

Psychological impact of femicide

Impacto psicológico ante el feminicidio

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Abstract

This paper was designed with the objective of describing the characteristics and consequences of femicide in order to raise awareness in society about the psychological impact of its normalization and minimization. This crime is due to the fact that the conduct itself develops within an unequal power relationship between men and women, due to different factors, among which can be found: economic, political, social, religious and sexual, to mention a few. Affecting not only the life and integrity of women, but also third parties, such as the family. It is for this reason that this paper seeks to provide a look at the effects that femicide has on society, as well as the characteristics and consequences of the same and some intervention strategies that can be applied, giving importance to the psychological area and the way in which, as a society we can contribute something to stop normalizing this type of violence.

Resumen

El presente trabajo fue diseñado con el objetivo de describir las características y consecuencias del feminicidio con la finalidad de concientizar a la sociedad acerca del impacto psicológico de su normalización y minimización. Este delito se debe a que la conducta en sí, se desarrolla dentro de una desigual relación de poder entre hombres y mujeres, debido a diferentes factores, entre los cuales se pueden encontrar: el económico, el político, el social, el religioso y el sexual por mencionar algunos. Afectando no solo la vida y la integridad de la mujer; ya que también, se perjudica a terceros, como la familia. Es por esto, que con el presente se busca aportar una mirada sobre los efectos que tiene el feminicidio en la sociedad, así como, las características y consecuencias del mismo y algunas estrategias de intervención que se pueden aplicar, dándole importancia al área psicológica y la manera en que, como sociedad podemos aportar algo para dejar de normalizar este tipo de violencia.

Femicide, Psychology, Crime, Intervention

Feminicidio, Psicología, Delito, Intervención

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Introduction

In recent years there has been a lot of talk about femicide; a problem that is intensifying every day, alarming the country and the world in general.

The aim of this essay is to describe the characteristics and consequences of femicide, in order to make society aware of its psychological impact, its normalisation and minimisation. Unfortunately, not many people are aware of what this crime really is, nor of the consequences it can have on people's lives in general.

The text shows the importance of the issue, the damage it causes and what we as a society can do to gradually eradicate this problem. The methodology used for its elaboration is qualitative and documentary as it is the one that best fits in this case, to describe the aforementioned problem.

Femicide is considered a serious violation of women's human rights, as well as one of the most extreme manifestations of discrimination and violence against women. Discrimination and violence are brutal forms in which girls, adolescents and adult women are subjected; evidencing the hatred and contempt felt towards them (Olivares et al., 2021, page 12).

Femicides are the most extreme form of contempt and violence against women in Mexico, our country. In the family, in the street, in schools and at work, they are assaulted, made invisible and humiliated, preventing them from enjoying the same opportunities as men.

If we want to eradicate the violent deaths of thousands of women and the violence they experience on a daily basis, it is crucial to intervene appropriately, condemning the aggressors, understanding the problem in depth, preventing it and taking action to achieve real change. This will only be possible by making the magnitude of the problem visible, being empathetic, not ignoring or normalising these actions.

The research on this problem was carried out precisely because of the interest in knowing the consequences and some of the causes of this crime and how to intervene psychologically in this situation.

The attention to femicide implies an inter and multidisciplinary work, so the focus of this contribution is more towards the psychological field, since it is an area that can contribute to the understanding and explanation of this problem, with the intention that women who have been violated and the families of the victims can re-evaluate their emotional and mental part, since, unfortunately, in many cases this part of health is left aside.

It is also important that in the different care centres this problem is made visible from the mental health point of view, so that the people involved in this type of experience feel safe and are able to carry out a therapeutic process in confidence.

Justification

Historically, violence is a crime that women have had to suffer. This begins with cultural issues and little by little it has been escalating and incorporating other forms of exercising control, such as psychological violence, physical violence or even death.

The situation worsens once it is considered normal. The institutions that should protect and help women, leave them aside, revictimise and ignore them, fail to provide them with the support they need to safeguard their integrity and nobody does anything about it.

Therefore, the aim is to raise awareness and reflect on some of the causes and consequences that lead to femicide. An important point mentioned by Bejarano (2014) in this regard is that the state provides precarious care due to the limited resources allocated for this purpose. As a result, it is not possible to carry out efficient work or to provide the support that women who are victims of violence need (paragraph 9).

Problem

The problem of femicide in Mexico is alarming, the issue is becoming more controversial every day, it is a situation that has been dragging on historically and over the years has become more acute, as hundreds of women and girls have been victims of this violence just because they are women.

There is an urgent need to protect girls and women from this violence and to hold the perpetrators accountable, to provide real resources to the victims and, above all, to provide justice for each of the women who have lost their lives due to violence (Instituto de las Mujeres del estado de San Luis Potosí, 2012, p. 14).

Therefore, it is necessary to intervene as a society and as mental health professionals to ensure that this crime is punished as it should be and that the families of the victims and the victims themselves, who have survived this crime, are given the justice they deserve and above all the psychological support they need at that time.

Objective

To describe the characteristics and consequences of femicide in order to raise awareness of the psychological impact of its normalisation and minimisation.

Clarification of terms

Femicide

The National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women, (2016), typifies femicide as the violent death of women for gender-based reasons; it is the most extreme form of violence against women.

The General Law on Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAVLV) criminalises femicide in Mexico and its purpose is to establish coordination between the Federation, the states and the municipalities to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women, as well as the principles and modalities that guarantee their access to a life free of violence, which favours their development and well-being in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, 2007, p. 11).

The Federal Criminal Code defines femicide as a criminal offence and a presumed femicide is committed when one of the listed gender-based reasons is fulfilled.

The intentional homicide against a woman should be investigated as a femicide if:

- The victim's body was exposed.
- The aggressor maintained or maintained some link with the victim.
- There is a history of previous stalking or harassment.
- There was sexual violence prior to the murder.
- There are physical injuries.
- There is a history of domestic violence (Garcia, 2020, para. 3 and 4).

Violence against women and girls is one of the most serious forms of violence, which has remained throughout life, in a society that normalises, invisibilises and degrades the female population. Femicide, as a concept, includes the factor of impunity and is a chain of violations of women's human and social rights.

In most countries, femicide is no different from homicide in criminal law, with only a few countries legally recognising femicide as distinctly different from homicide. Only 16 countries have included femicide as a specific crime, including Mexico.

The most recent global report on homicide by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was published in July 2019, presenting data from 2017. That year, 87,000 women worldwide were intentionally murdered, more than half of them (50,000) by intimate partners or family members (Offiong, 2021, para. 9 and 10).

No matter how viciously these crimes were perpetrated, at the moment, those who beat or stab women to death could get a lesser sentence of 20 to 25 years in prison.

In the state of Durango, Mexico, more than 12 femicides have been recorded so far during the current administration, according to information provided by Julieta Hernández Camargo, president of "Sí hay mujeres en Durango" (Yes, there are women in Durango). Most of the alleged perpetrators of the femicides have been arrested, although no sentences have yet been handed down by judges (Lastra, 2023, para. 1-4).

A femicide can be punished with up to 70 years in prison in some states in our country, but if the murderer alleges that the crime was committed under a state of "violent emotion" (also known as a crime of passion), the sentence can be reduced to only a quarter (Duran, n.d., para. 30).

Femicide

Many of the men who have been identified as potential feminicides are because in the past, mainly in their childhood, they lived in a violent environment that forced them to feel hatred towards women or were victims of physical and psychological abuse (Perez, 2022, para. 2).

Femicides can be the victim's own husband, partner or ex-partner, criminal groups, killers who look for victims of opportunity or predators who look for women with a specific profile to fulfil their fantasies, whom they go out to hunt (Sánchez, 2021, para. 8).

The level of violence, poverty, machismo and impunity make a perfect mix for the development of feminicides. The impunity that prevails in our country allows these types of people to continue to act against women, adding that in order to better understand the origin of this crime it is also necessary to determine that there are different types of femicide, although the research carried out to date has not been sufficient to delimit their classification.

Types of femicide

The categorisation of the types of femicide has progressed a little further, as detailed below.

Intimate Femicide

This is the death of a woman committed by a man with whom the victim had or had had an intimate relationship or link: husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend or lover. It includes the case of a friend who murders a woman (friend or acquaintance) who refused to enter into an intimate relationship (sentimental or sexual) with the aggressor (Olamendi, 2016, p. 35).

Non-intimate femicide

The crime is carried out by an unknown person who has no relationship with the victim. In these cases, physical and sexual aggression is present (Navarro, 2020, para. 6).

Child femicide

The murder of a girl up to 14 years of age, by men or women, in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power that gives them their adult status over the girl's minority (Albarrán, 2015, para. 41).

Familial femicide

It is the death of a woman in the context of a kinship relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The relationship can be by consanguinity, affinity or adoption (Olamendi, 2016, p. 34).

Femicide by prostitution

This is the murder of a woman in prostitution; committed by one or more men. This typology includes cases in which the perpetrator or perpetrators kill the woman motivated by hatred and misogyny aroused by the victim's status as a prostitute (Atencio and Laporta, 2012, para. 31).

These are some of the types of femicide, the victims of which can be women of all ages and belonging to any social group, as well as the perpetrators. Although, as previously mentioned, there is still a lack of categorisation of those who commit femicide, there are currently a series of characteristics that identify them.

Femicide profile

It can be said that, although there is no single type of femicide perpetrator and all of them have characteristics that make them different from each other, there are a series of elements that tend to be common in almost all cases. Pérez, (2022) points out that the National Institute of Women has made known some of the characteristics of a subject who can be profiled as a femicide:

Violent and jealous people

These are people who fall into situations of uncontrollable violence. They respond with excessive violence to any situation that puts their instinct of "superiority" at risk, they consume drugs or alcohol and are prone to commit this crime (many of the attacks that have been carried out against women have been perpetrated under the influence of drugs or alcohol).

Social complacency with violence

Those who grew up in a social context where violence against women is celebrated and encouraged have behaviours that can lead to femicidal violence.

Impunity

Those who have touched a woman inappropriately, without legal consequences for their actions, increase their level of aggression and may even commit femicide.

Misogyny

Those who show irrational hatred towards women are prone to extreme violence.

Exacerbated machismo

People who consider women to be inferior may be potential femicides.

Gender inequality

Those who live in an environment where women's rights are constantly undermined on the basis of gender alone are a red hotspot.

Patriarchal culture

Institutionalised system of domination that maintains the subordination and invisibility of women.

Argumentation

The theoretical elements found on femicide in the documentary consultation are set out below.

Background

It is necessary to talk about gender-based violence against women in order to better understand the term femicide. Historically, girls have been taught how to behave in society, to be polite, sweet, tender; even the differentiation in the use of toys shows the way in which contrasts are promoted in the education of women and men. At the same time, women are expected to remain virgins until marriage and maternal in order to be socially accepted; on the other hand, men can have sex freely, they can go to bars, have one or several relationships, without being frowned upon (Cárdenas and Vargas, 2014, p. 21).

All these beliefs and teachings are transmitted from generation to generation through culture, schools, education received at home, even through the media and social networks, creating a series of prejudices and stereotypes that become naturalised and accepted (Díaz, 2017, p. 11).

Galeana (2014) argues that, since classical antiquity, Aristotle considered women to be incomplete human beings, less capable than men. Plato, on the contrary, made his disciples see that there could be nothing better for a society than having all its members to defend it. He therefore proposed that women should be given the possibility of participating in its defence.

In the selective Athenian democracy, only free men with the ability to bear arms could vote, thus excluding the elderly, the disabled, slaves and women, who made up the majority of the population. Unfortunately, the Aristotelian view prevailed and not the Platonic idea (p.15).

Over the centuries, the patriarchal system was reinforced by philosophical and religious as well as legal conceptions. Women have had to fight hard to deconstruct this discriminatory culture. They fought first for their labour rights, then for access to education and for their political rights, and it was thanks to these women who paved the way and worked to stop this from happening that the term feminism was born.

Ordorica, (2019), indicates that the first recorded use of the word occurred only around 45 years ago; in 1976, when three radical feminists, two North Americans and a Lebanese, defined the concept at the "First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women" held in Belgium.

The definition stabilised once Russell (American Feminist) published the book *Femicide: The Politics of Women Killing* in 1992 where she defined the concept as "misogynist killing of women by men": the misogynist killing of women by men. It was this definition that would be reinterpreted for the Mexican context (paragraphs 4-6).

Hernández (2020) mentions that the concept of femicide became popular in the context of the events in Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua, Mexico). Between 1993 and 2012, more than 700 violent murders of women were recorded there, most of whom showed evidence of sexual violence.

In 1993, Alma, a 16-year-old girl, was found murdered in a vacant lot with blows to her face and signs of rape, raising concerns about the whereabouts of many other missing women.

Several bodies were found in the cotton fields, half-buried, with marks of violence, and as a result, the world began to speak of "Las muertas de Juárez" (the dead women of Juárez). By the way, they should have been called "Las asesinadas de Juárez" because they did not die automatically, but were murdered. This made Mexico a feminicidal country and attention was drawn to the issue (paragraph 12).

Faced with the bewilderment of the Mexican and international community, as well as the lack of concepts that could provide an answer as to why these murders were taking place, Dr. Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos in 2007 proposed, together with other deputies, to frame the initiative of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence to investigate more about the femicides committed in Ciudad Juárez (Peralta, 2020, p. 72).

Chihuahua, Guerrero and Baja California were the states with the highest rates of female deaths with presumed homicide in 2009. These are just some of the data on the basis of which the picture of the magnitude and intensity of the violence against women that claims fatal victims is configured (Castañeda, 2012, p. 16).

These events have been the watershed for the constant feminist protests across the country to focus attention on the importance of addressing gender violence, without leaving behind the fact that it is not only in Mexico that this problem exists.

Ramírez, (2018) indicates that the term femicide began in Latin America in the last two decades, where there has been a broad debate on the concept as an effect of the situation of vulnerability and violence in which women find themselves, and especially due to the ineffectiveness of the justice system to contain and repress the death of women.

For this reason, it was in Latin American countries that the political decision was taken to criminalise the murder of women in certain circumstances, calling it femicide.

Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru call it femicide, and although progress has been made in terms of protection and guarantees, there is still a long way to go (pp. 11-14).

At the state level (Durango, Mexico), according to Barrientos (2021), as of 2021 and based on statistics from the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System, the number of femicides has increased exponentially over the last few years.

In 2015 there were two investigations initiated for this crime, as well as in 2016, while in 2017 there were nine femicides, four in 2018, 10 in 2019 and 12 investigations initiated by the authorities in 2020. Despite the fact that an Alert for Gender Violence against Women has been active in Durango since 2018, this type of crime is on the rise (para. 7).

Prevalence

According to official statistics, during 2021, 969 femicides were registered in Mexico, an average of 2.6 per day. In 2022, 1,006 victims of femicide were counted, which means that 3 women die every day due to gender violence. Currently, feminist groups have denounced that, on average, 10 women are murdered every day (Islas, 2022, para. 23).

The State of Mexico is the state with the most femicides in absolute numbers. The government of Alfredo del Mazo has registered 131 incidents in 11 months; it is followed by Nuevo León, with 85 cases; La CDMX, with 70; Veracruz, with 63, 42 in Chiapas and 40 in Oaxaca (Ramos, 2022, paragraph 2).

But it is not only in Mexico that femicide exists, nor is it the country with the highest figures; there are other countries and continents that also suffer from this violence against women.

Bermúdez and Meléndez, (2020) say that in 2017 there were 87,000 intentional homicides of women, 58% of them took place within the family and 34% were committed by their partner.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2018). The region with the highest percentage of femicides in relation to homicides of women in 2017 was Oceania (42%), followed by Africa (38%), the Americas (35%), Asia (31%) and Europe (29%). The data also show a homogeneous distribution in relation to the prevalence of physical violence cases (paragraph 3).

Since 2019, countries such as Greece, Slovenia, Germany and Italy experienced significant increases in femicides, Greece had the highest increase in 2021 with a peak of 187.5% from eight incidents from 2020 to 2023. It is also important to note that, according to experts, this has much to do with the control men had over women in closed settings during the pandemic (Khatsenkova, 2023, para. 7).

Etiology

It is clear that the profile of a femicide offender can vary depending on the case, and therefore the causes for committing this crime depend on particular circumstances; however, a history of physical and psychological violence increases the risk of being a victim of femicide much more. Other causes include gender violence, domestic violence, poor anger management, pathological jealousy, substance abuse, psycho-emotional disorders, low self-esteem and economic problems, among others.

Hernández (n.d.) indicates that there is another factor that increases the probability of a woman being a victim of violence, with the risk of femicide; that is, having been a victim of sexual violence increases four times more her risk of being a victim of this form of violence.

It is not that sexual violence conditions a femicide, but it does make it more likely under the extreme domination to which some femicides subject their victims; however, the other types of violence should not be minimised (paragraph 20).

Lugo (2020) points out that the writer and journalist Lydiette Carrión, who specialises in documenting a network of trafficking in girls and adolescents and femicides in the State of Mexico, explains that not all femicides can be committed for the same reason. In other words, there is a clear division between femicides that occur in rural contexts, where the violence is due to specific causes specific to the culture and activities that take place in these places, and those committed in more urbanised areas, where it is even due to organised crime (paragraph 4).

However, there are other elements that femicides have in common and that could occur frequently in rural areas, or areas with scarce resources, and one of these is machismo, this does not mean that it does not occur in other areas, simply that it is more common to see it in this environment since most men have been taught over time to be exploitative and to exploit women for their own benefit.

Social consequences

At the social level, femicide leaves a culture of learned violence, where the one who loves, controls, mistreats and minimises the female sex. It is currently a plague that affects women, violating their fundamental rights, threatening their lives and preventing the development of an inclusive and democratic society.

The specialist Rita Segato introduced the concept of gender violence as "the incubator" of all other forms of violence, it is the first pedagogy; it is the first school of all other forms of violence (Demirdjian, 2019, paragraph 10).

Femicide is related to social and institutional misogyny, to the failures of the justice system and impunity. This violence is not exclusive to any political or economic system; unfortunately, it occurs in all societies around the world and without distinction of economic position, race or culture (Álvarez, 2019, paragraph 5).

The authorities are indifferent, liars and evasive, this is one of the main problems that society faces in this situation and every time new cases of femicide arise, there is no perceived path that leads to justice and above all, to the eradication of the problem (Castañeda, 2012, p.15).

Femicides have led us to reflect on two things: firstly, on prison policies, the authority of judges and how they handle these cases, and secondly, on the type of society that makes it possible for a woman to be raped and murdered because she is a woman; even today it is safe to say that there are still people who are not informed about what a femicide is.

It is there, in access to justice, where most victims complain about the mistreatment and revictimisation they receive from the authorities. And the authorities, overwhelmed, make slow progress in resolving cases with obstacles, lack of personnel, lack of training and budget cuts (Barragán, 2021, para.10).

There are poorly prioritised resources, as well as a lack of human sensitivity, emotional and spiritual intelligence to respond to this national catastrophe, which leads to the need to raise awareness and make this problem more and more visible, for the vindication of women's right to life (Flores, 2016. P. 53).

Legal consequences

In Mexico, the violent murders of women have led to the emergence of the terms feminicide and feminicidal violence. According to the federal penal code, certain essential characteristics must be met for femicide to be differentiated from any other type of homicide.

Contreras, (n/d) indicates that Article 325 of the Federal Criminal Code establishes that the crime of femicide is committed by anyone who takes the life of a woman for gender-based reasons. It is considered that there are gender-based reasons when any of the following circumstances concur.

- I. The victim shows signs of sexual violence of any kind.
- II. The victim has been inflicted with infamous or degrading injuries or mutilations, prior or subsequent to the deprivation of life or acts of necrophilia.
- III. There are antecedents or data of any type of violence in the family, work or school environment, of the active subject against the victim.

IV. There has been a sentimental, affective or trusting relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

V. There is information that establishes that there were threats related to the criminal act, harassment or injuries by the perpetrator against the victim.

VI. The victim has been held incommunicado, regardless of the time prior to the deprivation of life.

VII. The victim's body is exposed or exhibited in a public place (paragraph 3).

The penalties for femicide in the state of Durango, Mexico according to Article 147 bis are 40 to 60 years imprisonment. If the victim is a minor, older adult, pregnant or disabled, 45 to 65 years in prison and a fine of 3240 to 4680 times the Unidad de Medida y Actualización (Maldonado, 2020, para. 2).

Psychological impact

Femicide is currently an act that affects society in all parts of the world, occurring in diverse contexts, in all social strata and leaving in its wake pain, suffering, anger and frustration. It affects not only the women involved, but also their children, families and communities.

Rodríguez (2019) mentions that the woman victim of femicide faces two situations that are linked between life and death, both situations provoke and trigger a series of damages that alter, either in their environment or in their own individuality, one of these situations is when the victim is a survivor of this attack, which leads to emotional sequelae that can affect the daily life of the woman as it can reduce their social interaction, acquire low self-esteem, guilt and emotional dependence.

In the alterations of the victim's personality, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can occur, where the affected person can relive over and over again the scenes that disturbed her mental condition, presenting a state of hypervigilance and in some cases paranoid conditions.

For a woman to have experienced a violent event within attempted femicide can lead to PTSD. Additionally, comorbidity can be related to depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, substance use disorders, or neurocognitive disorder, among many other consequences (DSM-V, 2013).

On the other hand, there is the second situation that is equally devastating and is defined as the greatest act of violence against women; femicide as such. In this case, those directly affected are the family members, who primarily suffer the consequences of femicide, having to cope with life after the fact, without the presence of one of their family members. Families, for example, lose the mother as their fundamental pillar and suffer the consequences (Tornimbeni et al, 2020, p. 1).

(Vélez, 2018) mentions that the family may present emotional problems, difficulty adapting to changes, feelings of guilt, low self-esteem, depression, signs of aggression and attitudes of isolation.

All of this causes different affectations because it is not only the victim who presents consequences, but also the family system is altered; causing dysfunctions in the family environment and in the social sphere. Within the family system, different reactions are generated in each of its members, who assume different positions with respect to the situation (paragraph 1).

For all of the above reasons, feminicide is a fact that must be studied and dealt with in an interdisciplinary manner in the search to design alternatives and changes that make it possible to safeguard the integrity of society and provide effective care for the victims.

Intervention

In a society of murdered women, of which we are all a part, hatred, discrimination and contempt towards women increases daily and means that gender violence continues to be perpetrated, often with impunity and in silence. Justice, like any other law, reproduces macho mechanisms and most of the time does not guarantee women's rights or protect them in the face of macho violence.

We must insist that the elimination of gender violence is a collective responsibility, not only of the victim. If we want to avoid more feminicides, we must ensure that the state implements public policies free of conservative, religious and sexist beliefs in which the idea that women are only there to serve men prevails.

González (n.d.) suggests some strategies that can help prevent violence against women and girls, starting by incorporating the gender perspective and the right to live free of violence into the educational curriculum so that:

1. From an early age girls and boys learn to know their bodies and make them respect them.
2. Acquire the ability to differentiate between affectionate acts and abusive actions.
3. Access key knowledge about bodily changes as they grow up.
4. Learn to value themselves and defend their bodies as a territory that cannot be subjugated by anyone. The greater the knowledge, the greater the self-esteem; the greater the self-esteem, the less likely to fall into toxic, abusive and violent relationships.
5. Have the strength to say NO if they feel that someone wants to subjugate, humiliate or attack their body and their life (paragraph 6).

In short, girls, boys and adolescents must learn that they have the same rights and that women are nobody's property.

On the other hand, Cervera (n/d) mentions that close communication can be established between governmental institutions, private care centres and civil society associations that deal with the problem of violence against women and children in order to establish urgent and free prevention and care measures.

To follow up on the complaints filed by women against their partners, as well as to provide psychological and medical support to victims of violence; a very important measure, as many women remain silent because the institutions do not listen to them and their cases are forgotten (p. 472).

This commitment must be accompanied by the business sector, civil society organisations, institutes, universities and academia. This participation is essential and will favour a country without violence, not only for women, but for the entire population. And that all of us, who now have information about this problem at our fingertips, should also be part of the solution.

Analysis and Discussion

Historically, there has been violence against women and, according to research, it is violence that exerts control over women. Women are taught that they must meet certain standards in order to fit in socially. However, over the years many women have spoken out against discrimination and it is thanks to feminist movements that their status has improved. Nevertheless, inequality, control and access to power between men and women have not yet been overcome.

The research carried out for this article leads us to reflect that this struggle is not based on seeking power over men but over people themselves, over roles, decisions and the sexuality of each person. Olguín and Rojas (2023) mention that this struggle is not about women against men, it is against the machista system that affects us all because, although it may not seem like it, men are also affected by machismo and its consequences such as femicide, situations that are not talked about.

Due to the education that most men receive, they carry a huge mental and social burden as alpha males, family providers, successful and competitive men. Living in a society where they are told how and in what way we have to be as men and as women is a heavy burden, which is why most of the time it is men who are the protagonists of all forms of violence against women, from drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, assaults and above all femicides (paragraphs 1-5).

We are acting badly as a society by reproducing violent masculinities, with men raping women, children, adolescents and the elderly. While each femicide is the result of different causes, it cannot be overlooked that many of the aggressors feel power, possession and authority over women, which are the main reasons why men murder women (Sahuquillo, 2017, paragraph 3).

Thousands of girls, young women and older women live in a constant risk of suffering some kind of violence and to a greater or lesser extent society bears a heavy burden of responsibility for being indifferent to the actions that affect women's physical and emotional integrity.

According to some studies, the most dangerous place for a woman to live is in her own home, unfortunately the majority of femicides are caused by the victim's partner. The person who should care, love, and protect her the most, is instead the one who ends her life (Zraick, 2018, p. 18).

Femicide is foreseeable before it happens, due to experiences of violence manifested in jealousy, insults, economic control, manipulation, physical, sexual or psychological aggression, women tend to remain silent not only if this happens at home but also at work, in the street, on public transport and at school, as spaces conducive to suffering some kind of aggression.

In Mexico, statistics on femicides are increasing year by year. Currently there are 11 femicides a day and unfortunately it has reached a point where they represent only one figure; it has been forgotten that 11 femicides are 11 women and that these statistics are people with dreams, with family and friends. Femicide is dehumanising us, we are just automatically repeating figures. Normalising this crime has led to the need to demand and protest for justice for these women (Reyes, 2023 para. 6).

As a society we must speak out because the victims are mothers, daughters, friends, people with goals in life. As a collective we are turning the other way in the face of the impunity that exists in the country, which is blinded by fear and shame that prevents us from taking actions such as denouncing the crime. Giving the impression that it is better to accept this type of mistreatment.

This form of violence has a direct impact on the victim, the perpetrator, the children and family members of both parties, it is a problem of great magnitude, without leaving aside the social aspect; friends and the community.

The damage caused by femicide can affect the lives of many people, even if the victim does not die, the attempted femicide has permanent consequences.

Experiencing any type of violence tends to limit people's functionality, they may experience emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, inhibition, apathy, low self-esteem and frustration. In the worst cases, when the family loses a family member, the experience of grief is accompanied by the legal process, which is just as emotionally exhausting as it revictimises the family, together with the institutional violence that in most cases occurs, which limits the quality of life of the family members.

Therefore, it is of vital importance to provide them with psychotherapeutic intervention in order to develop the psycho-affective tools that allow them to adequately elaborate their mourning process after the loss of their family member, as well as to overcome the traumatic or stressful situation that the family members may have experienced, especially to rebuild their life project (Olivares et al, 2021, p 19).

It is very important that when a report of violence is made, the Public Prosecutor's Office acts immediately by removing the aggressor from the family environment, as well as preventing a possible femicide, it also guarantees the emotional stability of the rest of the family.

We must remember that it is not right for the next generation to normalise insults, lack of respect towards their partner, substance abuse, much less physical aggression or any type of violence, this is what people learn and normalise, then these attitudes are what they repeat as they grow up and the cycle is reproduced. Children must be taught that violence cannot be a form of love.

Based on all of the above, there is a need to implement public policies and strategies, as well as projects that allow mental health education in schools so that children and adolescents learn about their emotions and feelings and how they can work with them. Having mental health in childhood means having a good development, as well as learning healthy social skills to cope with problems that may arise (United Nations, 2006, p. 6).

It is also important to know that it is not all the work of the State; at home, parents must also contribute and have a respectful education, instil values and above all the responsibility to remain physically, emotionally and spiritually stable in order to provide them with the best possible education.

For its part, the State must also take the necessary measures to support the families of victims of femicide or attempted femicide with professionals in the area of psychology or psychiatry, depending on the need, which not only guarantees the right to justice, but also to timely access to professional treatment (National Human Rights Commission, 2021, p. 28).

The role as psychology professionals in this issue is essential; as we have to actively participate in programmes to prevent violence in schools, support gender equality education both in behaviour and in the expression of feelings; as well as work with young aggressors and bullies, considering that some of them might also have been victimised. As psychology professionals, it is also necessary to be in contact with the aggressor in order to understand the reason for his offence and its possible relation to a disorder.

It is also necessary to consider that within prisons, psychology professionals play a very important role in the diagnostic and therapeutic function with detained offenders, which, to date, is unfortunately not given the importance it deserves. There is a lack of support and visibility so that they can be properly followed up in prisons.

Women who are suffering from violence on a daily basis cannot be left in oblivion. We must raise awareness and provide more support for those who are still being abused in silence, ensuring that they are protected so that they can raise their voices.

Conclusions

Over time, patriarchal thinking has had a negative impact on crimes such as femicide, which causes irreversible damage at the family, social and political levels. At the family level, the psychological, social and biological state of those around the victim is altered, with children and parents being the most affected, and in the case of death, those close to the victim experience depressive disorders, anxiety and post-traumatic stress, among other symptoms.

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On a social level, criminal and aggressive behaviour is produced, as well as revenge, the result of an apprenticeship probably experienced at home. Drug addiction, alcoholism and even bad influences can drag the perpetrator to continue committing the crime of femicide.

From the political point of view, it is necessary to create and approve laws that protect the wellbeing of women or to make effective the laws that already exist, that politicians in general leave corruption aside and focus on what is really important, that they pay attention to the needs that exist such as: improving the country's penitentiary spaces, professional support from doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists, knowing in depth the real history of the perpetrators to understand the reason for their actions and provide them with the best therapeutic treatment that is required, depending on the case.

We have to stop normalising violence in our society, this is a problem that has been going on for many years. Fortunately, many women are already breaking the silence and it is society's duty to inform itself about how it can help and how it directly impacts society as a whole in order to prevent it. We need to be empathetic and not look the other way when it comes to violence such as femicide.

Reaffirming this position also leads us to reflect on the need to educate families, teachers in schools, especially mothers and fathers, who are responsible for providing the axiological and educational references in the family context..

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