



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY
Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate Programme

Understanding Gender in Society: Concepts and Trends

Unit 5

Gender-based Violence

**Units of Certificate in Understanding Gender in Society:
Concepts and Trends**

Unit 1: Gender Debates and Dialogues

Unit 2: Roots of Gender Discrimination

Unit 3: Mainstreaming Gender

Unit 4: Gender at the Workplace

Unit 5: Gender-based Violence

Unit 6: Gender Mainstreaming within Institutions

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Introduction

Unit 5 is about violence, an issue that is increasingly being discussed more openly and in different fora, both national and international. Traditionally treated as a private affair, and ignored by communities and government policies, violence recently gained greater public acknowledgement as a concern of economic development, as well as a major public health and human rights concerns of epidemic proportions.

The terms 'violence' and 'violence against women' are frequently used interchangeably in literature and by advocates. The term violence refers to violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture. violence highlights the gender dimension of these types of acts. As we have seen in previous units, there is a relationship between females' subordinate status in society and their increased vulnerability to violence.

This unit addresses concepts such as violence and different forms of violence within the private and public domains and its roots and causes.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand violence in the context of gender dynamics;
- Adopt a more holistic approach when addressing the issue of violence;
- Learn about the different forms of violence; and

5.1 Defining gender-based violence

Defining violence

Any comprehensive analysis of gender-based violence should begin by defining violence in general. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as:

“The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.” (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002)

In the definition, WHO associates intentionality with the committing of the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. The inclusion of the word “power”, in addition to the phrase “use of physical force”, broadens the nature of a violent act and expands the conventional understanding of violence to include those acts that result from a power relationship, including threats and intimidation. The “use of power” also serves to include neglect or acts of omission, in addition to the more obvious violent acts of commission. Thus, “the use of physical force or power” also includes neglect and all types of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, as well as suicide and other self-abusive acts (Krug, 2002).

Violence (GBV) differs from other types of violence wherein the aggressor attacks because of the gender of the victim. It encompasses physical, sexual and psychological force, including coercion, or the threat of force to accomplish a goal. Men, women and children are all vulnerable to fall prey to this "gendered form" of violence. Women by and large are more vulnerable to gendered forms of violence or live under its threat. Justification for violence frequently evolves from social norms about the “proper” roles

and responsibilities of men and women and the regulation of women’s sexuality. That is why the gender-based violence is often understood as Violence against Women (VAW).

Any act of violence 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 occurring in public or private life.

(UN General Assembly, 1994)

Throughout the world, violence against women and girls is perpetrated within marriages, families and relationships by husbands, intimate partners and relatives; within communities by strangers and traditional leaders; in the workplace; across international borders as women are trafficked for sex and labour; and as a tool of war by military forces.

Violence also affects entire families and communities and causes the cycle of violence to continue into new generations; it perpetuates the continued false belief that men are superior to women. More importantly VAW has a profound impact on development as it perpetuates poverty when women cannot work to their full capacity, have restricted mobility, low health, limited access to information and other resources, including education.

The gender-based violence can be likened to a wheel (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 2011). The central point, power and control, are the reasons for violence. Violence is the means for all behaviours such as sexual abuse, controlling money, blaming, using children, making threats, isolation and emotional abuse. The wheel is held together by violence.



As has been illustrated, many forms of media are used to propagate violence against women. Males making up the majority of the perpetrators of violence use the privileges of their sex that entails control of the household and the woman, thereby reinforcing socially held stereotypes of the role of men and women.

In a move to assert male superiority and to almost mark a man's possession over 'his woman', she might even get isolated from the rest of the world. In such situations, the woman generally undergoes extreme emotional and economic abuse and may even be taunted, in public. She is also not allowed access to money, although it might be her earnings. Children are affected by such abusive relationships among their parents. In case the partners are separated, there can be threats of taking the children away and use of permitted visitation to harass the woman. Thus, children become an integral part of this vicious wheel.

Threats, intimidation and coercions are common tactics. When women pick up the courage to raise these issues, they are usually trivialised she is made to believe that she is seeing more into situation than exists. In some conservative societies, she is told by her parents and other family members to bear such abuse since she is subservient to her husband and it is his right to do so.

5.1.1 Roots of violence

Violence is an ancient and universal problem, which occurs in every cultural and social group. Its roots are embedded in the inequalities of power distribution that lie in the relationship between men and women. The patriarchal norms and structures force a woman into a role of subservience and dependence. The right of every man to control the female body is a cornerstone of patriarchy. It is expressed by the efforts to control

pregnancy and childbirth in women, and to define female health care. Patriarchy fosters the image of a masculine warrior like male; hence, masculinity includes not only a tendency for violence but also all the other characteristics of a warrior, such as aggression, control, emotional reserve, rationality and sexual potency.

Patriarchy in India is supported by the ancient religious sanctions, or the *Shastras*, which perpetuates that the woman's goal in life should be the procreation of male descendants. At the same time it professes that women have an uncontrollable sexuality and an inherently "weak and evil" character, due to which she has to be under the authority of men throughout her life. Rule of man or patriarchy sustains this violence, in its role of protector of women and the less powerful in the family.

Under the English common law, a husband had complete legal authority to control his wife through physical force. The expression "rule of thumb" actually refers to the English common law that allowed a husband to physically attack his wife, provided he did not use anything thicker than his thumb.

Gender-based Violence may also be linked to the lack of access and control that women have over economic resources within the family, forcing her to a state of economic, social and legal dependence. The Note Bank below highlights the factors that perpetuate domestic violence.

Factors that perpetuate domestic violence

Cultural:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender – specific socialization • Cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles • Expectations of roles within relationships • Belief in the inherent superiority of males • Values that give men propriety rights over women and girls • Notion of the family as the private sphere and under male control • Customs of marriage (bride price/dowry) • Acceptability of violence as a means to resolve conflict
Economic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's economic dependence on men • Limited access to cash and credit • Discriminatory laws regarding inheritance, property rights, use of communal lands, and maintenance after divorce or widowhood • Limited access to employment in formal and informal sectors • Limited access to education and training for women
Legal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser legal status of women either by written law and/or by practice • Laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance • Legal definitions of rape and domestic violence • Low levels of legal literacy among women • Insensitive treatment of women and girls by police and judiciary
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under – representation of women in power, politics, the media and in the legal and medical professions • Domestic violence not taken seriously • Notions of family being private beyond control of the state • Risk of challenge to status quo/religious laws • Limited organisation of women in organized political force • Limited participation of women in organisational political system

(Lawyer's Collective Women's Rights Initiative, 2009)

5.1.2 Effects of violence upon women

It has been recognised that violence against women is a violation of the basic human rights of women. It should be recognised that violence against women also has economic and social costs. While direct costs can be considerable, the opportunity costs of violence against women can also be high.

Violence against women has serious consequences on their physical and mental health. Abused women are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, eating problems and sexual dysfunctions. Violence may also have profound—direct and indirect effects—on a woman’s reproductive, mental and physical health. For instance:

- Unwanted pregnancies and restricted access to family planning information and contraceptives.
- Unsafe abortion or injuries sustained during an illegal abortion after an unwanted pregnancy.
- Complications from frequent, high-risk pregnancies and lack of follow-up care.
- Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Consequences such as HIV/AIDS or unplanned pregnancies may in themselves, act as risk factors catalysing further aggression and forming a cycle of abuse.
- Persistent gynaecological problems.
- Mental health problems such as lack of self-confidence and motivation, reckless behaviour leading to alcoholism or having many sexual partners or attempt to suicide.
- Physical pain and injuries such as broken bones, sexual health problems and sometimes even death as consequences of varied acts of aggression upon them.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (Articles 1, 2 and 7) speak about equality in dignity, rights and freedoms and equal protection against any discrimination. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, enjoins all States party to the Covenant to guarantee rights enunciated in it without discrimination of any kind. It also means that States will ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights established in the Covenant. The right to fair conditions of work is also enshrined in Article 7 of the Covenant. Article 11 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) all takes into account violence and equality in employment. The 1995 United Nations’ Women’s Conference in Beijing drew up a Platform of Action of objectives and actions towards greater equality and opportunity With a view to protect and promote the human rights of women and girl-children as an integral part of universal human rights.

(UN General Assembly, 1948)

5.2 Forms of violence

Gender-based violence manifests itself in many different forms. Women and girls are at risk of different forms of violence at all ages, from prenatal sex selection before they are born to abuse of widows and elderly women. While sexual violence affects women of all ages, the changing nature of women and girls' relationships (with family members, peers, authorities, etc.) and the different environments (at home, in school, at work, within the community, etc.) in which they spend time expose women and girls to specific forms of violence during each phase of their life (UN Women, 2013).

Some of these are confined to one stage in the lifecycle, some continue into subsequent stages. These abuses are experienced in the context of additional oppressions based on race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity, type of labor being performed, level of education, class position, disability, or immigration/refugee status. The chart below shows different forms of violence that women may face at different stages of their lives.

Fear of retribution, powerlessness, lack of support, breakdown of public services, and the dispersion of families and communities—all act as barriers to reporting and the real magnitude of violence against women is difficult to determine.

Types of Gender Violence throughout a Woman's Life	
Phase	Type of Violence
Prenatal	Prenatal sex selection resulting in foeticide, effects of battering during pregnancy on birth outcomes, coerced pregnancy (rape during war)
Infancy	Female infanticide; physical, emotional sexual and psychological abuse, differential access to food and medical care
Childhood	Genital mutilation; incest and sexual abuse; child marriage, child prostitution, pornography, differential access to food, medical care, and education;

Adolescence	Dating and courtship violence, economically coerced sex, sexual abuse in the workplace, rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, acid throwing; adulthood economically coerced sex (e.g. school girls having sex with “sugar daddies” in return for school fees);
Reproductive	Abuse of women by intimate partners, marital rape, dowry abuse and murders, partner homicide, psychological abuse, incest sexual abuse in the workplace, sexual harassment, rape, abuse of women with disabilities; forced prostitution and pornography; trafficking in women; forced pregnancy, forced abortion, partner homicide
Old Age	Suicide” or homicide of widows for economic reasons; sexual, physical and psychological abuse

(Heise, 1994; WHO, 1997)

5.2.1 Domestic and intimate violence

Widely prevalent but largely invisible in the public domain, domestic violence is an intentional pattern of behaviour that includes physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse but is not limited to threats, intimidation, isolation and/or financial control to harm and take power and control over another person in the context of a dating, family, roommate or caretaker relationship.

NOTE BANK**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

The practice is mostly carried out by traditional circumcisers, who often play other central roles in communities, such as attending childbirths. However, more than 18% of all FGM is performed by health care providers, and the trend towards medicalization is increasing. It may be noted that the procedure has no health benefits for girls and women.

Female genital mutilation is classified into four major types:

1. Clitoridectomy: Partial or total removal of the clitoris (a small, sensitive and erectile part of the female genitals) and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris).
 2. Excision: Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (the labia are "the lips" that surround the vagina).
 3. Infibulation: Narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris.
 4. Other: All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area.
- Procedures can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.
 - More than 125 million girls and women alive today have been cut in the 29 countries in Africa and Middle East where FGM is concentrated.
 - FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15.

FGM is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children. The practice also violates a person's rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death. (WHO, 2014)

Gender-based violence is a common occurrence across all social strata and can take various forms. It can be:

- **Physical violence**

- Direct violence, ranging from unwanted physical contact as punching, mutilation, burns, use of arms, domestic incarceration to rape and murder.
- Indirect violence, including destruction of objects, throwing objects near the victim, harm to animals or pets of the victim

Some religious texts sanction physical violence as a necessary form of discipline or chastisement.

- **Mental/emotional violence**

- Verbal threats of physical violence to the victim, the self, or others including children, ranging from explicit, detailed and impending to implicit and vague as to both content and time frame
- Verbal violence, including threats, insults, put-downs, attacks
- Non-verbal threats, including gestures, facial expressions, body postures humiliation, exploitation, intimidation psychological degradation, , deprivation of freedom and rights

- **Economic/social abuse**

- Controlling victim's money and other economic resources, preventing victim from seeing friends and relatives, actively sabotaging victim's social relationships and isolating victim from social contacts.

Domestic violence is maintained by societal and cultural attitudes, institutions and laws that often do not identify this type of violence as wrong. It knows no boundaries in terms of socio-economic status, religion, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, immigration status or gender. While domestic violence occurs in all communities and the pattern of abusive behaviour is often universal, it is important to note that abusive tactics, barriers to services, subjective experience of abuse, criminal justice response, and level of family and community support can vary based on socio-economic status, religion, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, immigration status or gender.

Domestic Violence—Myths and Facts

- MYTH: Domestic Violence is rare. Most violence against women is perpetuated by strangers
- FACT: Domestic Violence is very common the world over, including in India. Women are far more likely to be assaulted by intimate family members than by strangers
- MYTH: If the abuse was that bad, the victim would just leave.
- FACT: Victims stay in abusive relationships for a variety of reasons. They include fear for physical safety, no place to go, no access to money, hope that the violence will stop, etc. Studies show that victims leave an average of seven times before they leave for good, and that victims are more likely to be killed or seriously injured at the time of their departure.
- MYTH: Domestic violence only happens in poor, under-educated families.
- FACT: Domestic violence can happen to anyone. It is not limited to any one socio economic class, educational background, social class or sexual orientation. Studies reveal that battering occurs among all types of families and relationships, regardless of income, profession, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational level or race. However, lower income victims and abusers are over-represented in calls to the police and shelters because of a lack of other resources.
- MYTH: Alcohol abuse causes domestic violence, not the abuser. Perpetrators of domestic violence are mentally ill
- FACT: Although there is a high correlation between alcohol/drugs and battering, it is not the cause of abuse. Only a small percentage of perpetrators suffer from mental or substance abuse problems. Batterers use drinking as one of many excuses for their behaviour. Stopping the abusers' drinking will not stop the violence. Both battering and substance abuse need to be addressed separately, as overlapping, yet independent problems.
- MYTH: Domestic violence only includes physical abuse, such as hitting, slapping, biting, pushing, etc. Other forms of abuse don't hurt the victim as much.
- FACT: Physical abuse is only one of the many types of abuse that is equally harmful. Domestic violence includes emotional abuse, verbal abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, and social abuse/ isolation. Many victims report that emotional abuse is more devastating than physical harm.
- MYTH: The problem is not really the abuse of women; it is spousal abuse. Women are just as violent as men.
- FACT: Only about 5% of the perpetrators are women

(Campus Advocacy Network, 2014; Lawyer's Collective Women's Rights Initiative, 2009)

Many incidents of domestic violence go unreported due to the shame and fear associated with such violence. Often, violence is accepted by the victims themselves as appropriate retribution for minor mistakes or lapses—not cleaning the house properly, arguing back, etc.

The United Nations Committee on Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its recommendation no. 12 has recommended that state parties should act to protect women against violence of any kind. The Vienna Accord of 1994, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (1995) have also acknowledged it. The Government of India's Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 also identifies domestic violence as a human rights issue and a serious deterrent to development. The Act defines domestic violence as:

“Any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent in cases it:

a) Harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or

b) Harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce her or any other persons related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security; or

c) Has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any persons related to her by any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or (b); or

d) Otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.”

5.2.2 Sexual violence and harmful traditional practices

5.2.2.1 Sexual Violence

Both men and women often use sexual violence as a tool to 'control' persons in less powerful positions. The main motive for this type of violence is to dehumanise and humiliate the victim to such an extent that they live in constant fear of the abuser. Again, sexual violence cuts across all cultures, castes, classes and ages. Sexual harassment, rape, sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, incest and eve teasing are some of the terms that are associated with this kind of violence.

Rape: Sexual assault resulting in rape is the most feared form of violence; it straddles both the private and the public spheres. Women activists define rape as any kind of sexual activity that is committed against the will of a woman.

Marital rape, also known as spousal rape, refers to non-consensual sex in which the perpetrator is the victim's spouse. Once widely condoned or ignored by law, spousal rape is now repudiated by international conventions and increasingly criminalised.

The traditional view is that it is impossible for a man to rape his wife and that somehow, in taking our marriage vows, women have abdicated any say over their own bodies and sexuality. The myth that women have basically denied themselves the right to say 'no', is still prevalent amongst wives as much as amongst their husbands. A wife being raped will often question her right to refuse intercourse with her husband, though she may realise that legally it now constitutes rape, there are many reasons which prevent her from perceiving marital rape as such:

- see it possibly as a communication problem (did I make it clear enough that I did not want intercourse)
- see it as an act for which the man is not fully responsible due to his nature (men have a biological need to have sex and if there is a woman next to them in bed when they are in the mood they just cannot help it)
- see it as a misunderstanding (although I told him I didn't want to, maybe I gave him the wrong signals somehow)
- religious issues which question the right to refuse intercourse (I have got to submit myself to him and accept his will above mine as my Lord and Master). (Hidden Hurt, 2014)

NOTE BANK

Mukhtar Mai, a rape victim in search of Justice

On 3 March 2005, the Lahore High Court Multan Bench shocked the whole nation with its verdict on the case of a young woman, Mukhtar Mai, who was raped. The court freed five men convicted of rape by the Anti-Terrorist Court. According to the judges, the evidence failed to prove that gang rape actually took place and the counsel for the victim could not prove that a Panchayat was even remotely implicated in this dreadful act. The 'learned' judges also criticised the police for incorrect investigation and inefficiency.

Mukhtar was working in her house, when the Panchayat ordered her father to bring her to them to "apologise" on behalf of her brother who was accused of having an affair with the daughter of a rich, feudal family. When she was brought to the Panchayat, the village elders ordered her to be raped in order to restore the 'pride' and 'honour' of the family who brought the case.

This case caught the attention of the international media and human rights organizations, which forced the government to take action against the accused and the members of the Panchayat. The Anti-Terrorist Court passed a death sentence on the six accused.

(Manzoor, 2005)

Child sexual abuse: According to the definition provided by Driver and Droisen, child sexual abuse is “any sexual behaviour directed at a person less than sixteen years of age without that person’s informed consent.”

Child sexual abuse includes:

- An adult exposing his/her genitals to a child and persuading him/her to do the same.
- An adult touching a child's genitals and making her/him do the same.
- Involving or showing a child pornographic materials.
- An adult having anal, oral or vaginal intercourse with a child.
- Any verbal or other sexual suggestion made by an adult to a child.
- Adult persuading children to indulge in sexual activity among themselves.
- Adult inserting foreign objects into a child's body for his/her own sexual gratification.

(Virani, 2000)

Commercially facilitated child sexual abuse or *Child Sex Tourism* is a serious concern. It results in both mental and physical consequences for the exploited children, both girls and boys, viz., "disease (including HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, pregnancy, malnutrition, social ostracism, and possibly death". The children who perform as prostitutes in the child sex tourism trade often have been lured or abducted into this trade.

Sexual trafficking: According to studies published by various civil society and other organisations, sexual trafficking is a demand driven trade (Anderson & O'Connell Davidson, 2003; Danailova-Trainor & Belser, 2006; UNODC, 2010). Traffickers have been known to make use of a variety of means for 'procuring' the girls. Using guile and under false pretexts of marriage and promises of jobs, traffickers take advantage of girls' state of poverty, unemployment or underemployment; illiteracy and ignorance due to the lack of education in the family and the community. Parents of young girls are known to have willingly sold off their children for some monetary sustenance.

5.2.2.2 Harmful traditional practices

Harmful traditional practices refer to types of violence that have been committed against women & girls in certain communities and societies for so long that these abuses are considered a part of accepted cultural practice. This violence includes female infanticide, foeticide, child marriage, and dowry murders, honour killings of women and girls and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). These harmful traditional practices often result in death, disabilities and physical and psychological dysfunctions for millions of women annually.

Dowry harassment: The harassment of brides usually related to the demand for dowry creates ample potential for violence within a marriage, which can lead to death either through suicide or murder. Though not uncommon in most regions of the world, instances of dowry murder are found in greater prevalence in South Asia. The resultant trauma is evident in the film 'Bund File' (audio visual extra reading) that deals with a real life situation that took place in an Indian city, some years ago.

THINK TANK

Watch the movie *Bund File* and answer:

- Why do you think the girls committed suicide?
- What did you feel about the father's point of view?
- How did you react to the student leader's observation?
- Can this situation be changed in any way? If so, how?

Honour killing: In many societies, the ideals of masculinity are determined by a notion of the 'honour' of a man, his family or the community. Women, whose actions are constantly watched and regulated in terms of restrictions on

their movement and sexuality throughout their lives, are the primary victims of crimes of honour. Though cases of honour killings are found predominantly in Islamic and Hindu societies, cases have also been found in Brazil, where killing is justified to defend the honour of the husband in case of a wife's adultery. In Pakistan, honour killings are termed as *Karo-Kiri* killings (black woman or black man targeted for honour killing). *Karo-kiri* killings allow for the killings of both men and women who are suspected of

having illicit relationships and not adhering to gender norms. These norms of control and killings are seen reflected in legal codes and judicial decisions around the world, and what is particularly alarming is the complicity of certain states in these crimes of honour.

Closely related to honour killing are **acid attacks** often directed at women who reject the advances of men or by family members. Linked to the concept of honour it is difficult to eradicate as long as women's emotional and sexual behaviour are seen as reflecting on the honor of the men who are intimately connected to them

Female infanticide: Female infanticide or the killing or murder of an infant on the basis of her sex upon her birth is a traditional outcome of the perception that a daughter is an unnecessary economic burden on the family. This in addition to shame associated with the birth of a girl child push families to kill or abandon these new-borns.

Female foeticide: Worldwide, over 163 million girls are missing. Most of them were killed through sex-selective abortion, targeted through the deadly search-and-destroy combination of prenatal sex identification technologies and elective abortion (Liisanantti & Beese, 2012).

The practice of female foeticide is the more sophisticated version of infanticide. The sex determination test (amniocentesis), with the help of advanced diagnostic techniques, helps mothers resort to abortions of the foetus, if it is of a female child. Abortions from safe clinics are expensive so mothers, made desperate by their situation, are forced to go in for unsafe abortions from clinics with poor hygiene and sanitation, exposing them to further complications due to infections.

Country	Country Sex Ratio at Birth (boys to 100 girls, 2011)
China	113
Armenia	112
India	112
Albania	111
Vietnam	112
Azerbaijan	114
Georgia	111
Grenada	110
Macedonia	108
Bosnia and Herzegovina	107
Tunisia	107
South Korea	107
Slovenia	107
Portugal	107
(Protect Our Girls, 2012)	

Deliberate sex selection usually occurs in populations where three pre-conditions come together for those who make the decision:

- Access to the necessary technology for selection ('It is possible');
- Low or decreasing fertility ('It is necessary'); and,
- Son preference due to a variety of socio-cultural factors in patrilineal/patrilocal societies, e.g., the importance of having a male heir to continue the family line or economic support in old age ('It is worthwhile'.) (UNFPA, 2011)

Child marriage: In the next decade, about 14.2 million girls will be married off every year – often without their consent, before they are mentally or sexually ready for such a relationship. The practice is most prevalent in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, despite laws in most countries banning it (UNFPA, 2012). In India the Child Marriage

Restraint Act of the Government of India sets the minimum age for a woman to marry as 18 years and 21 years for a man. Despite this, it is still a common feature to see child marriages taking place, especially in states like Rajasthan during the *Akha Teej* festival, during which no auspicious dates are needed for the marriage to take place.

South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa regions have the greatest proportion of girls aged 15–19 married or in union and bearing the burden of domestic responsibility and the risks associated with early sexual activity, including pregnancy (UNFPA, 2012).

Sati (Widow Burning): The word **sati** has been used to signify the custom of widow burning herself along with her dead husband on his funeral pyre. Though sati was abolished in British India in 1829, there have been reported cases of widow immolation since then. .

NOTE BANK

The case of Roop Kanwar, who in the late eighties committed Sati on her husband's pyre in a public spectacle, created major national and international furor. Some scholars argue that Sati is an act of sacrifice of a wife for her husband and should not be decried since it is a form of heroic death. But many other feminist scholars and women activists have argued that given the fact that women's lives are undervalued and restrained, Sati is often always committed under coercive circumstances and a tolerance of Sati will make many families urge their young widows to commit Sati to prevent having to take care of them. For this reason women's groups have not only argued against Sati as a practice but also the ideology of Sati. Luckily the Indian state responded firmly. Parliament enacted comprehensive anti-sati legislation outlawing Sati and its glorification. Since the law was passed, there have been few reported cases of Sati which points to the importance of criminal sanctions. However, Roop Kanwar's family was acquitted by the jury of their peers pointing to the fact that communities will rarely punish individuals for customary forms of violence against women. (UNIFEM, 2005)

Female circumcision: Female circumcision signifies the mutilation of the female genital organs for religious or ritualistic purposes. Circumcisions are usually performed during the period between childbirth and adolescence, often under unhygienic conditions using broken glass, tin lid, blunt knife or a razor blade after which antiseptic powder may be applied. Reading III gives a more detailed explanation of this harmful social custom.

Witch hunting: Patriarchal discrimination is also seen in the traditional, but yet prevalent, practice of witch hunting. Witchcraft is invoked as a way of keeping women in subservient roles. Sometimes these witch hunts deliberately target widows or women with property in an attempt to take advantage of them. Many a times they become victims of witchcraft accusations after refusing sexual advances of village men.

To sum up, most forms of violence take place within family and intimate relationships. The perpetrators of violence against women are almost exclusively men. Women are at greatest risk of violence from men they know (WHO, 2013).

Worldwide Fast Facts: Statistics on Violence against Women and Girls

Violence and Young Women

According to the fact sheets compiled by UNIFEM in 2010

- Between 15 and 76 percent of women are targeted for physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Worldwide, up to 50 percent of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16.
- An estimated 150 million girls under the age of 18 suffered some form of sexual violence in 2002 alone.
- Most of this violence takes place within intimate relationships, with many women (ranging from 9 to 70 percent) reporting their husbands or partners as the perpetrator.
- The first sexual experience of some 30 percent of women was forced. The percentage is even higher among those who were under 15 at the time of their sexual initiation, with up to 45 percent reporting that the experience was forced.

In India, the National Family Health Development Report, 2006 reports that

- one in three women aged between 15 – 49 years has experienced physical violence and about one in ten has experienced sexual violence
- Nearly two in five married women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their husband
- Only 1% of married women have ever initiated violence against their husband
- Never married women also experience physical violence and sexual violence. 16% of never married women have experienced physical violence since they were 15 years of age, generally by a parent, sibling or teacher
- Most women do not seek help when they are abused. Only 2% of abused women have ever sought help from the police. Two out of three abused women have not only never sought help, but have also never told anyone about the violence

Femicide

The fact sheets compiled by UNIFEM state that

- In Guatemala, two women are murdered, on average, each day.
- In Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the United States, between 40 and 70 percent of female murder victims were killed by their intimate partners.
- In the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, 66 percent of murders of women were committed by husbands, boyfriends or other family members.

In India, the records in National Crime Records Bureau, 2007 reveal that

- Crime against women increased by 12.5% over by the year 2006.
- Cruelty by husband and family constitutes 3.8% of total IPC (Indian Penal Code) crimes, with a conviction rate of 20.9%.
- Dowry deaths constitute 0.7% of total *IPC* crimes.

Harmful Practices

The fact sheets compiled by UNIFEM state that

- Approximately 100 to 140 million girls and women in the world have experienced female genital mutilation/cutting, with more than 3 million girls in Africa annually at risk of the practice.
- Over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides, married before the age of 18, primarily in South Asia (31.3 million) and sub-Saharan Africa (14.1 million). Violence and abuse characterize married life for many of these girls. Women who marry early are more likely to be beaten or threatened, and more likely to believe that a husband might sometimes be justified in beating his wife.

Trafficking

The fact sheets compiled by UNIFEM state that

- Women and girls are 80 percent of the estimated 800,000 people trafficked across national borders annually, with the majority (79 percent) trafficked for sexual exploitation. Within countries, many more women and girls are trafficked, often for purposes of sexual exploitation or domestic servitude.
- One study in Europe found that 60 percent of trafficked women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence before being trafficked, pointing to violence as a push factor in the trafficking of women.

Sexual Harassment

The fact sheets compiled by UNIFEM state that

- Between 40 and 50 percent of women in European Union countries experience unwanted sexual advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work.
- Across Asia, studies in Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea show that 30 to 40 percent of women suffer workplace sexual harassment.
- In Nairobi, 20 percent of women have been sexually harassed at work or school.
- In the United States, 83 percent of girls aged 12 to 16 experienced some form of sexual harassment in public schools.

Rape in the context of Conflict

The fact sheets compiled by UNIFEM state that

- Conservative estimates suggest that 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped during the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while approximately 250,000 to 500,000 women and girls were targeted in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.
- Between 50,000 and 64,000 women in camps for internally displaced people in Sierra Leone were sexually assaulted by combatants between 1991 and 2001.
- In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, at least 200,000 cases of sexual violence, mostly involving women and girls, have been documented since 1996: the actual numbers are believed to be far higher.

(UN Women, 2013; Lawyer's Collective Women's Rights Initiative, 2009)

Think Tank

- What, according to you, is the most heinous form of violence? Discuss.
- Can you think of possible reasons why parents prefer sons over daughters? Look at it from the perspective of a systemic problem and not of an individual choice.
- Do social institutions and traditional cultures legitimize violence against women? Explain with examples.

5.2.3 Workplace violence

Every worker has a legal right to a healthy and safe work environment that's free from violence. Formulation of codes of practice and implementation of laws to prevent and help the victims of workplace violence to protect their personal safety is now a mandate for governments and employers across the workplace map of the world.

Gender-related expectations about “male” and “female” behavior also influence levels of exposure to risk when men and women workers have the same job tasks in similar

conditions. Although most victims of physical violence are men, they do not face sexual harassment and gender related violence as much as women do.

workplace violence is described by many as the most prevalent human rights violation that both reflects and reinforces inequalities between women and men. The occupational health and safety, the rights-based and “cost to organization” approaches are compelling reasons for tackling such violence.

- **Occupational health and safety approach**

The OHS approach focuses on prevention strategies which aim to limit risk; employee health and safety; responsibilities of employers; and factors that increase workplace violence.

Women being most often employed as casual labour do not enjoy protection against injuries or illnesses and more often than not these go unrecorded. Lack of awareness amongst women implies that they do not enjoy the agency of trade unions and thus are not able to demand their rights. The approach, however, assumes that once people are informed about proper practice and policies are developed in a workplace to deal with workplace violence, the problems will be contained (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

- **The human rights approach**

The ILO uses a rights-based approach to violence, which violates victims’ fundamental human rights as articulated in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These principles are included in Article 1 which provides that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”; in Article 3 which provides that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”, and in Article 5 which provides that “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.

Workplace violence has been defined by ILO in their Code of practice as something that “is a threat to productivity and decent work.”

- **The cost to organisation approach**

For the organization, sexual harassment can be a financial burden. Sexual harassment is bound to negatively affect the victim’s performance level. Many a time, she may decide to stay away from work (a provision that has been legally granted in many countries). The environment created by such a case may affect other workers, thus bringing down their morale.

Costs also include legal cases and other bureaucratic procedures that the organisation is mandated to follow. The image of the organisation is bound to be affected negatively thus demotivating aspirants from joining it (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

High-risk groups

Some groups at high risk for violence in the workplace are girls and boys in child labour, forced and bonded labourers, migrant workers, domestic workers, health services workers, and sex workers.

- **Child labourers**

Both male and female child labourers are vulnerable to sexual violence. Because of their age they are easily impressionable and thus exploited by their employers, who are adults. Their lack of awareness of their rights and their dependence on adults make them victims of physical assault, sexual harassment, rape and, sometimes, even murder.

Migrant workers

Migration often happens in the hands of smugglers and recruiters. This means that these migrants are not accounted for. Women in such groups are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and harassment. (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

Domestic workers

Most domestic workers have no access to any kind of protection against sexual harassment. They are often migrants living away from their own families. When they are expected to live in the homes of their employers, they become extremely susceptible to sexual violence of all kinds (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

Health services workers

Women in the health services are vulnerable to sexual harassment from co-workers (mostly psychological abuse), as well as patients (mostly physical abuse). Irregular working hours which include night shifts exposes them to sexual abuse and violence. This will push women away from the health sector as well as increase health costs (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

Sex workers

Sex workers, being illegal in many countries, has led to them being pushed into the fringes of society where their agencies have been taken away. Rape of sex workers are thus not recognised as sexual harassment at the workplace. This means that they have no access to mode of grievance and redress.

Stereotyping of sex workers has led them to be seen as 'fallen women' who are sexually accessible to all. They face harassment from clients, pimps and the police (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

Summary

violence is predominantly men's violence towards women and girls. Justification for violence frequently evolves from social norms about the 'proper' roles and responsibilities of men and women. Domestic violence is maintained by societal and cultural attitudes, institutions, and laws that often do not identify this type of violence as being wrong.

Women are beaten, coerced into sex or abused by a family member or acquaintance in her lifetime. Most rapes are committed by individuals known to the victim such as the intimate partner, male family members, acquaintances, and individuals in position of authority. Dowry deaths, bride burning, widow immolation, child marriage or genital mutilation are present even today in the contemporary contexts.

Traditionally treated as a private family affair—and ignored by communities and government policies— violence only recently gained the status of a major public health and human rights concern. violence is clearly a multi-dimensional problem that demands a multi-faceted response.

Sexual harassment at workplace is a reality in all types of organizations, unorganized and organized sectors, as well as being prevalent in all countries around the world. It is an outcome of patriarchal culture within the workplace, and a tool for exerting power.

There are different forms of sexual harassment, verbal and non-verbal, physical and visual and can be categorized as quid pro quo and hostile environment. Sexual

harassment has emotional, physical, social and financial impact on an individual and negatives impacts her/his productivity

Glossary

Akha Teej: Hindus across India consider the day of Akshay Trithiya or Akha Teej highly auspicious to bring good luck and prosperity. Good deals are fixed on this day such as buying Gold or other precious metals or immobile properties or starting new business enterprise or shifting to a new house or start constructing a new house. Weddings are also planned on this day as it is considered the best time for tying new knots of relationship between couples. Often it is found that during the marriage rituals of young men and women, villagers also perform marriages of their children. Only the rituals are performed and the children do not live together. The community only permits them to live together after puberty. Such marriages are organized in the interiors of villages and it is very difficult to interfere there. Usually a large gathering of the community members on such occasions does not let the police force stop these events. Often as public elected representatives participate in these occasions it is not easy for the police to interfere here.

Sex Ratio: Sex ratio is the ratio of males to females in a population. It is expressed as the number of males per either 100 (or in the case of India, 1000, females), and the biologically normal sex ratio at birth ranges from 102 to 106 males per 100 females. The values of sex ratio at birth of around 120 mean that, per 100 girls, about 14-15 more boys are born than would normally be born— more than 13 per cent of the normal proportion (105-106).

Gender Violence: Any act or threat by men or male-dominated institutions, which inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender; There is, however, no single definition of gender violence accepted

internationally and there is much debate over the breadth of inclusion. Commonly, the acts or threats of such included in the definition are rape, sexual harassment, wife-battering, sexual abuse of girls, dowry-related violence, and non-spousal violence within the home. Other definitions extend to marital rape, acts such as female genital mutilation, female infanticide, and sex-selective abortion. In addition, certain definitions include 'sexual exploitation' such as enforced prostitution, trafficking of women and girls, and pornography.

Paedophile: Men who have a marked preference for sex with young (prepubescent) children.

Woman Battering: A "battered woman" is a woman who is beaten by her husband or partner. The batterer systematically uses physical violence, economic subordination, threats, isolation, and a variety of other behavioural controlling tactics to ensure she does what he wants her to do.

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