

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

What is Gender Based Violence?

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in:

- Gender inequality
- Abuse of power
- Harmful norms

GBV encompasses a range of violent acts including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm or suffering. It can affect anyone but disproportionately impacts women and girls.

Forms of Gender Based Violence

1. Domestic Violence

Physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse by a partner or family member

2. Sexual Violence

Rape, sexual assault, and harassment

3. Human Trafficking

Exploiting people through force, fraud, or coercion for forced labor or sexual exploitation

4. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The practice of intentionally altering or causing injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons

5. Child Marriage

Marrying off children, often girls, before they are physically or emotionally mature

6. Honor Crimes

Violence committed to protect or regain family honor, often targeting women perceived to have brought shame to their family

7. Economic Abuse

Controlling a person's access to financial resources, hindering their ability to support themselves and forcing dependency

Causes of Gender Based Violence

1. Gender Inequality and Patriarchy

- Societal norms that value men over women
- Traditional gender roles that reinforce power imbalances
- Justification of violence against women and girls

2. Cultural Norms and Practices

- Cultural beliefs that endorse male dominance and control
- Practices such as FGM, child marriage, and honor killings

3. Economic Inequality

- Economic dependence on men makes women more vulnerable to abuse
- Poverty and lack of economic opportunities exacerbate stress and conflict

4. Lack of Education

- Limited access to education perpetuates ignorance about gender equality and human rights
- Makes individuals more likely to accept GBV as normal

5. Weak Legal and Justice Systems

- Inadequate laws
- Lack of enforcement
- Justice system that doesn't protect victims or hold perpetrators accountable

6. Conflict and Displacement

- Social structures break down in conflict situations
- Women and children become more vulnerable to violence and exploitation

7. Substance Abuse

- Alcohol and drug abuse increase the likelihood of violence
- Impairs judgment and self-control

8. Historical and Intergenerational Trauma

- Societies with historical trauma may have higher levels of violence
- Violence can be passed down through generations

9. Media Influence

- Media portrayal of gender roles and violence shapes societal attitudes
- Can normalize aggressive behavior towards women

10. Power and Control

- GBV is often a means to exert power and control over others

Effects of Gender Based Violence

1. Physical Health Effects

- **Injuries:** Bruises, cuts, broken bones, internal bleeding, permanent disabilities
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues:** Unwanted pregnancies, STIs including HIV/AIDS, complications from unsafe abortions, gynecological problems
- **Chronic Health Problems:** Chronic pain, gastrointestinal disorders, psychosomatic symptoms

2. Psychological and Emotional Effects

- **Mental Health Disorders:** Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal ideation
- **Emotional Distress:** Feelings of shame, guilt, fear, and low self-esteem

3. Social Effects

- **Stigmatization and Isolation:** Stigma and discrimination from communities and families
- **Relationship Strain:** Breakdown in relationships with family members, friends, and partners

4. Economic Effects

- **Financial Instability:** Medical expenses, loss of employment, inability to work
- **Workplace Impact:** Affects job performance, attendance, and productivity

5. Impact on Children

- **Developmental Issues:** Risk of developmental problems, behavioral issues, and emotional trauma
- **Intergenerational Transmission:** Exposure normalizes violence, increasing likelihood of becoming perpetrators or victims

6. Community and Societal Effects

- **Healthcare Burden:** Significant burden on healthcare systems
- **Economic Costs:** Healthcare costs, legal costs, lost productivity
- **Social Cohesion:** High levels of GBV undermine trust and social cohesion

Addressing Gender Based Violence

Comprehensive Approaches:

1. **Legal Protection:** Strong laws and enforcement
2. **Support Services:** Shelters, counseling, and healthcare for survivors
3. **Education:** Awareness campaigns and education about gender equality
4. **Economic Empowerment:** Programs to increase women's economic independence
5. **Cultural Change:** Efforts to change societal norms and behaviors
6. **Community Engagement:** Involving communities in prevention efforts
7. **Healthcare Response:** Training healthcare providers to identify and respond to GBV