

## **Forms, Effects, Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women – An Overview**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Violence against women has a very long history and is often used as a mechanism for the subjugation of women. This gender-based violence is a global pandemic that affects one in three women in their lifetime. Such kinds of violence against women are under-reported due to societal norms, prohibition of using unparliamentary words, stigma and the sensitive nature of the subject. The objective of this paper is to bring to light the effects of various forms of violence done against women and the measures to be adopted for the prevention and elimination of violence against women. The paper first focuses on explaining the several categories of violence against women which are the main barriers to women empowerment and their equal participation in the society. Secondly, the paper describes how violence against women can cause permanent physical and mental health problems in themselves, their families and societies at large. Finally, the paper discusses the ways and means to put an end to violence against women thereby understanding and equating women's rights with human rights.

### **KEYWORDS:**

Violence, women, forms, effects, prevention, barriers, health problems, elimination.

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## 1. **INTRODUCTION:**

Violence Against gender, specifically women is a major public health problem and violation of women's human rights which is the main barrier to women empowerment and their equal participation in the society. The UN Declaration reveals on the Elimination of Violence against Women stress this, gender based violence means not only physical or sexual it is including psychological harm, suffering to women, deprivation of liberty etc.

## 2. **FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:**

Various forms of violence against women remain under-reported due to societal norms and conditions, taboos, disapproval and sensitive nature of the subject. Some common forms of such violence against women are listed below:

### **2.1. Intimate Partner Violence:**

'Intimate Partner Violence' means any behaviour by a current or former life partner, companion or spouse that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm. This type of violence is one of the most common forms of violence experienced by women globally.

Worldwide, one in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner or spouse. When accounting for sexual harassment, this figure is comparatively higher. The sexual violence by the spouse is comes under marital rape.

### **2.2. Sexual Violence:**

'Sexual Violence' is any sexual act committed against the will of another person, either when this person does not give consent or when consent cannot be given because the person is a child, has a mental disability or is severely intoxicated or unconscious as a result of alcohol or drugs.

Sexually violent acts can take place in different circumstances and settings. These include, for example:

## **i. Sexual Harassment:**

‘Sexual Harassment’ includes non-contact forms like sexual comments about a person’s physical disability, appearance, whistling, demands for sexual favours, sexually suggestive staring, and stalking and exposing one’s sexual organs at someone. It also includes physical contact forms like grabbing, winking, pinching, slapping or rubbing against another person in a sexual way.

## **ii. Rape:**

‘Rape’ is non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature of the body of another person with any bodily part or object. This can be by the persons known or unknown to the survivor, within marriage and relationships, and during armed conflict.

Approximately, 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) worldwide have experienced forced sex at some point in their life.

## **2.3. Human Trafficking:**

‘Human Trafficking’ is the acquisition and exploitation of people, through means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception. This abominable crime ensnares millions of women and girls worldwide, many of whom are sexually exploited. It is serious crime and deadly violation.

72% of all trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls. And, 4 out of 5 trafficked women are trafficked for sexual exploitation.

## **2.4. Female Genital Mutilation:**

‘Female Genital Mutilation’ includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Beyond extreme physical and psychological pain, the practice carries many health risks, including death.

At least 200 million women and girls aged 15 – 49 have undergone female genital mutilation in 30 countries where representative data is available. In most of these countries, the majority of girls were cut before age 5.

## **2.5. Child Marriage:**

‘Child Marriage’ usually means an end card to the girl’s education, vocation and her right to make life choices. Research confirms that girls who marry in her

younger age are at greater risk for intimate partner violence than girls of the same age who marry later. The child marriage not only a full stop for a girls child growth, is it a big block for nation growth.

650 million women and girls alive today were married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **2.6.Honour Killing:**

‘Honour Killing’ refers to the murder of a woman, usually by a brother, father or other male family member because the woman had allegedly brought shame to their family. Causes of honour killing include marrying a person outside the caste or religion, refusing arranged marriage, engaging in Lesbian or Gay relationship etc. Even if a woman is raped, she is thought to disgrace the family’s honour. Hence in some societies, the only way to cleanse the family’s honour is by killing the woman or girl. This is mostly happened for the women side only. The male escaped from the punishment.

The United Nations Population estimates that as many as 5000 women are killed annually for reasons of honour. These crimes take place throughout the world and are not limited to one specific religion or faith.

## **3. EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:**

Every woman has the right to live her life safely and free from violence. A life without violence is essential to women’s health as it causes short-term or long-term physical and mental health problems in themselves, their families and societies at large.

### **3.1.Short-Term Physical Health Problems:**

Short-term physical effects of violence against women give rise to following health problems in them:

- i.** Unwanted pregnancy
- ii.** Vaginal bleeding or pelvic pain
- iii.** Trouble sleeping or nightmares
- iv.** Sexually transmitted infections

### **3.2. Long-Term Physical Health Problems:**

Long-term physical effects of violence against women give rise to following health problems in them:

- i. Heart problems
- ii. Migraine headaches
- iii. Arthritis and asthma
- iv. Problems with immune system
- v. Sexual problems such as pain during sex
- vi. Digestive problems such as stomach ulcers

### **3.3. Mental Health Problems:**

Effects of violence against women give rise to following mental health problems in them:

- i. Low-esteem
- ii. Shutting people out
- iii. Anxiety and depression
- iv. Post traumatic stress disorder
- v. Not being able to trust others
- vi. Not wanting to do things that they once enjoyed

### **4. PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:**

Ending violence against women is an effort that includes everyone in the society. Here are a few ways that we could work to help end violence against women:

- i. Call the police if you see or hear evidence of violence against women.
- ii. Support a friend or family member who may be in an abusive relationship.
- iii. Volunteer at any organization that helps survivors or works to prevent violence.
- iv. Teach your children early on that they are the ones who decide who gets to touch them and where.
- v. Raise children to respect others. Educate them to treat others as they would like to be treated.
- vi. Lead by example. Work to create a culture that rejects violence as a way to deal with problems.

### **5. CONCLUSION:**

Violence against women is an everyday reality. To openly debate this subject is a way to reduce society's tolerance towards violence against women. We should act now, always and forever before it's too late.

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