggressor and



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10 Al-Shaykhli,'Abd al-Qadir,Ethics of Dialogue,Dar al-Shuruq for Publishing and Distribution, Beirut -Lebanon,1st ed., 1994.

·11 Jürgen Habermas, Ethics and Communication, translated by Abu al-Nur Hamdi Abu al-Nur Hasan, Al-Tanwir for Printing, Publishing and Distribution,Beirut-Lebanon,1st ed.,2012.

imposed violence on the underage victim.Sometimes violence is justified by the victim herself under the pretext that the cause is the abuser's intense love, whether father, brother,or lover, under the claim of jealousy and fear for her. The abuser then persists as long as he finds no resistance or refusal. Awareness of the concept and forms of violence against women is necessary in the process of eliminating this phenomenon and reducing it.

#### **IV-Effects of violence: Violence has multiple effects, the most important of which are:**

1.Physical effects: Harms that affect the abused woman, appearing as bruises,scratches,and redness on her body; the matter may reach fractures, swelling, and bleeding that may end in the victim's death. In reality we have witnessed many violent crimes, such as an aggressor burning down a house with those inside, shooting a mother in front of her children, or beating her with a sharp tool until death. Therefore,it is necessary to hasten to limit this phenomenon so it does not negatively affect society.

2.Social effects: Women represent half of society and contribute greatly to upbringing and care. Every pain women go through reflects negatively on the family, children,and socialization processes .Likewise, a girl raised in violence and pressure will have a fragile psyche and a lack of personality, and will not be able to form a family and raise healthy offspring. Therefore, we stress the necessity of combating violence against women for the sake of a sound society where women are respected and occupy a position befitting their demographic and economic weight. It also helps reduce divorce and social crimes that lead to family disintegration, children's homelessness,and the risk of their joining criminal and drug networks and other risky behaviors; because the absence of the mother threatens the family, and her presence is a major guarantee of family stability.

3.Psychological effects: They are destructive effects, but invisible,felt only by the woman and some specialists who speak with her. Psychological effects result from repeated violence in all its forms imposed on her and on those with her, such as children.The abused woman feels constant anxiety and fear, which may turn into depression,leading her to think about suicide if she does not find someone to contain her and alleviate her depression, especially when social and psychological support is lacking.

4. Economic effects: The most important is repeated absence from work and its impact on production and productivity. Women represent a labor force and a demographic force;any interruption in production due to the abused woman's absence because she is unable to work has negative results for the economy as a whole. Added to that is the cost of treating the abused woman, clinics, medicines, and equipment,which is expensive for the state, especially when violence escalates, forcing authorities to provide shelter centers and specialists to support her, costly for the national community.

#### **V-Ways to prevent violence:**

The Tunisian state ratified several international agreements combating violence against women. The law combating this phenomenon in Tunisia developed and reached advanced

stages,especially when the Assembly of the Representatives of the People approved Law No. 58 combating violence against women in 2017. The Tunisian state adopted a prevention strategy that passes through four stages:

·A.Prevention: The state carries this out through its health, social, and youth institutions. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was established on 25 November each year, during which awareness activities are held. State institutions cooperate through awareness sessions targeting women and girls, identifying where they are found, in high schools, middle schools, factories, farms. For women not working, gatherings of women at vaccination centers, outpatient clinics in hospitals, or development associations may be used to organize awareness circles with specialists. The National Office of Family and Population in Tunisia is a leading institution in behavior change and awareness in this field.

B.Care/Case management (Ta'ahhud): This includes several stages established by the state so that the abused woman finds safe and effective services. The state articulated its national strategy in Law 58 combating gender-based violence, which explains the process of care and follow-up and divides responsibilities among multiple actors. The Ministry of Women coordinates among all actors, follows implementation, and prepares annual reports to evaluate results. Key actors include specialized security units trained on how to deal with the victim, inform her of her rights, not force her to return home, and help secure a safe shelter for her and her children. Here comes the role of state-equipped shelter centers to receive abused women and refer the report to the judiciary to prosecute the perpetrator, and to enable the abused woman to obtain legal aid, meaning the state provides a lawyer to defend her rights. Another key actor is health institutions that provide the abused woman with a certificate documenting the extent of health damage so she can be compensated and the perpetrator punished. The abused woman may also be a social case. Here comes the fourth partner: the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, as well as civil society represented by associations that receive children born outside marriage and provide urgent assistance to abused women; sometimes the abused woman may be granted self-financing to open a project to become financially independent.

· C.Protection: This includes protecting her personal data, physical protection, and protecting accompanying children, so that she is not exploited by those providing shelter, care, and follow-up services. It includes monitoring cases so violence does not recur, especially when the abused woman becomes financially independent and may again be exposed to violence in order to seize her project. Therefore, the Ministry of Women through its regional offices, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, work to follow up with abused women and prevent the recurrence of gender-based violence against them.

·D.Follow-up: Through guides/mentors to reassure themselves about her life and living conditions so she does not become a victim again. This follow-up may be done through continuous awareness of the necessity of refusing violence, not accepting it, and not remaining silent about it.

The state's strategy appears theoretically to be proceeding on the right path, especially after the approval of the law on preventing violence against women (Law 58 of 2017) and after establishing the National Observatory for the Prevention of Violence against Women and the green line 18 99, which provides legal guidance, psychological services, moral support, alleviation of the victim's distress, and links the abused woman to the other actors to whom she is referred. But despite raising awareness about forms of violence and the need to confront it, many shortcomings remain, most notably the absence of shelter centers in all governorates, the influence of the cultural environment and family on some abused women and forcing them to give up their rights, and the difficulty of applying some provisions of the law, such as the requirement to hear the abused woman in a special office to ensure confidentiality, due to the lack of infrastructure readiness in some courts, hospitals, and security centers, and the absence of a special office to receive her.

## **VI-Recommendations:**

·Intensify awareness about working women's rights on the one hand and forms of violence on the other, and the necessity of combating it.

·Support organizations and associations supporting women's rights that work to find effective solutions to combat the phenomenon of violence.

·Strengthen women's ability to lead and increase their self-confidence so they do not become easy prey for violence.

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