
***Social Regulation and
Suicidal Attitude
among elderly Women
in Ilam Province (Iran)***

**Ali Ayaseh
Dr. Abdoallah Dashti
Dr. Ali Asghar Moghadas**

Suicide among Ilam's women is a national tragedy and a major public health problem (AWP, 2001). Indeed, during the past three decades, suicide has come to play a proportionately larger role in women deaths. The incidence of suicide among women in Ilam has increased almost 300% in the past three decades (Ayaseh, 2001).

The suicide among women in Ilam province that is the result of excessive regulation exhibiting coarse social norms. In this society, the women are restricted by external controlling. Then, consequence of further regulation represents important determinants of suicidal attitude; higher patriarchy, double checking of women, imposed marriage.

* M.A of Population and Development at Shiraz University and (UNFPA)

** Assistant Prof. of Anthropology at Shiraz University

*** Assistant Prof. of Sociology at Shiraz University

The intention of study is to identify risky factors related to suicidal attitude in a community of women in Ilam province (of Iran). The main objectives of present study are to report of the characteristics of women attitude toward suicide and explain the factors responsible for producing the high suicidal attitude among representing sample.

Data collection

Data were collected via self-report questionnaires administered by interviewers. Interviewers completed all questionnaires during morning to noon, when homes are generally less stressful. Questionnaires were administered in a controlled environment in the others respective. To maintain confidentiality, no personal information was requested. Each aged woman was assigned a number for the purpose of the study.

Sample

Population in this research is women aged 45 and over who live in Ilam province (of Iran) consists of 21000 women. Sample size in this study is equal to 625. This is a random type of multistage cluster sampling. Demographically, the residence area of population has 410 villages and urban blocks. Each village or block constitutes 30 households. Totally, the area has about 11502 households. At first step, we selected 106 villages and blocks randomly. Within each block and village, the interviewers selected one of 5 households systematically, using a random started and following, throughout the district. From each household, a aged women was interviewed.

Data Analyzing:

Analyzing data was carried out with SPSS software. Results of this research presented in three parts including descriptive explanatory and inferential analyses. In univariate descriptive analysis measures of central tendency and dispersion were applied. In bivariate descriptive analyses comparer means and Pearson correlation were applied. Furthermore, for explanatory analyses, we conducted Eta and regression to indicate the degree of influencing. In inferential analysis, F test was used to test the hypotheses.

Measures and Procedures

Attitude toward Suicide Questionnaire: It was self-indexed to examine woman attitudes toward suicide, consists of 21 multiple-choice questions examining the attitudes regarding suicidal believes and ideation. Many of the items on this instrument were excerpted from

other questionnaires. This scale was as a self-report of the interviewer-administered scale for suicidal attitude and ideation. The total items consist of three options graded according to the intensity of the suicidality and rated on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 to 6. These ratings are then summed to yield a total score, which ranges from one to 21. More items assess characteristics such as wish to die, wish to make a passive suicide attempt, amount of ideation and belief toward suicide. "Item to total item correlation" was used to testing the unidimensionality of items. A low correlation coefficient between response to two items and total scores, suggests that both of them are candidates for exclusion. However, reliability tests for suicidal attitude indicates that the alpha coefficient would not be improved by removal of any of the items that were the total of .781 would be dropped if any item were removed.

Double Checking of Women: This term is defined as social process by which the behavior of women strictly regulated containing the informal coarse forms of social control. In this investigation, it has been emphasized family's ideas, values or attitudes toward regulating behavior of women. For measuring the patriarchy, 11 item considered, for example; "I am under closely chastity accusing" "Men try to protect women from stranger staring" "Women easily became defame" and etc. The total items rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5. These ratings are then summed to yield a total score.

Absolute Patriarchy: For doing this research, at least, it was considered as following indices: "If girls decide by themselves, they are opposed by their parents", "My father or husband consults me in all decisions", "Women obey men without haggling", etc. The total items rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5. These ratings are then summed to yield a total score

Results

The initial matter to note is that the mean score of suicidal attitude that is above the midpoint (3.0) of distribution indicates that the respondents have more positive views on the suicidal attitude. Significant correlation was found between scores of patriarchy and measure of suicidal attitude. Furthermore, results for regression analysis indicates that higher patriarchy accounted for statistically significant portion of the variance in suicidal attitude scores, $R^2=0.255$. It indicates that patriarchy with beta .505 and $P<.000$ was significant predictor of suicidal attitude. In other side, Significant correlation was found between scores of double checking and measure of suicidal attitude, $r= .417$, $P<.000$. Results for regression

analysis indicate that double checking of women accounted 25.5 percent of the variance in suicidal attitude scores, and indicates that double checking with $\beta = .505$ and $P < .000$ was better predictor of suicidal attitude. In relation with analysis of imposed marriage and suicidal attitude, mean analysis shows that imposed married women have higher mean score than others in suicidal attitude. For explanatory analysis, Eta value indicates that imposed marriage has strong influence on suicidal attitude (Eta = .426, $p > .000$).

Conclusion

In the most of studies, frequently emphasis is on the objective dimension of suicide (suicide rate), representing the simplified picture of suicide. Results of these studies are not trustworthy, but the present study investigate the attitude and ideation toward suicide and delivering the substantial picture of social risks of suicide.

In the most studies exhibiting in western emphasis is on Durkheim's egoistic and anomic pattern of suicide, similarly in Iran followed. However, the present study reveals that these types of suicide, at least for women (self burning), is not suitable to make definite statement. Suicide in Ilam province is the result of excessive regulation exhibiting the coarse social norms. prohibition toward women and further patriarchy, despite of having negative beliefs toward suicide, increases the suicidal ideation or tendencies.

On the foundation of this study, it can be said that the Durkheim's theory of suicide isn't answerable. It must be reconstructed or synthesized with new theories to fill the gap among theoretical framework.

Eventually, the study about suicide especially among women is a novel topic requiring further studies. The present study implies the essentiality of conceptualizing, conceiving new idea and deep qualitative studies.