

**SHADOW REPORT**  
**ON THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED**  
**IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCORD**  
**ON ABOLISHING ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**  
**AGAINST WOMEN**  
**CEDAW**

The National Committee for the Follow up on Women's Issues

Research and Training Centre on Development Issues

Funded by UNFPA and UNIFEM 2005

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## Article 1

The term “discrimination against women” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Agreement to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women

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## **1- Lebanon after the war: Stakes and Challenges**

### **1-1 General view**

Lebanon is a small country that is greatly influenced by the Arab and Israeli conflict. As a result, the Lebanese population suffers from a special political and economic situation. According to a study on living conditions, Lebanon's surface area is approximately 10435 square km and is not a heavily inhabited country since its population does not exceed 4.500.000 million inhabitants. According to another study entitled "The Statistics Survey on Housing and Population" the total number of residents in Lebanon does not exceed 3.118.28. These seeming contradictions in numbers are only estimates due to numerous political causes which did not allow for any official census since 1932.

The gender distribution of the population is almost equal in Lebanon with 49.6 per cent males and 50.4 per cent female.

The reduction in the fertility rate to 2.8 and the increase in the mortality rate changed the age pyramid. With the great increase in the elderly population and the decrease among the younger population, Lebanon enjoys a special demographic status through the rapid growth of the age range from 15-64 when compared to the developed countries.

The decrease in the death rate was 0.7 % in 2000. The life expectancy rate was 69 years old for males compared to 72 for females in 1996.

### **1.2 Stakes and Challenges**

Lebanon's reconstruction program and its transition to peace were not easy. Its political and financial costs required qualitative changes in the Lebanese political, financial, and social life.

The expected success of economic policies that were enacted by the different governments in power did not occur because of the lack of security and the political circumstances prevalent in the Middle East since the nineties. Moreover, the reconstruction program which was originally socio-political in form and aimed at reintegrating Lebanese society into an entity of responsible citizens was transformed into a physical reconstruction. On the one hand it succeeded in giving Beirut back its former beauty, but on the other hand, it involved huge debts that reached 35.4 billion dollars according to a Merrill Lynch report.<sup>(1)</sup> Lebanon with its limited resources will not be able to pay back these debts.

During this difficult state of affairs most of the territories in South Lebanon were liberated from the Israelis. The national resistance drove out the Israelis due to the strong alliance between the society and the government. This liberation was expected to improve the socio-economic conditions produced by the Arab-Israeli conflicts and the continuous Israeli attacks on Lebanon. The Lebanese hoped that a national consensus on the resistance would decrease the impact of sectarianism in Lebanon. However the deteriorating situation in the region, the war in Iraq and the events in the Occupied Territories contributed to the huge economic recession that persists to this day.

## **The report**

Lebanon ratified the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women 17 years after the United Nations General Assembly passed it. This ratification was the result of the national campaign established by the National Committee for Preparation and Cooperation for the Beijing Conference in 1994-1995. The first Shadow Report was prepared by the National Committee for the Follow up on Women Issues which together with the National Council on Women's Issues participated in the preparation of the Beijing conference.(2) The report was completed after the above agreement was ratified. That same year, the national council prepared a report on the implementation of the report in Lebanon. However this report was neither submitted to nor discussed by the CEDAW Committee.

The Second Report herein presented is based on the following:

- it is the first report prepared by the National Committee for the Follow Up on Women's Issues in 1999
- it highlights the improvements and the decrease in the basic areas of the CEDAW Agreement
- it highlights the major areas that still need further governmental interventions
- it summarizes the most important issues that governmental organizations wish the CEDAW Committee and the Lebanese government to discuss.

## **Part One: Reinforcing equality**

### **1.1 Achievements**

There were hopes that the present regime which took power at the end of 1998, would take a stand on women's issues that would be compatible with Lebanese women's capabilities and would be appropriate to the historic struggle of the Lebanese women's movement.

The activities of various governments that took office did not provide the changes desired. The first government formed did not include women, and the present government did not broaden to fill this historical gap. Although the Lebanese woman was given the right of vote in 1953 she was never a participant at the executive level.

The same situation exists in the legislature since only three out of 128 deputies are women. The formation of a Women's Committee in the House of Parliament was the only new step taken. Although this committee was already in existence, it was comprised of both women and children. Once a new committee was formed separating women from children it was considered as an acknowledgment of a new vision towards women's issues.

This new committee was seen as a major but incomplete step because its responsibilities were not clearly determined nor was its relationship with the National

Council for Women's Affairs- the body responsible for women's development-delineated. The committee therefore has not resulted in increasing the effect of women's participation in the political domain. The results of local elections that took place in the spring of 2004 (3) confirmed the lack of interest of local politicians in equal participation of women in municipal elections.

It is worth mentioning some of the achievements realized during the past five years.

- There is a significant increase in the number of women occupying leading positions in the public sector and in the judicial system, although this increase is not part of gender awareness in political planning.(4)
- There is a noted improvement in data collection using gender indicators. Such data provides better analysis where women are marginalized and contribute to the legitimate moves and demands of the women's movement.

### **1.2 Limitations**

- The first note to make is that women's issues are not represented by powerful institutions which specifically promote them. In spite of the efforts made, no significant change occurred in the National Committee for Women's Affairs. Its organizational structure remained subject to the religious and political dictates prevailing in the country. The latter hindered the progress of women and failed to bring about any results influencing practical changes to the numerous demands made by the NGOs concerned with women. This is clearly reflected in the relationship between the National Council for Women's Affairs and other NGOs and the Women's Committee in the Parliament, where efforts were isolated and no results were achieved.
- The second note to make is the absence of policies aimed at promoting women and specialized centres in the various executive councils.

Therefore, in the absence of a political will the Lebanese women failed to achieve many of their goals. The women's movement and the social forces relating to women believe that the situation of women in Lebanon deteriorated especially with regard to their legal rights and particularly when compared with other Arab Countries.

### **1.3 Retaining the Reservation made on the articles in the Agreement**

The Lebanese Women Movement never ceased to demand that the political authorities lift the reservations put on the ratified Agreement. A memorandum was presented by women's organizations urging the government of Lebanon to lift the reservations on article 2, article 9, and article 16 and to amend them so that family targets and demands would be met.

## **Article 2**

States' Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

- a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein, and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;
- b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;
- c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
- d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;
- e) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;
- f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;
- g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

## **Article 9:**

- 1- States' Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.
- 2- States' Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

## **Article 16:**

1-States' Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- a) The same right to enter into marriage;
- b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
- c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
- d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
- e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;
- f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interest of the children shall be paramount;
- g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;
- h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2- the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

## **The second part: Level of Priorities**

### **1. The legal dimensions in five years (1999-2004)**

#### **Introduction**

##### **1-1 Background**

Lebanon ratified the CEDAW agreement to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in accordance with the law 572 issued on 24-7-1996 approximately 17 years after it was put into effect. Lebanon ratified this agreement while stating many reservations to particular articles:

- the second item of article 9 regarding the recognition of women's rights to grant nationality to their children. (This point will be discussed later in the text).
- the first item of article 16 regarding equal rights and responsibilities of women in marriage, maternal care, protection and custody of children, as well as in adoption, and the right of women to choose their own last name.

- the first item of article 29 regarding the resolving of the disagreements between countries in the interpretation and the application of this agreement before the international court of Justice

Lebanon also approved other related agreements such as:

- the agreement on women's political rights in 1953 (ratified in 1955)
- the UNESCO agreement on equal rights for women to education (ratified in 1946)
- the agreement on women's working at night in 1948 (ratified in 1977)
- the agreement on women's working underground such as in mines in 1937 (ratified in 1946)
- the agreement on the employment policy in 1964 (ratified in 1977)

It should be noted that to date Lebanon has not ratified many international agreements mainly due to the reservations regarding nationality and personal status issues.

It should also be noted that when the Lebanese Constitution was made public in 1926 and although the text was later amended, it did not include discrimination against women. Rather it emphasized equality among all citizens under the law as the following articles show:

- article 7 stresses equality in civil and political rights
- article 12 stresses equality in the holding of public positions
- article 21 stresses the right of election
- article 2,9,10,12 respectively stress personal freedom, freedom of belief, freedom of education, freedom of speech, freedom of meeting, and founding associations

However the most important component in the constitution is the content of the introduction that was added to the constitutional law number 18 on 21-9-1990 and which asserts the following:

“Lebanon has an Arab identity. It is a founder and an active member of the Arab League and respects its charter as well as that of the United Nations, and the International Commission on Human Rights. The Lebanese state stands for all these principles without exception.”

The above introduction to the Lebanese Constitution has a constitutional value that is equivalent to all the articles within the constitution. This is in accordance with a preliminary statement of the constitutional council in 12-9-1997 where it announced that “all the principles mentioned in the constitution are considered as any other indispensable article and has the same constitutional value as the constitutional rules”.

The decision of the constitutional council relies on the international covenant of political and civil rights so as to revoke the law confirmed by the parliament and aimed at extending the municipal and “mukhtar” councils. Therefore in addition to the civil trials law issued by the legislative decree number 90 on 16-9-1983, it stipulates in its second article that in case of conflict, the international legal agreements supercede the local laws.

However the laws applied now are characterized with a "legislative stability" in the negative sense. The legislation put into practice between 1999 and 2004 were limited to few of the numerous demands made by the women's movement since the start of the last century.

The implementation of the agreement in the internal laws of Lebanon stipulated between 1999 and the present are as follows:

## **1-2 Personal Statute**

This particularly delicate domain faced enormous difficulties for at least two reasons:

- a) The reservations Lebanon reported when ratifying this agreement with regard to nationality and personal status to maintain equality between men and women in the family.
- b) The problem lies within the structure of the law and is related to the religious sectarianism in Lebanon wherein the religious laws dominate rather than the legislature. Therefore any legislature attempting to promulgate the civil status law cannot be enforced.

### **1.2-1 Personal Statute in General**

As Lebanon kept its reservations on articles 1 and 16 of the agreement the clear rejection of the civil status law regarding personal status law persisted. The civil statute law that was presented to the parliament in the mid nineties was not voted in with a unanimous consensus and is not put on the parliament's agenda for discussion.

While the Orthodox sect has amended some of its laws and the Catholics have begun studying some amendments with regard to child custody, in all sects the father is always the main custodian over children. He is also the only person who can provide family members with permission to travel and/or to open bank accounts.

## **1-3 Nationality Issues**

Regarding nationality most of the Arab countries softened their stands and stipulated new legislations allowing women to give their nationality to their children. This can now be perceived in Egypt, Jordan and Morocco.<sup>(5)</sup>

Since Lebanon kept its reservations on time 2 Article 9 of the agreement, to this date no change has taken place in the legislation exercised in the country. However, in 2003 the Directorate of the General Security passed an administrative memorandum, whereby a permanent or long term complimentary residence permit is given to:

- Arabs and foreign nationals with Lebanese mothers;
- Spouses of Lebanese citizens whatever their nationalities may be, on the condition that they do not work in the country.

When the general security memo applied since 1-7-2003 ardor to warrantee the continuous practice of this rules dealing with the Palestinian refugees it integrated a method in order to stop any injustice and to grant the children of the Lebanese women their rights associated to the nationality. However this administrative measure

dependable of its positive and practical side annul the necessity to amend the law for leading to many other consequences dealing with inheritance and possessions holdings.

The general security memorandum was put in practice on 1/7/2003, while still maintaining the rules dealing with the Palestinian refugees. This memorandum to some extent rescinds the injustice inflicted on the children of Lebanese women who are born in a country without the right to a Lebanese nationality. However, further measures need to be carried out to cover laws that include inheritance and land ownership

#### **1-4 Employment and social security laws**

By and large, men and women in the labor force are in principle equal before the labor law in Lebanon. The amendment made to the labor law of 1946 was widely disseminated to reinforce equality between men and women. The major rules covered in the law no. 207 dated 26/5/2000:

- Clearly prohibits the employer from any kind of discrimination between male and female workers with regard to types of job, remuneration, employment, promotion, vocational training and clothes (new article 26)
- Amends maternity leave which is extended from 40 days to 7 weeks (article 28)
- Forbids the sending of warnings to pregnant women at any time during their pregnancy (article 53) though previously such acts were permitted before the 5<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy
- The tax laws provides the mother with tax reduction for children only in special cases such as when the father dies or is disabled and without employment, while the father always benefits from such reductions. The mother's benefits are limited and the law does not take into consideration when she is the sole provider for her children particularly in cases of divorce and separation.

With regard to social security, and after many deliberations with the administration of the National Social Security Fund and the executive court decision no. 483 dated 12/12/2002, article 14 of the social security law (stipulated in 1963), an amendment was prepared by adding the following to the first paragraph: "the term secured mentioned in this article refers to both men and women without discrimination." The new law also cancelled paragraph "d" of article 14 and stated that "the benefits offered to the secured woman for her children, as interpreted by the National Social Security Fund paragraph "d" above, are her right and that of her children and cannot be revoked".

In the public sector, law no. 344 issued on 21/4/2001 stipulates equal benefits for male and female employees from the Government Employees Co-operative Offices.

#### **1-5 Penal law**

The Lebanese penal law enacted in 1943 still discriminates against women especially when violence is used against them. The penalties are not equal for both men and

women in case of adultery crimes - known as honor crimes- and in cases of abortion and prostitution.

The last legislative amendments regarding this issue took place in February 1999 (law number 7 on 20-2-1999) where article 562 was amended to replace the legitimate excuse with an alleviated excuse. This benefited the husband who killed or unintentionally hurt his wife or anyone of his family members or relatives caught in the act of adultery or illegitimate intercourse. Article 562 still contradicts paragraph "f" of the second article in this agreement and doesn't meet with the request to eliminate the whole article completely.

With regard to articles 503 and 522 of the penal law dealing with rape, promiscuity, aggression, assault, and intruding on women's private space; parts of these articles are offensive and hurt women, exposing them to domestic, sexual and psychological violence.

### **1-6 Political rights issues**

The evening of the municipal and "mukhtars" elections that took place in May 2004 the quota topic was brought up again for discussion. Depute Serge Torsarkisian suggested a law to adopt the quota in the municipal council. Though this suggestion did not meet with any objections it was not adopted (legislatively ratified).

## **2-Education to attain equality**

### **Article 5:**

States Parties shall have to take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

## Article 10:

States' Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific education information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

**2-1** Education is one of the major domains in Lebanon. It witnessed and accumulated many successes. Female education became a legal right since the creation of the new constitution. All the Lebanese laws dealing with learning and education do not reflect gender discrimination at any educational level whether it be primary, intermediate, secondary, or tertiary, as well as at technical and professional levels. Lebanese laws also guarantee the same curricula for both men and women and the freedom to choose their field of specialization.

This narrowed the gap between men and women at all educational levels. However there is a slight difference between the paid and the free private education mainly due to the poverty and living conditions in Lebanon and the discrimination exercised in the family favoring boys' education since the patriarchal tradition still persists in Lebanon.

**Table 1 – Percentage of females and males in paid and free public and private schools**

|                | <b>Public Education</b> | <b>Free Private Education</b> | <b>Paid Private Education</b> |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Females</b> | 52.8                    | 47.7                          | 48.15                         |
| <b>Males</b>   | 47.2                    | 52.3                          | 51.9                          |

**Source:** Lebanese republic, Ministry of Education, Education Center for Research and Development, The development of educational parameters during the past five years 1996-1997 2000-2001.

During the past four years the situation of education did not comprise any significant changes. While females continued their intermediate and secondary education, the percentage of male enrolment decreased. However, there are slight differences when comparing the educational data in the regions. Although the mandatory education law was approved by the parliament in March 1998, then amended under article 49 of the constitutional decree no. 134/59 to make education free and mandatory, the parliament left it up to the council of ministers to decide on the most appropriate means to implement the obligatory free basic education. Several governments took office between 1998 and 2004 but the law was not put in force. The gap between the free and mandatory education persists, although free education is the guarantor of all the social strata, particularly girls, suffering from poverty to develop.

## **2-2 Adult education and literacy program**

The national illiteracy rate reached 11.6 in 1997 and 10.3% in 2000 then decreased to 8% in 2001. However, the illiteracy rate for women is double that for men.(6)

**Table 2: Illiteracy rates based on gender and different sources**

| <b>Parameter</b>                | <b>1970</b> | <b>1996</b> | <b>1997</b> | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>General illiteracy level</b> | 31.8        | 13.6        | 11.6        | 10.3        | 8.0         |
| <b>Female illiteracy level</b>  | 42.1        | 17.8        | 16.0        | 13.8        | 10.9        |
| <b>Male illiteracy level</b>    | 21.5        | 9.3         | 7.2         | 6.8         | 5.1         |

**Sources:** Labour force, analytical studies of survey results, family living conditions, the status of children in Lebanon in the year 2000, study about the entry of youth into the labour force and their emigration.

However, illiteracy is limited to the elderly group, especially women. It arrived at between 22.1% and 43.1% for men compared to 50.7% and 63.1 for women of 60 years of age and above. The large gap between gender and age range still exists. The decrease in the illiteracy rates noted is due to the advancement of the better-educated age groups and not as a result of the adult literacy programs that did not contribute to the reduction of the illiteracy gap especially among women.

**Table 3: Illiteracy rates according to gender and age range 1970-1997**

|                | 1970  |       |       | 1997  |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 |
| <b>Males</b>   | 5.6   | 8     | 9.1   | 1.4   | 2.4   | 2.7   |
| <b>Females</b> | 14.2  | 16.6  | 23.1  | 1.7   | 2.3   | 3.9   |
| <b>Both</b>    | 9.8   | 12.3  | 15.9  | 1.6   | 2.4   | 3.2   |

**Source:** Labour force and family living conditions

A regional gap can be noted in illiteracy levels. The minimum level of illiteracy is demonstrated in Beirut and Mount Lebanon while it reached its maximum in other districts in a way that enables us to redraw the social morphology between Lebanon's centre and its suburbs, cities, and rural areas.

The illiteracy rates vary in the regions. The minimum rates are in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. These rates increase in other regions, where the social morphology shows the difference between the centre and the suburbs compared to the cities and rural areas of Lebanon.

The rates are most likely to increase with the current economic crises and the higher cost of public education. According to the UNESCO report of 2003, Lebanon is one of the countries that might not attain initial education for all by the year 2015. Lebanon also risks not reaching educational equality among males and females, nor reduce adult illiteracy rates to half.

### **2-3 Interventions to illiteracy**

The particularity of the educational system in Lebanon is restricted to formal education, with other components either dispersed or absent. Thus, the interventions to eradicate illiteracy, in the absence of a timetable to realize the goals, will not reach the national strategic plans put forward.

All the statistics between 1997 and 2002 show that the total number of beneficiaries from the literacy training sessions reached 11639 participants, approximately 2000 beneficiaries per year.(7)

Although Lebanon contributed and agreed to all the recommendations that were initiated from all the international conferences that took place in Joven and Thailand between 1990 and 2000, aiming to eradicate gender differences in education, and to have an educational program with a curriculum to meet the needs till 2010, none of these goals were realized. The chances for children aged 3-4 years old to attend elementary schools are limited. This is due to the high school fees and other cultural factors such as barring girls from going to school alone.

In spite of the official data repeatedly presented since 1995 by the governments indicating the development and equal chances given to everybody, this declaration

was never realized. No reference was ever made by those who work for the improvement of the Lebanese women nor of her participation in the development process. The government never presented any data to indicate the progress in the elimination of all kinds of discrimination against women, especially gender discrimination, as stipulated in the Agreement.

### 3- Women and Decision Making

Women's participation in decision making evokes many raised eyebrows by those who have been witnessing the progress and competence of women during the last two decades. They see women's position and her role in Lebanese society.

Although all the laws emanated from the Lebanese constitution do not discriminate between men and women in ascribing administrative and political positions, in real life women are restricted to an inferior position that is in total contradiction with the economic message and the political liberty prevailing in Lebanon.

Whilst women effectively participate in voting, they do not participate early enough as candidates in the elections. Statistics show the high percentage of female voters during the legislative election in the year 2000. It exceeded by far the percentage of males who voted. However women's participation in the lower houses of parliament was not easy.

**Table 4: women's participation in the parliament elections in 2000**

|                           | <b>Women's electors</b> | <b>Women's voters</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Male electors</b> | <b>Male voters</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Disparity</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|
| <b>Total in Lebanon</b>   | 1444020                 | 604751                | 41.0     | 1358071              | 602312             | 44.3     | 2.5              |
| <b>Bekaa 1</b>            | 113283                  | 49117                 | 43.3     | 4102931              | 47453              | 46.1     | 2.8              |
| <b>Bekaa 2</b>            | 68059                   | 27594                 | 40.3     | 64250                | 28402              | 44.2     | 3.7.             |
| <b>Bekaa 3</b>            | 51746                   | 207781                | 40.7     | 51641                | 19443              | 37.6     | -2.5             |
| <b>South and Nabatieh</b> | 316309                  | 142621                | 45.0     | 294823               | 133704             | 45.3     | 0.3              |
| <b>North 1</b>            | 134050                  | 52537                 | 39.1     | 129200               | 53344              | 41.2     | 2.1              |
| <b>North 2</b>            | 185714                  | 71527                 | 38.5     | 180481               | 75942              | 42.0     | 3.5              |
| <b>Beirut 1</b>           | 68441                   | 25392                 | 37.1     | 61816                | 25829              | 41.7     | 4.6              |
| <b>Beirut 2</b>           | 70086                   | 22742                 | 32.4     | 61838                | 22854              | 36.9     | 4.5              |
| <b>Beirut 3</b>           | 75926                   | 23648                 | 31.1     | 67545                | 21264              | 31.4     | 0.3              |
| <b>Mount Lebanon 1</b>    | 76603                   | 42370                 | 55.3     | 72694                | 43224              | 59.4     | 4.1              |
| <b>Mount Lebanon 2</b>    | 79091                   | 35340                 | 44.6     | 75616                | 36971              | 48.8     | 4.2              |
| <b>Mount Lebanon 3</b>    | 123103                  | 50499                 | 41.0     | 118663               | 55157              | 46.4     | 5.4              |
| <b>Mount Lebanon 4</b>    | 81609                   | 40582                 | 49.7     | 76573                | 39725              | 51.8     | 2.1              |

**Source:** Kamal Feghali Lebanese parliamentary elections 2000: parameters and results (reference: lists Ministry of Internal Affairs)

The number of the registered electors: 2,802,091 (two million eight hundred two thousand ninety one) and the number of voters 1,207,063 (one million two hundred seven thousand and sixty three). The rate of those voted 43.07%.

The rate of male votes was 2.5% more than the female votes.

The disparity in favor of males ranged between 5.4% in Mount Lebanon's third area and 0.3% in both districts of the South and Nabatieh and Beirut's third district area.

However, in the third district area of Bekaa, women's participation exceeded men's by 2.5%.

**3-1 legislative authority:** Women's political participation in the legislative authority remained 2.3%. This is one of the lowest rates in the world.

Nothing was new in the election that took place in 2000 except the victory of one woman on the list of the opposition. This in itself is a good indicator that women are aware that their participation is not only a right and a duty, it is also a stand to take and defend.

**3-2 Executive authority:** No change occurred here either and there is no sign of change on the horizon. Women are still outside the executive authority and the government does not seem yet interested in taking in women to participate in this authority. However a major incident occurred this year when Mrs. Nayla Mouawad presented her candidacy for the position of president of the Lebanese republic. It is to be noted that Mrs. Mouawad won the parliamentary election three times in a row. She was the woman who won the elections in 2000 on the opposition list.

**3-3** Such is the mode in which the elections for the local authorities ended in 2004.<sup>(8)</sup> Nothing has changed, as though it were a repetition of the preceding elections. No outstanding events occurred, and the government did not take any measures to allow women better participation in the election thus increasing their chances of winning.

**Table 5: Number of Women Who Won the Local Elections - 2004**

| District     | Mayor                              | Municipality member | Optional member | Moukhtar/mayor |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Saida        |                                    | 7                   |                 | 1              |
| Tyre         | Salma Abu Khalil<br>- al-Hinnieh I | 8                   |                 | 2              |
| Jezzine      |                                    | 10                  | 15              |                |
| Bint Jbeil   |                                    | 6                   | 1               |                |
| Nabatieh     |                                    | 7                   |                 |                |
| Marjayoun    |                                    | 5                   | 5               | 1              |
| Hasbaya      |                                    | 3                   | 4               |                |
| Matn         | Mirna el-Murr                      | 22                  | 17              | 7              |
| Keserwan     |                                    | 12                  | 8               |                |
| Jbeil/Byblos |                                    | 9                   | 7               |                |
| Baaba        | May Diyab -<br>Irbanieh            | 10                  | 1               |                |

|                 |  |     |     |    |
|-----------------|--|-----|-----|----|
| Aley            |  | 14  | 1   |    |
| Chouf           | Nahla al-Huseini –<br>Ain ou Zein,<br>Noha al-Ghosaini -<br>Baakline | 14  | 3   | 1  |
| Zghorta         |  | 12  | 4   | 2  |
| Tripoli         |  | 5   |     | 2  |
| Bsharri         |  | 5   | 3   | 1  |
| Batroun         |  | 11  | 15  | 1  |
| Koura           | May Salem -<br>Bkaftaan  | 17  | 8   | 1  |
| Minyeh-Deniyeh  |  | 6   |     | 1  |
| Akkar           |  | 27  | 9   | 2  |
| Zahle           |  | 5   |     | 1  |
| Rachaya         |  | 6   | 1   |    |
| Beqaa el-Gharbi |  | 11  | 1   |    |
| Hermel          |  | 2   |     | 1  |
| Baalbeck        |  | 6   | 1   | 1  |
| Beirut          |  | 1   |     | 2  |
| Total           | 6  | 241 | 104 | 27 |

**Source:** Study carried out by the Lebanese Women's Council during the local elections 2004

The efforts exerted on the government by the women's movement to create a quota for women in the local authorities elections were in vain. The efforts to motivate women to participate as candidates and voters were faced with obstacles. This included poverty; absence of influential national parties in the various regions; the allocation of electorates according to religious sectarian shares; and the electoral law. Such law obliges woman to follow where her husband votes, thus uprooting the women from her environment

An extensive study carried out by the Lebanese Women's Council showed the negative/hostile attitude of the society towards women's participation in politics and other aspects as indicated in the following table.

**Table 6: discrimination against women**

| Choice  | Repetition | Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|
| <b>The discrimination in people's mentality and social life</b> | 211        | 51         |
| <b>Discrimination in personal status</b>                        | 135        | 33         |
| <b>Discrimination in social security and in employment</b>      | 154        | 37         |
| <b>Discrimination in civil rights and penal code</b>            | 69         | 17         |
| <b>Discrimination in political and leadership positions</b>     | 144        | 28         |
| <b>Violence against women</b>                                   | 5          | 1          |
| <b>Others</b>   | 60         | 15         |

**Source:** Study carried by the Lebanese Women's Council

**3-4** The absence of women from the political decision-making process is closely related to their absence and lack of participation in the political parties and associations. The study carried out by the Lebanese Association for Civil Peace showed that 64.5 % of those surveyed are neither affiliated to a party nor wish to join

any. 56.4 % of those who responded were women compared to 43.6% men. It was also noted that the political parties were neither interested nor gave thought to the needs of women. They never presented programs particular to dealing with women's concerns, and the presence of women in party leadership positions never changed. However, as a result of the pressure organized by the women's associations and civil societies, the percentage of women appointed as general directors increased from 2 to 6. Studies also indicate that the percentage of female judges in the court of justice (judicial court) reached 27.5 % while 19.5% arrived at the advisory council.

**3-5** Although the Lebanese government agreed with the Beijing Declaration, it did not play an effective part in supporting women in the decision-making process. Even after five years the government did not realize the importance of women's participation in decision-making. The political problems were given precedence by the government. The Lebanese social pyramid, the traditional culture, and the modern viewpoints do not promote any real progress. More efforts should be made by the government to carry out its responsibilities in planning and creating procedural mechanisms to overcome such obstacles.

It should be mentioned that the traditional social structure had a great effect on the general direction of social movements. This explains why the efforts made by women were not converted to a political request that concerns the society as a whole.

#### **4- Women and Work**

The development approach regarding work and employment differs from the economic approach. Thus the economic approach in the nineties together with the procedures applied for decades was criticized by the development approach.

Use of the gross national product as the only indicator for development was criticized, for this parameter is not sufficient to provide a real estimate of the wealth produced in the society. It does not take into consideration all the products not directly related to the market and not included in national calculations, especially in the social and reproductive roles women have. Therefore, work is divided into production work (economic) and reproductive work (social) that is mainly ascribed to women. All such activities are not classified as work.

Although this concept is not scientifically interpreted in applied research, it is necessary to point it out so that better policies and interventions are planned and introduced.

**4-1** Various reports indicate that in 2001, 2/3 of the Lebanese population 15-64 years of age were in the work force. Thus, half of the work age population was already employed, with an increased improvement in women's employment when compared to the seventies.

According to the United Nations Development Program, the Human Development Report 2003, the average of economically active women was 29.9% of the labor force.

One of the studies (9) where a survey was conducted covering 277 women of various occupations and domains, such as commerce, services, banking, dressmaking and health providers, showed that 52% of workers in these areas were women.

It is also known that the private sector has the bigger share of the work force. In 2001, 82% of the work force was in the private sector compared to 13% in the public sector. A large proportion of women was among those earning wages while men were either self employed or employers.(10)

**Table7: Percentage of Workers distributed According to Gender and Work Status in 1970, 1997 & 2001**

|                            | 1970  |         |       | 1997  |         |       | 2001  |         |       |
|----------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
|                            | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total |
| <b>Paid worker</b>         | 58.5  | 65.7    | 59.8  | 58.1  | 81.6    | 62.7  | 55.6  | 80.9    | 61.3  |
| <b>Owner</b>               | 8.9   | 1.4     | 7.6   | 9.2   | 1.5     | 7.7   | 9.2   | 1.3     | 7.4   |
| <b>Self-employed</b>       | 26.6  | 11.8    | 24.0  | 29.5  | 11.6    | 26.0  | 33.3  | 13.8    | 28.9  |
| <b>Assistant to family</b> | 3.9   | 19.4    | 6.6   | 1.9   | 4.6     | 2.4   | 1.3   | 3.3     | 1.8   |
| <b>Others</b>              | 2.1   | 1.7     | 2.0   | 1.3   | 0.7     | 1.2   | 0.6   | 0.7     | 0.6   |
| <b>Total</b>               | 100.0 | 100.0   | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0   | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0   | 100.0 |
|                            |       |         |       |       |         |       |       |         |       |

**Source:** Work force and the Living conditions of the family and entry of youth into labour market and immigration

#### 4-2 Women's Work

Women's participation in the employment (labor) market is affected by many economic, social, and cultural factors that sometimes have conflicting effects. As the living burdens increase, women are driven to work and help contribute to support the family. At a time where economic recession and unemployment are increasing, conservatives tend to sympathize more and give priority in employment vacancies to men rather than women. The prevailing culture restricts women's economic role to specific activities such as teaching and health care services. This clearly indicates the compromises women make between their income generating activities and their commitment to family. Hence, the possibility for women to have equal chances in all the economic sectors is weakened.

There are many factors that undermine women's contribution to the work market, especially their tacit work contributed in the field of agriculture and domestic work. Moreover, some of the economic activities carried out at home by women are neither quantified nor considered in the data collection, as it should be. The definition of work is biased against women, and emphasizes the prevailing culture by ignoring the economic and productive activities of women and by excluding their contributions from the active economic domain.

Studying women at work and their contribution to the economy should clearly go beyond studying the work market. A large portion of their contribution lies outside the market domain. Since the data available does not cover such components, in the

future field studies should consider quantified research to fill this gap and treat it accordingly.

The percentage of women in the labor force reached 25% in 2001. This increase explains the reason for enhancing the economy in the country, and this compensates, although only partially, for the increasing rates of labor force immigration. However, considering that they are 50% of the population, women's participation in the work force is still seen as low. With equal access to education and qualifications women can be given preference to men in certain sectors.

Economically active women reached 17.2% of all the women in 2001 and 25% of women at work in the age range 15-64 years, compared to 53% and 57.7% for men. Women's contribution to the economy is significantly related to geographic areas whereas men's work is not. The percentage of women working in Beirut is 37.1% of all women of working age, 29.8% in Mount Lebanon excluding the suburbs, and 27.1% in the suburbs of Beirut. The rates in the other regions drop below the national average to reach 18.2% in the south, 19.2% in the Bekaa, 19.5% in the north and 21.8% in Nabatieh. This disparity is due to cultural and social factors that either encourage or discourage the work of women, the style of life and the importance of the nature of the economic sector (agriculture, vocational etc.), in addition to the encouraging and hindering particularities of the inhabitants such as age, sex, and home keeping women.

**4-3** Women enter the work force market at a later age than the men. The economically active females between the ages 15-19 years old do not exceed 8.9% compared to 25.7% for men in 2001. This is directly related to the high rate of male dropouts from the intermediate and secondary school levels. However, females are the most economically active in two age groups (20-24) and (25-29) years old where they arrived at 37.5% and 45.8% respectively. The rates dropped later when girls leave work or get married. During the seventies and the nineties there was a major transformation. Women's participation in the work force reached a peak for the age range 20 – 24 years, when girls at that time got ready to be married or pursued their education. The nature of women's work changed as well. In 1970 most of the women had limited education and worked in the industrial and agricultural sectors. Later on, between 1997 and 2001, most women completed secondary and university education and were able to find more stable and diverse jobs. Thus, their first jobs were started at an older age. During 1997 and 2001 women worked in education (27.8% and 29.4% respectively of all number of working women), while in 1970 women worked in agriculture and fishing (22.6%) and in industry (19.8%). There was also an increase in the number of women working in commerce, hotels and restaurants. This number increased from 6.1% in 1970 to 19.7% and 21% in 1997 and 2001 respectively.

**Table 8: Work force distribution according to gender, sector and economic domain**

|   | 1970  |         | 1997  |         | 2001  |         |
|---|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|
|   | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Agriculture & hunting                           | 18.1  | 22.5    | 10.2  | 5.7     | 7.7   | 3.5     |
| Industry: electricity, gas & water              | 18.6  | 20.4    | 15.5  | 13.3    | 14.8  | 11.5    |
| Construction                                    | 7.8   | 0.3     | 14.2  | 0.9     | 11.9  | 0.5     |
| Trade: Hotels and restaurants                   | 19.3  | 6.1     | 27.6  | 19.7    | 29.7  | 21.0    |
| Transportation & communication                  | 8.2   | 2.3     | 6.4   | 2.1     | 8.3   | 2.2     |
| Financial transactions & institutional services | 3.5   | 3.0     | 5.6   | 9.4     | 6.7   | 11.0    |
| Public administration                           | 7.9   | 10.3    | 9.4   | 3.5     | 10.0  | 2.7     |
| Teaching  | 3.2   | 16.5    | 4.2   | 27.8    | 4.5   | 29.4    |
| Health and social work                          | 0.7   | 3.1     | 1.9   | 9.6     | 2.1   | 10.7    |
| Other activities and services                   | 12.7  | 16.1    | 5.0   | 8.0     | 4.6   | 7.5     |
| Total   | 100.0 | 100.0   | 100.0 | 100.0   | 100.0 | 100.0   |

**Source:** Work force and living conditions of the family, and youth entry to the work market and immigration

Women occupied specialized jobs such as health care and teaching. Their ratio decreased to less than 5% in the primarily male related jobs such as the army, construction, and the operation of heavy equipment. Women did not participate in jobs that required physical strength as in construction, stone quarrying and driving lifting machines. Women's participation in heading professions that do not require physical strength such as managers of small establishments was diminished.

**Table 9: Percentage of females out of the total workers in selected jobs - 1997 and 2001**

| Job   | 1997 | 2001 |
|---|------|------|
| Teaching  | 81.1 | 79.8 |
| Health care   | 75.3 | 70.9 |
| Professional educator                               | 62.1 | 66.5 |
| Office employee                                     | 51.4 | 51.5 |
| Administrative employee                             | 45.6 | 47.2 |
| Sales & promotion representative                    | 40.9 | 23.3 |
| Other profession                                    | 31.9 | 38.0 |
| Work industrial machines                            | 30.2 | 31.8 |
| Health care professional                            | 30.1 | 43.1 |
| Other jobs  | 27.2 | 30.6 |
| Higher positions & director of small establishments | 13.7 | 6.4  |

**Source:** Living conditions of the family and youth entry to work market and immigration

#### 4-4Unemployment

The difference in unemployment rates between men and women were close in 1997 where it reached 8.9% for men and 7.1% for women. Between 1997 and 2001 a major shift occurred where the rates of unemployed females reached 18.2% compared to 9.5% for males. Thus many women were classified as unemployed and were looking for jobs. This change was due to several accumulated events, such as increase in the average age of marriage, the higher rate of females pursuing various levels of education, and the increased number of women seeking jobs to contribute to the family income in times of economic difficulties.

**Table 10: Unemployment rates according to gender 1970, 1997 & 2001**

|                | 1970 | 1997 | 2001 |
|----------------|------|------|------|
| <b>Males</b>   | 6    | 9    | 9.3  |
| <b>Females</b> | 5.1  | 7.2  | 18.2 |
| <b>Both</b>    | 5.8  | 8.6  | 11.5 |

**Source:** Labor forces and living conditions of the family and youth entry to work market and immigration

#### 5- Women and the Media

**5-1** Lately a lot has been said about women and the media as a result of the media development and their frequent appearance in it. Women occupy prominent positions in the various multimedia that prevails in a small country like Lebanon. A study covering the media shows the average number of women in television stations is 48.4%, with a variation from one station to the other. When considering ownership and responsibilities of the mass media, it is men who own them and not the women. Some men, to escape the law, offer their spouses shares some times.

Regarding responsibilities many of the women occupy administrative and simple artwork posts where they reach 100%, as the study indicated. Women are found in marketing and promotion as well as administration and finance departments. Their presence drops significantly in the technical department. A slight change occurred for women in the news, editing and reporting sections. In the production, technical and presentation sections males are still dominant to females.

The average number of women graduates from media schools is 91% specialized in different media domains. Affiliate members to the press syndicate reached 28.9%, especially no applications were accepted since 2000.

Though major changes occurred to women's work in the media and the positions they occupy, be it preparing special programs on women, presenting political or social programs, this did not change the image of women in the media. The reasons are two folds, explain the researchers: First, women cannot influence decision making for they do not have that power. They are considered executing staff. Second, Women are aware of their limited role in the decision making process. Such important issue requires necessary measures to improve female staff awareness and training.

Ownership of the written media is the same as that of the audio-visual media, though women own some of the magazines. The continuous increase in the number of women magazines is purely commercial and maintains the traditional image of women though most of their writers and editors are women. Still they deal with the traditional subjects: mother responsibilities, women's beauty, the qualities of a good wife and how to maintain a harmonious marriage and a happy home. Statistics of 2002 indicate that the rate of women working reached 45.8% and their age ranged between 25 and 29 years old.(11)

The magazines do not discuss the discrimination against women in pay, training or promotion, as the male and female media study show. Men get more promotions (54.69%) and better positions than women (39.51%). The study also indicated that men occupy leading positions more than women.

## **6- Women's Health: Reproductive Health**

**6-1** The new health comparatives still view public health in general without considering the particularities of the age groups and health effects especially when they are inflicted and their health is affected. This leads to medical care compared to public health indicators that are significant to the socio-economic parameters. The difference between health care, medicine and sickness, and their relationship to the general social and development situation, result in a comparison not to neglect the other indicators to improve the general health of the population in a more comprehensive way. For example, the increase in life expectancy among the elderly is considered one of the most active indicators. To complete its significance, a correlation is required to measure disparity in the population clusters to long age with good health and the economic and social factors.

Lebanese women do not suffer from any discrimination regarding health care. All studies indicate there is a marked improvement in the health indicators in Lebanon. The life expectancy at birth reached 74.6 in 2000 compared to 71.4 in 1996.(12) However the general mortality rate is approximately 7.4 per thousand and it is normally higher among men than women.(13) The average of residential Lebanese with chronic diseases is around 8.8%. This average increases with old age irrespective of the place of residence (rural or urban) or gender. However, studies indicate that women of all ages have more chronic diseases than men by 9.5%.

**Table 11: Percentage of chronic disease according to age and gender in1997**

|                | <b>Less than 15</b> | <b>15-44</b> | <b>45-59</b> | <b>More than 60</b> | <b>National Average</b> |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Males</b>   | 3.2                 | 4.1          | 15.8         | 32.6                | 8.1                     |
| <b>Females</b> | 2.1                 | 5.1          | 20.8         | 38.2                | 9.5                     |
| <b>Both</b>    | 2.6                 | 4.7          | 18.3         | 35.3                | 8.8                     |

**Source:** Living condition of the family.

It is expected that the percentage of chronic diseases is more than reported due to weak health education or people do not know they have the disease.

## **6-2 Childbearing**

There has been a significant increase in childbearing rates the past few decades due to the concerted efforts between the public and private sectors. The maternal mortality

rate was 104 per thousand in the year 2000. While the government already announced the policy to reduce MMR to 67, the ongoing studies will be ready this year, 2005<sup>(13)</sup> to compare the results.

The latest study (1999-2000) indicates that 94.9% of pregnant women had medical check up and the number of such visits reached 6.7, while 92.5% of the deliveries took place in the hospital or in private or public maternities.<sup>(14)</sup>

### 6-3 Use of contraceptives

Recent information regarding the use of contraceptives is not available. However the reduction in fertility rates is an indicator of its widespread use.

Since abortion is illegal and those who practice it are penalized, such information does not exist. And abortion practiced under unhealthy conditions lead in most cases to the death of women.

In spite of public awareness campaigns on cancer and the availability of many dispensaries dealing with this disease, breast examination is still not sufficiently carried out. The economic problems and since the social security does not cover all the people, are the main reasons for the low rates of cancer examinations.

### 6-4 HIV/AIDS

For ethical and moral values, figures and statistics do not reflect the actual spread of HIV/AIDS. The National Campaign to Combat AID in its report of June 2004 indicated the cumulative number of virus carriers was 765 cases. By May 2004, 9 cases were reported, 8 men and 1 woman.<sup>(15)</sup> The rates of infected males are higher than those of females. Studies show that the 45.36% of the virus is transmitted through sexual relationships and could be as a result of travel. Drugs are considered the second cause of the disease transmission especially when using intravenous needles. More than 58.8% of such cases are in the age group 41 – 50 years old.

6-5 The presence of women working in the health domain is still very dominant. A study on women rights carried out by the Research and Study Center indicate that 53.81% of the total staff working in the hospitals and health care facilities is women. Their jobs are limited to the vocational and administrative positions and their presence in the medical and dental professions is still much less than the men.<sup>(16)</sup>

**Table12: Female employment distribution and total number of positions available in health and social services sectors:**

| Job                         | Females |       |       | Total workers |           |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|-----------|
|                             | No.     | %     | No.   | %             | Females % |
| High positions Free careers | 1602    | 8.3   | 26.1  | 6.7           | 61.6      |
| Professional in health care | 4818    | 24.9  | 12154 | 35.5          | 39.6      |
| Medical care                | 5250    | 27.1  | 7345  | 21.4          | 71.5      |
| Other medical care          | 1873    | 9.7   | 3673  | 7.8           | 70.1      |
| Administrative employees    | 3566    | 18.4  | 4787  | 14.0          | 74.5      |
| Services' Workers           | 937     | 4.8   | 1617  | 4.7           | 57.9      |
| Skills jobs drivers         | 340     | 1.8   | 1355  | 4.0           | 25.1      |
|                             | 962     | 5.0   | 1720  | 5.0           | 55.9      |
| <b>Total</b>                | 19348   | 10.00 | 34252 | 100.00        | 56.5      |

**Source:** The National Committee for Women Affairs, figures and means

## **7-Violence against women:**

**7-1** Until recently violence against women was still a taboo and was not spoken of. The social conscience was never affected by any attacks, disfigurements or even murdered women since they were considered to be men's property and their lives were inundated with traditions and mores that permitted violence in its various forms. Some justify such traditions linking them to religious teachings, while others view these traditions as resistance to modernization that is invading their social life. Moreover, violence against woman is still not a critical issue in many social groups within society.

Violence against women is considered natural behaviour with the educational system prevailing in Lebanese society. Educational system indicates the moral values and mores that influence social relationships and these are usually reflected in the social upbringing, the cultural and educational systems, the moral values and the social behavior. This system organizes the social relationships within a hierarchy that usually give power to the stronger and the elder, thus allowing them to exercise violence as a means of controlling and often dominating their women. The attitude towards women is viewed from the same perspective where the head of the family (the father) has total authority over his wife and the children.

Dealing with violence against women is a recent issue in Lebanon. It was only addressed during the past few years, after the International Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

**7-2** In spite of the numerous associations interested in this subject, violence against women is still an issue that faces enormous problems and still needs to be studied and its causes to be identified. The problems are on two levels: first, the cultural level covered by the patriarchal system where the father/male controls all aspects of the social life. Hence, every discussion about violence against woman is considered as disclosing one of the family secrets that contradicts the moral and ethical values. Second, the objective level, related to laws and procedures that protect and are responsible for public life and do not allow any space for violence against women. Many studies indicate that violence against woman is normally linked to men, be it father, husband, brother or son. All sentences upheld by the courts between 1995 and 1996 show that 22 out of 36 honor crimes were committed first by a brother, second by a husband, and last by a father and son.<sup>(17)</sup>

If the general trend is to study violence focusing on what is apparent and clearly identifiable, there is the other symbolic violence, that concentrates on accusation, cursing, deprivation, persecution and submission resulting in women losing self confidence and feeling humiliated. Such acts are still not considered as violent. Symbolic violence in the patriarchal society is not a subject for discussion, for this is an issue within the family and related to relationships in the same family. In a recent study on "Violence Against Women in the Lebanese Society", around 100 girls and women of different social classes and educational backgrounds (illiterates to professional including doctors & lawyers), showed that violence against women was exercised from childhood until the age of marriage. The study revealed the level of

violence exerted against women which is considered a very "natural act". When asked the basic question about decision making in the family, the response came from all the women surveyed "of course my father is the decision maker". In other words, the man is usually in charge of the family.

Dr. Rafif Sidawi confirmed this trend in her study "*Jawari* (female slaves) in 2000".<sup>(18)</sup> She found that in the sample of males she surveyed violence was practiced following the prevailing social cultures which they acquired and that justifies such violence against women. On the other hand women face violence while assuming the contradiction between the traditional and the modern.

**7-3** According to the Women Democratic Gathering Report, the total number of women who were able to speak up and share their experience was 78. They described in detail the reasons for violence and its mode. Violence in marriage mostly abounded in rural areas (53 cases out of 78), while all other types of violence were domestic. However, the kinds of violence varied from beating to insulting and cursing (25 cases) with more than 18 cases of neglect, and symbolic violence related to humiliation.

Until the present, no measures were taken to establish governmental organizations to deal with violence against women. Nor are there statistics of the cases recorded with the police stations or the legal courts. However, concern of the non-governmental organizations are gradually increasing in this domain.

At present there are many associations dealing with issues related to violence against women from the legal perspective. These are accessible from the judicial assistance provided by the lawyer's syndicate, the Lebanese Association for the Struggle Against any Form of Violence Against Women and the Women Democratic Gathering, The psycho-social components are provided by numerous associations. Moreover, there are many of the penal laws that still discriminate against women, and efforts are proceeding to eliminate article 562 from the legal penal code.

Hot line set up for dealing with complaints were established in a number of associations such as the Lebanese Association Resisting Violence Against Women and the Women Democratic Gathering.

Training sessions were organized in coordination with the Ministry of Interior to train policemen on how to treat cases of violence against women.

Interventions were made to observe how prison guards deal with women prisoners.

It is worth noting that many of the materials in the penal law still discriminate against women, and efforts are underway to abolish article 562 of the penal code.

**7-4** After establishing the Lebanese Women Network, consisting of 13 women and legal Lebanese associations strictly concerned with women's issues, the title identified for the network campaign "the national campaign to eliminate discrimination in the penal law" aims at eliminating all the penal laws with discrimination against women dealing with abortion and adultery, as well as to persuade the government to create laws to protect women from any practical and symbolic violence.

### **Examples of some of the NGOs Work in the Domain of Violence**

In research: Reports issued by the Lebanese Association for the Struggle Against any form of Violence Against Women, and all the researches written in 2002

The women's associations responsible for enlightening people, training and educating them many years ago were: The National Committee for the Follow up on Women's Issues, The Lebanese Association for the struggle against any form of Violence against Women, Forum about Human Dignity, Women Democratic Gathering.

Suggestive power: The National Committee for the Follow up on Women's Issues and the Lebanese Women Network coordinate different recommendations to issue new laws and mechanisms to protect women from violence

### **Women's non- governmental organization network:**

- 1- National Committee for the Follow up on Women's Issues
- 2- Lebanese Women Council
- 3- Lebanese women network
- 4- The National Gathering to Abolish all forms of Discrimination Against Women

## **4- Critical Issues**

All the preceding information confirms the necessity to act on the following levels:

The government neither has an action plan nor has it any clear mechanisms to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women according to the text of the convention:

The action taken by the government is restricted and can be summarized as follows:

- a) The establishment of the National Council for Women's Affairs that is directly linked to and under the custody of the prime minister. This association is subject to the general directives of the government which still does not recognize the importance of gender equality for the development and improvement of our society.
- b) The establishment of the women's committee in the parliament that still does not have specific directives regarding the CEDAW agreement. The personal statute law is still part of a social and a political taboo in our society. Therefore, no significant amendments are mentioned either in the official governmental declarations and applications/practices or in legislative council i.e. parliament.
- c) Equality between men and women is part of the Lebanese constitution (nationality law, and personal status law).
- d) The political administration (government, parliament etc.) does not have a clear strategy for the culture of equality. This is evident in the educational development plan, the employment plans and in the introduction of policies and in their implementation.
- e) The government does not have a concrete strategy to abolish discrimination against women. This is evident for since peace has reigned in Lebanon the committee to

revise and renew the laws did not have any such programs and never had plans to help victims of violence.

f) The conditions for cooperation and coordination with NGOs are not clear. For example, the work of the National Commission for Women's Affairs and the women's association are not convincing and do not abide by the cooperation required.

### **Summary: Suggestions and ideas to abolish all forms of discrimination against women**

The figures and data provided in this report clearly indicate the gap in gender equality.

The amendment of laws and the creation of new laws are extremely important to the provision of liberal social space, thus allowing for the remediation of the social mental structure prevailing in Lebanon and the adjustment of moral values hindering women from enjoying their human rights. Such laws will allow for the active sharing in decision making and political planning so as to eventually permit equality at work without obstacles or constraints.

Although Lebanon ratified the convention and is bound to implement all its articles, it fell short and seems to be at a stand still at present.

What future policies are required to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women?

#### **I. What is required from the political administration of the country?**

- 1) Applying the articles of the convention Lebanon ratified to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.
- 2) Amending all the law not in accordance with the convention:
  - a) Employment and social security laws;
  - b) Penal sanction laws;
  - c) Nationality laws;
  - d) Admitting women as independent from men.
- 3) Lifting the reservations made on some of the articles:
  - a) Article 9, paragraph 2 of the convention recognizing woman's right to grant nationality to her children;
  - b) Article 16 related to the personal statute; issuing optional civil law to give equal rights to men and women.
- 4) Taking all the appropriate measures including the legal one, to amend and abolish all the laws, rules, regulations and practices that contain discrimination against women.
  - a) Integrating women who are in the field of agricultural and domestic work in the labour and social security law;
  - b) Creating new laws to protect women's rights especially in involving violence;
  - c) Structuring the budgets so as to take gender into consideration and thus serve both men and women.
- 5) Practicing favoured treatment or quotas to accelerate the integration of women in the fields of education, economics, politics, and employment.
- 6) Amending the social and cultural norms so men modify their behaviour and abolish prejudices and traditional roles ascribed to men and women.

- 7) Seeking the necessary laws to abolish all forms of using and exploiting women as prostitutes.
- 8) Guaranteeing women's political rights and creating the climate to facilitate participation in decision making by allowing for a quota or a ratio for women.
- 9) Involving women in policy formation and implementation, and by employing them in the public and private decision making positions.
- 10) Amending the law regarding the establishment of the National Commission to represent the various organizations dealing with women.
- 11) Suggesting the National Commission monitor and control its work plans and its implementation of such plans.
- 12) Considering motherhood a social service and allowing society to bear the responsibility regarding maternity leave and changing it to parental leave.
- 13) Expanding the active family planning service, while also providing the necessary measures to improve child bearing and introducing sexual education in the curricula.
- 14) Improving women's participation in governmental representation at international events and in the activities of international organizations.
- 15) Amending the nationality law and recognizing women's right to grant nationality to both their husbands and children as men do.
- 16) Reviewing the new educational curricula to remove gender discrimination texts from textbooks.
- 17) Unifying the legal courts so they are affiliated to the ministry of Justice.
- 18) Contributing to the financing of all governmental organizations.

## **II. What is required from the civil society:**

- 1) Providing women legal orientation at all educational levels.
- 2) Spreading the content of the convention by creating dialogue, organizing conferences, convention panels and workshops.
- 3) Building public opinion to abolish all forms of discrimination against women.
- 4) Forming pressure groups in all civil societies, so as to compel the government to abolish discrimination against women.

List of foot notes:

- 1) Merrill Lynch Report, An-Nahar 5 August 2004
- 2) Shadow Report on the Progress Achieved in the Implementation of the Accord on Abolishing all Forms of Discrimination against Women in Lebanon, 1999, the National Committee for the Follow up on Women's Issues
- 3) The complete list of the women who won in the 2004 local elections was not issued by the Ministry of Interior.
- 4) Man and Women in Lebanon: Statistics portrait, National Commission for Women Affairs – ESCWA
- 5) The main reason for not recognizing the right of Lebanese women - though not declared- is the fear of settling in a covert manner, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon; the Lebanese government is above the nationality legislation (Article 4 No. 15 of 12/1/1952) since it signed the Arab League Agreement and participated in decisions pertaining to the Palestinian Refugees. In the same framework, the Lebanese legislator excluded the Palestinians from the foreign ownership law article 296 of 3/4/2001 where the principle to forbid refugee settlement supercede that of equality.
- 6) The Social and Economic Situation in Lebanon – Reality and Horizon, Ministry of Social Affairs 2004
- 7) For more details, the Social and Economic Situation in Lebanon –Reality and Horizon, section six, Ministry of Social Affairs 2004
- 8) For example: The achievements made by the National Committee for the Follow up on Women's Issues, since the first local authority elections, the legislative elections in 2001 and the local authority elections 2004; for further details see: The Experience of the National Committee for the Follow up on Women's Issues, prepared by Dr. Fahmiah Charafeldine and Dr. Aman Kabbara Chaarani in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- 9) Mary Dibs: Study on the reality and role of the Lebanese working and employed women in the syndicate decision making 2003
- 10) The Reality and Horizon of the Social and Economic Situation in Lebanon 2004, Ministry of Social Affairs.
- 11) The Entry of Lebanese Youth in the Work Force and Immigration.
- 12) The Republic of Lebanon, The Arab countries reaction to the data regarding the achievements made as requested by Beijing work plan, section Women and health, page 4
- 13) The Social and Economic Situation in Lebanon (p.227), Ministry of Social Affairs.
- 14) Ministry of Social Affairs, Margin no.2 page 228, the Social and Economic Situation in Lebanon: Reality and Horizon 2004
- 15) The National Study for Post Delivery Period: Ministry of Public Health 1999 – 2000 and UNICEF
- 16) Ministry of Social Affairs, the Social and Economic Situation in Lebanon – Reality and Horizon, 2004
- 17) Fadi Mughazel and Mirella Abdel Sater: Honor Crimes in Lebanon – a Legal Study, Mughazel Institute 1996, Mughazel Institute 1999.
- 18) Rafif Sidawi "Jawari 2000" The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women, Beirut 2002.