WANA
INSTITUTE

im

Cyberbullying: Online Violence Against Women during the Covid-19 Pandemic, in Irbid Governorate

West Asia and North Africa Institute, October 2021

This policy paper is part of the training programme: "Towards Inclusive Participation of Marginalised Women and Persons with Disabilities in the Social and Economic Life", implemented by the West Asia-North Africa Institute in partnership with IM Swedish Development Partner in the Middle East. The programme aims to provide 20 male and female trainees with the necessary skills and tools to gain support on issues of concern to marginalised women and persons with disabilities by producing policy papers focused on their economic and social inclusion.

The project reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily of the West Asia-North Africa Institute

1. Table of Contents

1 Executive Summary

Nowadays, we live in an era characterised by the spread technology, especially communication technology, and in its forefront are social media sites, which have become an important lifeline in its various fields and a major part of human daily social, cultural, professional and institutional activities[1]. One of the most prominent problems that the society faces in its various segments, including women, is perhaps the so-called phenomenon of ***cyberbullying***. Despite the many advantages the social media provided, it has a downside, and perhaps the most prominent of which is the phenomenon of escalating cyberbullying.

This paper aimed to shed light on cyberbullying through the social media platform Facebook, which was practiced against women during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research aimed to identify the methods of cyberbullying that were practiced against women; its causes, forms and effects during the pandemic, the paper proposed policies that would mitigate the severity of this issue. The methodology that was followed:

1- Reviewing the literature and previous studies that dealt with this aspect, as well as reviewing the Cybercrime Law No. (27) of 2015.
2- Holding a focus group session with a group of 12 women in Irbid governorate who were exposed to cyberbullying through (Facebook) during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3- Holding two semi-structured in-depth interviews with specialists in this field: interviewed Ms. Inam Al-Asha, legal advisor at the Jordan Women's Solidarity Institute, and Ms. Nuha Muhreiz, consultant of the Women's Network for Women's Support.
4- Publishing an electronic questionnaire directed to women in Irbid governorate during the period 6/7/2021 to 16/8/2021, with a response of 87 women.

The paper revealed a set of results, most notably the high incidence of cyberbullying via Facebook during the Covid-19 pandemic, for several reasons, including:

1. Weak controls and laws related to the use of social media sites.
2. Lack of technological awareness of the safe use of social media sites, among women.
3. Lack of awareness of laws and penalties related to cyberbullying.
4. Attacks not being reported for fear of social stigma.

Together, these results reflected on the economic, social and psychological being of women.

The paper presented several policies that need to be put in place to mitigate the effects of cyberbullying on women, particularly during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The most important of which are:

1Ababneh, Nour and Jaradat Abdul Karim. 2021. The effectiveness of short treatment focused on the solution in reducing addiction to social media sites among a sample of Syrian refugee women in Jordan. Hebron University Journal of Research, 16(1), 192-222.

1- A policy to raise societal awareness about the issue of cyberbullying against women during the pandemic, or any crisis.
2- A policy to promote and develop the legal framework to put protection in place.
3- A policy to strengthen institutional and administrative measures related to cyberbullying against women.
4- A policy to devise a preventive approach by including women in crisis and emergency management plans.

2 Key Terminology

- **Social media sites:** "a set of tools that help individuals form virtual communities, giving them many opportunities to interact with a large number of people and keep pace with the world[2]." For the purposes of the study, Facebook was the chosen media because it is a global network with a huge number of users and is the most widespread social media site[3].
- **Violence against women**: "Any sexually motivated violent act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private life.[4]
- **Cyberbullying:** "Every physical or moral harm done through social media, such as insulting, cursing, threatening, exploiting, or impersonating another person, and causing undesirable effects on the victim.[5]"
- **Facebook:** "A site created in (2004), and is considered one of the most widespread social media sites. It has a large number of members who can share comments, photos, videos and articles, and they can interact with other members using like, comment or share.[6]"

3 Introduction

It is normal for the world to witness a change in some aspects of life, but it is uncommon to be exposed to a phenomenon that affects the whole world in unexpected circumstances, as is the case with the Covid-19 pandemic, which pushed the whole world to sudden changes in social, economic, cultural, political and health life patterns. In fact, the whole world had to sound the warning alarms for abiding by the new orders and controls, especially the lockdown. This in turn has left a strong impact on the society similar to the effects of the virus, but on a psychological level.

---

[2] Ababneh, Noor. 2020. The effectiveness of short treatment focused on the solution in reducing addiction to social media sites among a sample of Syrian refugee women. Master's Thesis, Yarmouk University: Jordan.
3 Ababneh, Nour and Jaradat, Abdel Karim. 2021, Ibid.
4 OHCHR, Declaration on Violence Eliminating Violence against Women. 2021
https://www.ohchr.org/AR/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ViolenceAgainstWomen.aspx
5Mohammadi, Fouzia. 2018. The impact of cyberbullying in social media sites on social relations among young people: a field study in the city of Ouargla. Jeel Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 40: 47-55..
6 Ababneh, Nour and Jaradat Abdul Karim. 2021, Ibid.

During such times the social media was able to provide an outlet for its users. Through it, they were able to express their individual and collective responses to the outbreak of the Corona pandemic in two directions; a positive attitude that tries to coexist with and overcome the crisis, and a negative attitude that tries to use the crisis to spread rumours and myths, and sometimes to spread racist, criminal or even different ideological tendencies[7].

According to the Al-Dustour newspaper website, Jordan ranks first in the world in the number of users of social media sites, amounting to 2.7 million users, i.e. 25% of the population, with an estimated number of 5 million and 700 thousand accounts. This is due to the extensive use of the Internet by Jordanians, which may reach up to eight hours a day, and the social media site Facebook is one of the most popular sites in Jordan, especially within the age group of 29 years and less[8].

In recent years, online violence against women has spread widely in light of the widespread technological developments. This has taken a varied range of forms, most notably: extortion, sexual harassment, threats, document collection, harassing messages, exchanging pornographic content, impersonation and human trafficking.

The danger lies in the fact that it uses an extremely wide space, which is the Internet, and that the procedures to control the generalisation of abuse or violation of privacy and the dissemination of private information is not easy. This is in addition to the fact that the laws related to cybercrimes are not known to everyone as they are a relatively a recent topic and the public, especially women, do not know much about it. Also, the cyberspace is renewed constantly with modern technology being issued every day, therefore, it is necessary for national laws and legislation to keep pace with these developments on a regular basis[9].

There are many reasons that motivate the practice of cyberbullying, including: achieving personal benefits and gains, in addition to psychological, family, environmental, political, economic, social and cultural factors, and cultural differences, the difficulty of revealing the true identity of the perpetrator, and fear of scandal that prompts the cover-up of the perpetrators of these acts. Ignorance of the safe use of websites is also considered a major reason for falling prey to cyberbullying. The lack of awareness about dealing with intrusive links and opening them without verifying them, account hacking, as well as a lack of awareness about privacy safeguards, such as using easy-to-access passwords, makes it easy for private accounts to be left open on other devices.[10].

---

7 Social media is a double-edged sword in the era of Corona, DW. 2020.
https://www.dw.com/ar/ Social media is a double-edged sword in the era of Corona /a-53139719
8 Jordan is the first in the world to use social media platforms, Al-Dustour. 2019.
https://www.addustour.com/articles/1068696
9 Cyberbullying against women between societal restrictions and legal mechanisms, Noon Post. 2021.
 https://www.noonpost.com/content/40000
10 Ibrahim, Reham. 2017, The University's Role in Confronting the Risks of Cyberbullying Through Social Networks "An Analytical Study", University Performance Development Journal 5(2)..

On the other hand, there are a number of reasons that make women victims of cyberbullying. **These include: sharing private data with others, not adhering to the protection settings on various social media sites, underestimating the importance of the published information and not being aware of the possibility of its use by others, communicating with strangers and interacting with them, fear of sharing incidence of online violence with trusted family members and friends, submitting to threats from criminals, and fear of reporting to the relevant security authorities [11].**

With regard to the effects of cyberbullying, specialists believe that cyberbullying limits the social relationships of individuals, and makes them tend to resort to isolation and introversion. They become surrounded with feelings of psychological alienation, disappointment, melancholy and sadness, conflict of values, and a sense of marginalisation, despair and frustration. They also suffer from their inability to adapt, inconsistency, duplicity, and incongruity. cyberbullying also reinforces grandiosity and narcissistic behaviours[12].

On the legal level, the Cybercrime Law has been issued since 2013, and it punishes crimes committed by electronic means. By reviewing this law, the researchers found that it did not include a text for punishing cyberbullying against women, but this law is rather referred to in the punishment or prosecution of perpetrators of crimes by electronic means, whose content maybe: blackmailing women through images or forcing them to engage in immoral practices, such as: prostitution, and other behaviours. The law also includes a text that punishes crimes of defamation, [13] slander[14], and contempt[15] committed against any person, male or female, in accordance with Article 11 of the law. The Cybercrime Unit in the Public Security Directorate pursues and follows up any crime committed through social media.

Despite this, research results showed that 47% of female candidates in the recent parliamentary elections in Jordan faced cyberbullying and incitement not to vote for them. The estimated figures indicated that about 37% of Jordanians, especially young people and adolescents, were subjected to cyberbullying[16]. Another study conducted by the Association of the Jordanian Women's Tadamun Institute indicated that one female parliamentarian out of every 3 women parliamentarians who were exposed to bullying reported that they were exposed to it primarily on social media 32% compared to other methods. The study also revealed that 77.8% of them submitted a complaint or a report, and friends and family 34.7% topped the party they complained to, followed by the security centres (the police) at a rate of 31.7%, the judiciary 15%, and the last of which was the media 5.4%. While 22.1% of them never complained or reported, and Tadamun

---

11 Director of Criminal Investigation, Cybercrime Unit, Jerasa.
 https://www.facebook.com/cybercrimesjordan/?_rdc=1&_rdr
12 Director of Criminal Investigation, Cybercrime Unit, Jerasa.
 https://www.facebook.com/cybercrimesjordan/?_rdc=1&_rdr
13 According to lawyer Dr. Saddam Abu Azzam, executive director of Lawyers Without Borders, it means: "Attribution of a certain trait to a person, such as: You are a thief, you are an embezzler..."..
14Abu Azzam, Saddam, Ibid, means: "Sending phrases or words such as swearing or cursing to another person.".
15Abu Azzam, Saddam, Ibid, meaning: "Any slander or slander that takes place in a face-to-face and public manner.".
16 The cyberbullying epidemic in Jordan is knocking on the doors of the courts, independent Arabia. 2020.
https://www.independentarabia.com/node/171651

Institute indicated that 28% of women who were exposed to cyberbullying were forced to deliberately reduce their visibility on the internet[17].

Statistics from the Cybercrime Unit of the Criminal Investigation Directorate at the Public Security Directorate show a huge increase in the number of reported cybercrimes each year, as the recorded cybercrime cases in Jordan during 2020 reached more than 9,500 cases, while in 2019 the number of recorded cases was 7,500, indicating an increase in cybercrimes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Cybercrime Unit believes that the number of crimes that do not reach them is relatively high, due to the sensitive nature of these topics, which hinders women from reporting them in most cases. Another reason is the ignorance of the possibility of legal protection for women if they file a complaint with the relevant authorities[18].

4 Discussion of results

After analysing the information and data from its primary and secondary sources, the paper concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic contributed to the rise of cyberbullying cases against women. This is due to the nature of the changes necessitated by the pandemic in various aspects of life and the accompanying transformation of many jobs and tasks into the electronic remote form, in addition to the leisure time left by the pandemic for some people during the lockdown period. In turn, it increased the percentage of social media use, thus increasing the chance of the occurrence of the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

The results also revealed the following:

4.1 The reality of online violence targeting women via Facebook

The judicial and legal jurisprudence stated that: "Any behaviour that would harm or offend the right of any person, whether to privacy or to freedom of opinion and expression, or any behaviour that threatens people's lives or constitutes extortion for them is considered as cyberbullying. Accordingly, forms of cyberbullying are developed and renewed according to the use of these social media sites."

Among the most common forms of cyberbullying are:
- Using a fictitious name other than the person's real name.
- Requesting images illegally and using them in illegal ways.
- Illegal audio recordings.
- Defrauding women through marriage promises and getting their money.
- Theft of data, personal files and e-mail.

---

17 Cybercrime has forced many women to deliberately reduce their visibility on the Internet, Jordanian Women's Tadamun
http://haqqi.info/ar/haqqi/media/sigi-cybercrimes-has-forced-many-women-deliberately-reduce-their-online-appearance
18   Cybercrime, Justice Center for Legal Aid.
https://www.jcla-org.com/ar/subcategory/cyber-crimes

- Threatening to publish private data for the purposes of sexual exploitation.
- Bank information theft.
- Defamation, slander, and contempt.
- Verbal messages of violence.
- Gestures/emojis of violence.
- Economic exploitation and unpaid work deception.
- Commenting on women's personal posts in a rude manner that includes harmful, negative, critical and frustrating comments.
- Spreading rumours.
- Hacking accounts.

Cyberbullying has many effects, including the following:
- **The social impact**: It is represented in the negative societal stereotype that emerges regarding women's reputation when exposed to any form of cyberbullying and the short and long-term consequences thereof.
- **The economic impact**: represented in the high financial cost resulting from the total number of movements by the electronically abused woman during the process of moving between the competent authorities to file a complaint, as well as the possibility of women who have been subjected to cyberbullying to leave their work because of the social stigma.
- **The psychological impact**: It is represented by psychological pressures and psychological disturbances, in addition to the feelings of anxiety, tension and fear that women experience when they are exposed to cyberbullying.

4.2 Problem Tree[19]

```
┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ Psychological│  │ Social impact│  │  Economic    │  │ Social media │
│   impact     │  │resulting from│  │  impact of   │  │ has become   │
│ manifested in│  │  the social  │  │   women      │  │ one of the   │
│ women being  │  │stigma towards│  │ refusing or  │  │   tools for  │
│ exposed to   │  │ women who    │  │not going to  │  │  practicing  │
│ fear, anxiety│  │ are          │  │ work because │  │cyberbullying │
│  and stress  │  │cyberbullied, │  │  of being    │  │              │
│              │  │  in          │  │ threatened   │  │              │
│              │  │ addition to  │  │              │  │              │
│              │  │holding them  │  │              │  │              │
│              │  │ responsible  │  │              │  │              │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
```

┌────────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────────┐
│ Women were subjected to│   │   │
│   several forms of   │   │ Hacking the personal │
│cyberbullying, ranging │   │ privacy of Facebook users│
│ from (verbal, gestures,│   │   │
│ images, bullying,   │   │   │
│   hacking,   │   │   │
│ deception, threats...) │   │   │
└────────────────────────┘   └────────────────────────┘

┌──┐
│ **Cyberbullying: Online Violence Against Women during the │
│   Covid-19 Pandemic in Irbid Governorate**   │
└──┘

```
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐
│  Weak    │ │  Poor    │ │   Low    │ │  Weak    │ │Spending a│
│enforcement│ │monitoring│ │ cultural │ │ controls │ │long time │
│  of the  │ │and follow-up│ │and social│ │and laws on│ │using social│
│cybercrime│ │by parents│ │awareness │ │ the use  │ │  media   │
│   law    │ │for their │ │ in the   │ │of social │ │ platform │
│          │ │ children │ │ use of   │ │  media   │ │(Facebook).│
│          │ │while using│ │social media│ │ platform │ │          │
│          │ │social media│ │platform │ │(Facebook).│ │          │
│          │ │ platform │ │(Facebook)│ │          │ │          │
│          │ │(Facebook)│ │          │ │          │ │          │
└──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘
```

[19] A methodology to identify the problem, its causes and effects, where the trunk is the main problem, and the roots represent the causes of the basic problem, while the branches represent its effects.
https://sswm.info/ar/taxonomy/term/2647/problem-tree-analysis

4.3 Motives behind practicing cyberbullying against women on Facebook during the Covid-19 pandemic:

1. Spending more time using the social media platform Facebook

Since the outset of the pandemic and up to this day, the world is still suffering from the pandemic and its effects, and with the lockdown procedures and the commitment not to leave homes, social media, specifically Facebook, became an outlet for people's communication with each other, and it was not only used to interact and share developments, but it has also become a way to study, learn and work remotely online.

The above is considered positive from a health viewpoint because it helps avoid the spreading of the corona virus, but on the other hand, negative issues have emerged through the excessive use of Facebook. This is because some individuals used Facebook for disseminating their negative energy, which resulted from the long lockdown during the pandemic. They targeted the groups that are less familiar with the proper way to use Facebook (especially women). Consequently, women were exposed to various forms of cyberbullying, such as: bullying, fraud, extortion and data theft, either to achieve personal motives or to exploit women and exercise male chauvinist powers over them.

2. Weak controls and laws regulating the use of Facebook (protection)

With the spread of social media networks and the continuous rushing to be part of this virtual world, now the world has a huge number of Facebook users. This in turn made it necessary for countries to establish controls and laws for its use. This was done in order to find out the violators and hold them accountable. To confirm this, one of the participants, who was affected by cyberbullying on Facebook said: *"The usage controls on Facebook are not sufficient to stop the abuser from the bullying he practices, for retaliatory purposes or to infringe on safe spaces of the users, where in this case it is necessary to raise and tighten the level of controls and enact new laws that constitute a strict deterrent to abusers."*

3. Low cultural and technological awareness of Facebook use

Societal and technological awareness of technological means of protection, as well as awareness of the existence of entities and institutions specialised in cybercrime, contribute to reducing the issue of cyberbullying.

The majority of women who were subjected to cyberbullying through Facebook refrained from revealing what they were exposed to. This stems from their fear of the social stigma and the stereotype that will be attached to them, or for fear that the aggressor might share the stolen information/data, or publishing their private information about their lives and work.

Mostly, cases of cyberbullying against women start through Facebook as a result of the low cultural and technological awareness in the proper way of using it and the means of protecting privacy, in addition to the difficult complaint mechanisms and follow-up. Female participants in the focus

group discussion stressed that *"the difficulty of follow-up procedures of the complaint after its submission, leads them to drop the case, for fear of social stigma due to their frequent visits to the specialised authorities."*

4.4 The effects resulting from practicing cyberbullying against women on Facebook during the Covid-19 pandemic:

Hacking women's personal privacy

Hacking the privacy and safe space begins as soon as women add new people without prior knowledge of them, or through account hacking, so that the abuser begins to enter the lives of women and learn about their opinions, points of view, and their preferences and dislikes by sharing these details from their private lives, or through direct communication in some applications, such as side chats with the so-called "chat applications". This enables the abuser to easily access the list of friends, and consequently start the threats. Most participants did not have real awareness of how to deal with the abuser and prevent penetrating their privacy.

1- Economic effects:

It is represented in the increase in unemployment among women, as they leave work as a result of their exposure to socio-cultural stigma, in addition to the abuser's request for large sums of money in exchange for not publishing their photos and information.

2- Social effects:

It is represented in the negative stereotype against them, which blames them for being the reason for being subjected to such cyberbullying.

3- Psychological effects:

It is represented by women living in a state of psychological pressure and feeling stress, fear and anxiety from using these sites.

5 Options and Alternatives

Based on the analysis of the current situation of the phenomenon of cyberbullying against women on Facebook, particularly during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of general policies have been proposed to contribute to alleviating the phenomenon of cyberbullying in general and the severity of its effects on women in particular, in addition to improving the conditions of women during crises. The proposed policies are as follows:

First: A policy to raise societal awareness about the phenomenon of cyberbullying against women during the pandemic.

Objective:

To increase the awareness of the local communities about the dangers of cyberbullying against women.

Programmes:

- Implementation of awareness programmes by the Ministry of Information for all segments of local communities about the risks arising from the practice of cyberbullying against women.
- Implementation of media campaigns in all different media (written, audio and visual) aimed at highlighting the seriousness and effects of cyberbullying against women.
- Implementation of specialised training workshops on securing internet privacy in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Development and the Cybercrime Unit.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Contribute to promoting the safe use of social media by the largest segment of society.
- Reducing the recourse to judicial measures resulting from the unsafe use of social media sites.
- Quickly detecting abusers on social media.
- Contribute to encouraging citizens to follow the legal methods in reporting cases of cyberbullying.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The difficulty of society accepting to engage in awareness-raising programmes and campaigns regarding cyberbullying.
- The long period of time to bring about a change in the society's culture regarding the safe use of social media sites.
- The financial costs necessary to implement the campaigns.
- The intensified efforts needed to mobilise the community to ensure the effectiveness of these programmes.

Second: A public policy to promote and develop the legal framework by putting protection in place.

Objective: To adopt comprehensive political legislative frameworks to address the phenomenon of cyberbullying against women.

Programmes:

- To develop legislation to criminalise all forms of cyberbullying against women by the House of Representatives.
- Review the penalties for the unsafe use of social media by the House of Representatives, and tightening their penalties, especially regarding the phenomenon of cyberbullying against women.
- Develop legislation related to cyberbullying by the House of Representatives to ensure the confidentiality of whistle-blowers, witnesses, and experts.
- Increase the electronic content of laws related to cybercrimes, in cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Information and the Cybercrime Unit.

Policy Opportunities and Advantages:

- Achieve public and private deterrence for perpetrators of cyberbullying crimes.
- Contribute to alleviating the stereotype about refusing to report cases of cyberbullying.
- Help to ensure ways and means of prevention from cyberbullying crimes.
- The possibility of networking and partnerships with civil society institutions and women's networks at the local, regional, and international levels.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The time period required to amend legislation in accordance with the constitutional framework.
- The need to provide specialised cadres to deal with cases of cyberbullying in institutions related to electronic crimes.

Third: A policy to strengthen institutional and administrative measures related to cyberbullying against women.

Objective: To create national institutions capable of confronting all forms of cyberbullying against women.

Programmes:

- Providing a set of secure channels by institutions concerned with women's affairs and international organisations, such as: (digital platforms, hotline) in order to follow up and announce complaints regarding cyberbullying against women.
- Reviewing public plans and policies concerned with the digital space and focusing research on the phenomenon of cyberbullying against women by research centres and institutes dealing with women's issues.

- Implementation of local campaigns by local councils in the governorates to raise awareness of the penalties for perpetrators of cyberbullying against women, and the parties that can be resorted to if women are exposed to cyberbullying.
- The Cybercrime Unit should adopt standard procedures manuals to simplify all procedures related to cyberbullying in all judicial authorities.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Facilitating procedures for all institutions related to dealing with cyberbullying cases.
- Highly efficient institutional responses in dealing with cyberbullying.
- Unifying references and integrating institutional work from all parties related to cyberbullying.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The financial cost and the human cadres necessary to implement these programmes.
- The period of time required to coordinate efforts and unify the references between institutions related to cyberbullying.

Fourth: A policy to adopt a pre-emptive approach by including women in crisis and emergency management plans

Objective: To mitigate the severity of cybercrime committed against women during crises.

Programmes:

- The inclusion of women in the national committees for crisis management by the House of Representatives.
- Institutions concerned with women's affairs should evaluate and follow up the complaints and response system related to women's issues.
- International organisations should implement psychological and social support programmes for victims of cyberbullying through partnerships between psychological and social specialists to promote the mental health of women who have been subjected to bullying.
- The Ministry of Social Development and international organisations should activate the role of civil society institutions and women's networks in crisis management plans.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Creating crisis plans that are sensitive to issues of cyberbullying against women.
- Reducing the negative effects of humanitarian crises.
- Strengthening real partnership programmes between official institutions, civil society and women's networks.

<u>Policy implementation challenges:</u>

- Weak readiness of official institutions to integrate issues of cyberbullying into crisis plans.
- The difficulty of developing civil society partnership programmes for managing plans and crises.
- Crisis plans are often built on the idea of solid security and do not take precautionary measures into account.

This paper aims to mitigate the impact of crises on women, while taking the Covid-19 pandemic as a model. Therefore, the research team relied on the standard scale of analysing the advantages, opportunities, and challenges in implementing each policy separately. It is also based on the analysis of the results of a group of secondary sources in addition to in-depth interviews, a focus group session and the results of an electronic questionnaire.

Thus, the optimal alternatives suggested by the paper are to adopt:
1. **A policy to raise societal awareness about the phenomenon of cyberbullying against women during the pandemic**.
2. **A policy for strengthening institutional and administrative measures related to cyberbullying against women.**

If the competent authorities put their efforts in improving the situation of women during crises and tightening its control over social media, this will be reflected in a noticeable way on improving the situation of women during crises and mitigating the phenomenon of cyberbullying and its effects on women, and thus contributing to achieving sustainable development goals represented by SDG 5 for gender equality, and SDG 17 for forming partnerships to achieve the goals.

6 Annex

A questionnaire was published about: "cyberbullying against women through social media platforms in Irbid Governorate" during the time period from 6-7-2021 to 16-8-2021, and the target sample was a segment of women from Irbid governorate; 87 respondents.
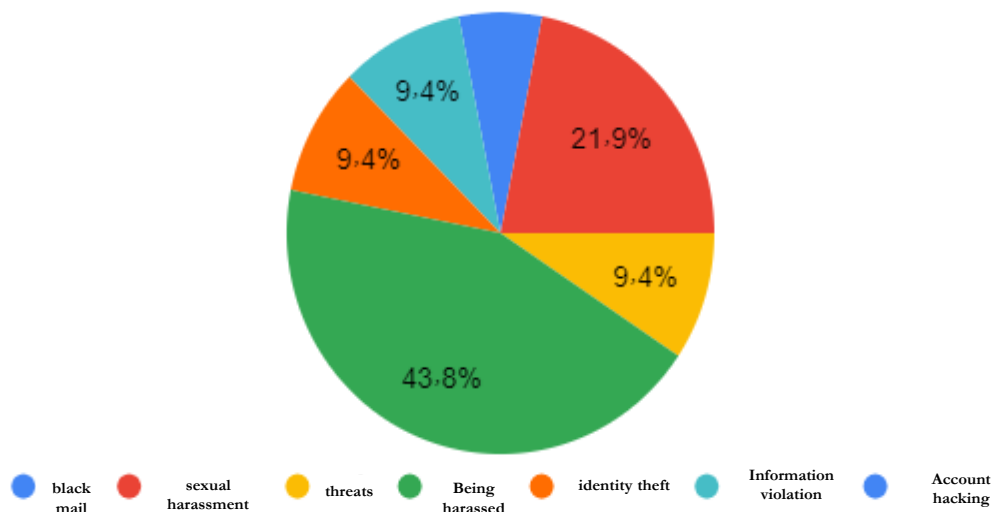
Here are the results:

- **Percentage of women who were subjected to cyberbullying during Covid-19 pandemic**

Yes ● | ● **No**
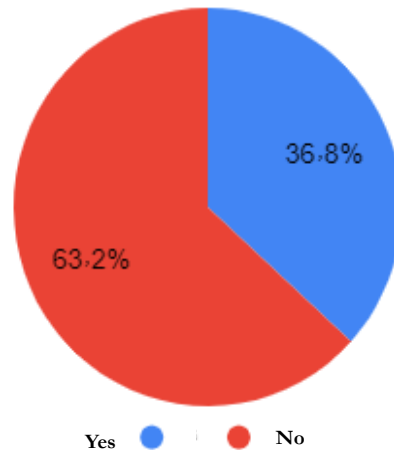
The previous figure shows that 36.8% of the women who participated in the questionnaire answered that they had been exposed to cyberbullying through social media sites during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- The form of cyberbullying experienced by women during the Covid-19 pandemic

● black mail　● sexual harassment　● threats　● Being harassed　● identity theft　● Information violation　● Account hacking
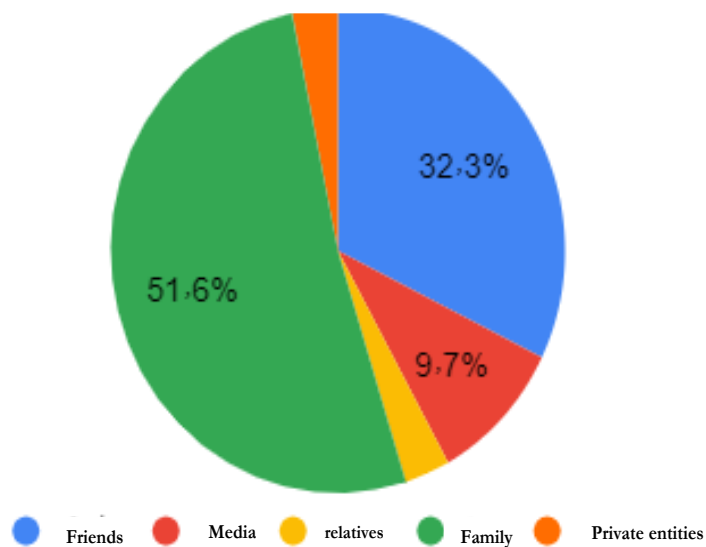
The previous figure shows the percentage of women who indicated that they had been exposed to cyberbullying, the highest percentage of them have experienced cyberbullying in the form of harassment, followed by sexual harassment.

17

**-Knowledge of the existence of government agencies specialised in cyberbullying**
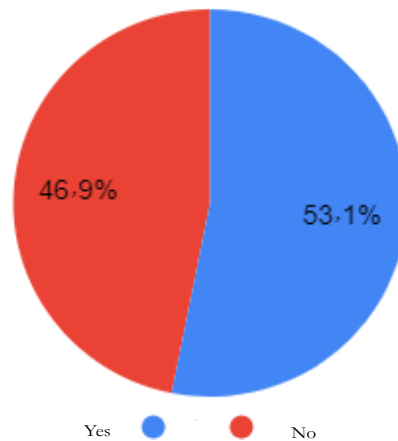
The previous figure shows that 46.9% of women do not have knowledge of government and specialised agencies in cyberbullying in Irbid Governorate.

-Alternative methods/entities that women resort to when exposed to cyberbullying during the Covid-19 pandemic in Irbid Governorate.

The previous figure shows that 51.6% of women turn to their family when exposed to cyberbullying.

-The relationship between the Covid-19 pandemic and the phenomenon of cyberbullying
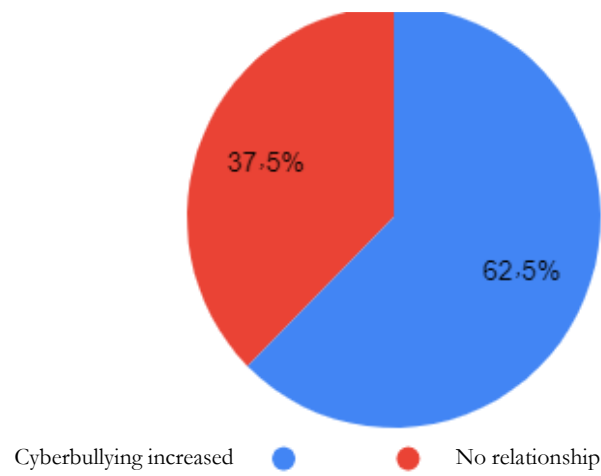
The previous figure shows that 37.5% of women confirmed that there is a relationship between the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise in cyberbullying.