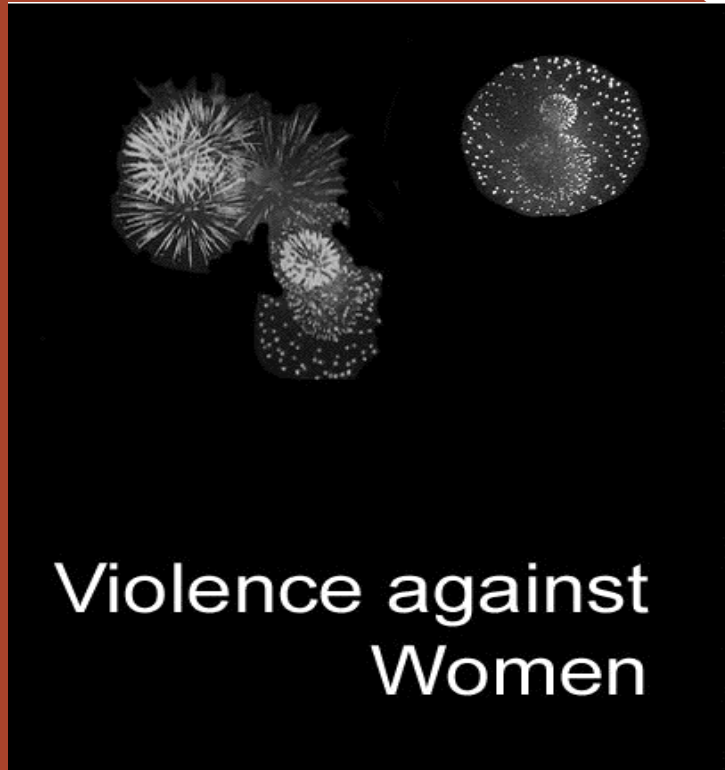


Understanding & Responding to





Studies on violence against women (VAW) have been carried out by a wide variety of bodies, including government ministries, national statistical offices, universities, international agencies, NGOs and women's rights organizations.

“According to 2006 United Nations report, at least one survey on VAW had been conducted in 71 countries and at least one national survey was available in 41 countries.”

At the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, 1993, the delegation received almost half a million signatures from 128 countries demanding that VAW be recognized as a violation of women's human rights.

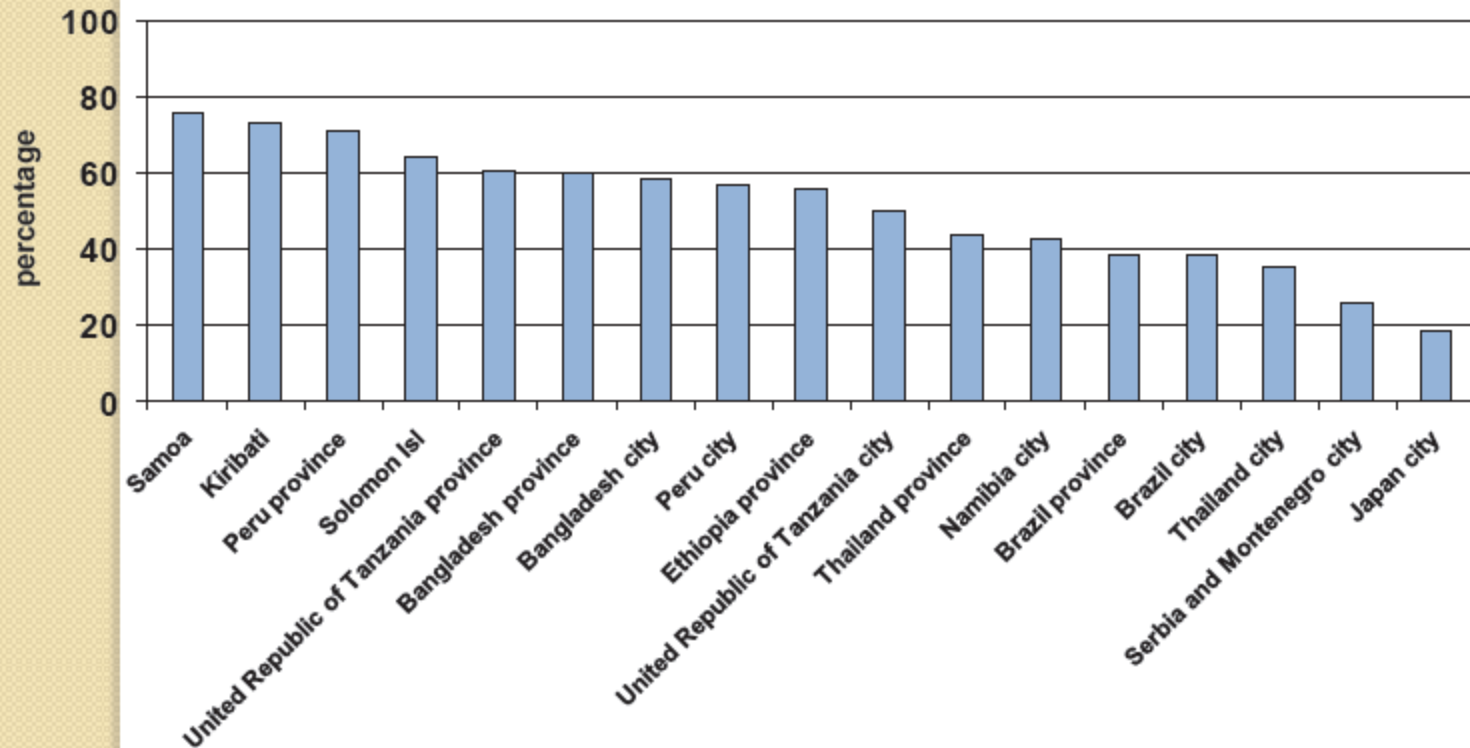
Between 1994 and 2002, an estimated US\$591 billion was spent in direct & indirect costs associated with VAW



Violence against Women: Is It Imaginary or Exaggerated?

How common is physical or sexual violence in women's lives?

Prevalence of physical or sexual violence against women by anyone (partners and others), since age 15 years



Objectives



- Differentiate **sex** and **gender**
- Define violence against women (VAW)
- Identify types of VAW
- Explain contexts of VAW
- Describe consequences of VAW
- List causal and risk factors for VAW
- Understand international mandates to eradicate VAW
- Appreciate the need for international standards In the measurement of VAW

Objectives




- Advocate for the implementation of state mandates to eradicate VAW
- Discover challenges and obstacles in eradicating VAW, discrimination, and inequality between men and women



Sex

Gender

Violence Against
Women



affects those you love

Definitions

Definition of “Sex” and “Gender”



Sex

- Sex refers to the biological & physiological differences between men and women. They are generally permanent and universal
- Male and female are sex categories

Gender

- Gender refers to the norms, roles, and social relations between men and women. It is socially constructed and varies from society to society
- Gender roles can be changed
- Feminine and masculine are gender categories



DEFINITIONS OF VAW

Definition of VAW



- “Any act of gender-based 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 the arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”
(Declaration on the Elimination of VAW, 1993)

Definition of VAW



- Gender-based violence against women is “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.” ***General recommendation No. 19***

Definition of VAW



- Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention.” (*Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women general recommendation No. 19, paragraph 7*)

Definition of VAW



- General Assembly resolution on the Elimination of Domestic Violence against women recognizes that “domestic violence can include economic deprivation and isolation and that such conduct may cause imminent harm to the safety, health or well-being of women.” (*General Assembly resolution 58/147*)



Sexual violence

Physical violence

Psychological violence

Economic violence

Female Genital Mutilation
or Cutting

Femicide

Exploitation



45%
women slapped,
kicked, beaten

75%
battered women try
to commit suicide

77%
men felt their
masculinity threatened
if their wives did not
listen to them

55%
women perceive
violence as normal
part of their marriages

Types of Violence Against Women

Sexual Violence

- Public arena and outside intimate relationships
 - Rape in the street
 - Forced prostitution
 - Sex tourism
 - Symbolic undervaluing that accompanies porn



Sexual Violence



- Abusive acts in intimate relationships, including marriage
 - Coerced sex through threats or intimidation
 - Coerced sex through physical force
 - Forcing unwanted sexual acts
 - Forcing sex in front of others
 - Forcing sex with others

Physical Violence

- Slapping
- Shaking
- Beating with fist or object
- Strangulation
- Burning
- Kicking
- Threats with knife or gun



Psychological Violence

- Isolation from others
- Excessive jealousy
- Control of woman's activities
- Verbal aggression
- Intimidation through destruction of property
- Harassment or stalking
- Threats of violence
- Constant belittling and humiliation



Psychological Violence



- Controlling behaviors such as using children for the purpose of controlling the woman
 - Physical and sexual abuse of children
 - Hostage taking of children
 - Custody battles
 - Using children to monitor the woman

Economic Violence



- Withholding funds
- Spending family funds
- Making most financial decisions
- Not contributing financially to the family
- Controlling the victim's access to health care, employment, family resources, etc.



Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

- Removal of part of, or all of the female genitalia
- Used to prevent women and girls from experiencing sexual pleasure
- An estimated 130 million girls and women have undergone FGM in Africa and some of the Middle East countries
- Prevalent in Europe, North America, and Australia



Femicide



- Selective murder for gender reasons
Perpetrated by a partner, former partner in a private space or as the final act of sexual violence in the public sphere



Femicide



- **Intimate femicide:** Victim had an intimate relationship with the perpetrator
- **Non-intimate femicide:** There was no intimate relationship with the perpetrator. Can be perpetrated by clients of sexual workers, by friends or neighbors, a stranger in the context of trafficking
- **Non-intimate femicide “by connection”:** Women who die in the “fire line” of an attack to another woman or while trying to protect her



Forms and manifestations of violence against women vary depending on the specific social, economic, cultural, and political context



Context of Violence

Intimate
Relationships

Community

Context of
Violence

State and/or Its
Agents

Vulnerable
Situations

Violence within Intimate Relationships



- The most pervasive form of VAW associated within the domestic environment
- Traditionally considered “private” (being an area inaccessible to the laws of and the State)
- Domestic VAW inflicted by a partner has been interpreted as a functional instrument of power in the dominant gender system which is used to reinforce male authority and to ensure that women fulfill the roles attributed to them within the family and the home (ECLAC 2007; Rico 1996)



Pregnancy is not necessarily a protected time

“He hit me in the belly and made me miscarry two babies - identical or fraternal twins, I don't know. I went to the hospital with heavy bleeding and they cleaned me up”

Woman interviewed in Peru

- In most sites 4%-12% of women who had been pregnant were beaten during a pregnancy
- In almost 100% of cases the abuser was the father of the unborn child
- Between one-quarter to half of these women reported being punched or kicked in the stomach

Source WHO study 2005

Cultural Differences in Violence within Intimate Relationships



- In large parts of the developing world, wife beating is seen as a form of “correction” or chastisement
- Beating is acceptable as long as it is for “just cause”
- Acceptability depends on who does what to whom, for what reason

Violence within Intimate Relationships



- By intimate partner, former partner, other male family members or acquaintances
 - Battering
 - Marital rape
 - Sexual violence
- Traditional harmful practices
 - Dowry-related violence
 - Female infanticide
 - Sexual abuse of female children in the household
 - Female genital mutilation or cutting

Violence within Intimate Relationships



- Traditional harmful practices
 - Early marriage
 - Forced marriage
 - Non-spousal violence
 - Violence perpetrated against domestic workers and other forms of exploitation
 - “Honor” killing
 - Maltreatment of widows or forcing them to commit suicide

Violence within Intimate Relationships



- Violence against children and adolescents
 - Discriminatory patterns of gender, age and trust combined at home and at school against little and young girls
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Trafficking
 - Violence in armed conflict settings

Violence within the Community



- Women are submitted to physical, sexual, and psychological violence in daily interactions within the public space
 - Sexual violence in the public sphere
 - Sexual harassment in the workplace: Intentional sexual conduct in acts ranging from very subtle behavior to sexual assault
 - Trafficking in women and forced prostitution
 - HIV/AIDS transmission through rape or coerced sexual relationships

State-Perpetrated Violence

- Construction and maintenance of gender roles and power relations
- Discriminatory laws and policies that undermine women's human rights and disempower women
- State inaction with regard to the proper functioning of the criminal justice system: Impunity for VAW encourages further violence and reinforces women's subordination



State-Perpetrated Violence



- By its agents
 - Law enforcement officials
 - Social security officials
 - Prison guards
 - Officials in places of detention
 - Immigration officials
 - Military
 - Security forces

VAW in Vulnerable Situations

- Migrant women and refugees are subject to
 - Segregated employment and precarious employment
 - At-risk sector jobs
 - Verbal abuse
 - Physical aggression, sexual harassment, rape
 - Dangers due to prostitution, travelling and illegal nature of domestic service



VAW in Vulnerable Situations



- Indigenous and Afro-descent women are subject to
 - Cultural and linguistic exclusion
 - Discriminatory treatment
 - Intimate partner violence
 - Custodial violence by police and murder
 - Coerced sex with authority figures
- Elder abuse (women over 60 or 65)
 - Physical sexual, or psychological abuse
 - Financial exploitation or neglect
 - Perpetrated by family members or other caregivers

VAW in Vulnerable Situations



- Women in armed conflicts suffer from
 - Sexual violence as an instrument of terror and ethnic cleansing
- Women in institutions suffer from
 - Institutional violence
 - ✦ Concentration camps
 - ✦ Murders committed by totalitarian governments
 - ✦ Inadequate care in institutions of support
 - ✦ Systematic poor practice affecting the whole care setting

VAW in Vulnerable Situations



- Women in state custody
 - Custodial violence, sexual violence including rape, surveillance during showers, or undressing, strip searches conducted by men and verbal sexual harassment, requiring sexual acts in exchange for goods privileges, or basic necessities
 - ✦ Police cells
 - ✦ Prisons
 - ✦ Social and welfare institutions
 - ✦ Immigration detention centers



Violence against women has far-reaching consequences for women, their children and community and society as a whole.



Consequences of VAW

Consequences of VAW



- In direct social and economic costs due to loss of wages, inability to work, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children
- Direct costs borne by the victims, governments, support services, and businesses in terms of goods, facilities, technology, and human resources to treat and support victims/survivors of VAW
- Inestimable and intangible cost of human suffering and pain

Consequences of VAW



- The 2006 Study of the UN Secretary General reports that selected studies of surveys and administrative records estimated direct and indirect costs of VAW to be as follows
 - Between 1991 and 2000, Australia spent AUD\$ 2.55 billion
 - In 1994, Jamaica spent US\$1.1 billion
 - New Zealand spent NZD\$1.4 billion
 - Between 1995 and 2002, Canada spent CAD\$6.8 billion
 - In 1997, the Netherlands spent CAD\$1 billion
 - In 1998, the United Kingdom spent over GBP 7.283 million
 - In 1996 and 1999, the United States spent over US\$555 billion dollars
 - In 1999 Switzerland spent US\$60 million, Chile and Nicaragua spent US\$30.56 billion
 - In 2001, Finland spent EUR 106 million
 - In 2002 Spain spent EUR 2.4 billion

Consequences of VAW



- Health effects
 - Injuries
 - Death/femicide/maternal death
 - Sexual and reproductive health: HIV/AIDS unintended pregnancies, gynecological problems, induced abortions, miscarriages, low birth weight
 - Poor mental health and social functioning
 - Suicide attempts
 - Post traumatic stress disorder
 - Depression
 - Central nervous system disorders
 - Malnutrition

Consequences of VAW



- Physical health
 - Headaches
 - Back pain
 - Abdominal pain
 - Fibromyalgia
 - Gastrointestinal disorders
 - Limited mobility
 - Poor overall health

Consequences of VAW



- Risky behaviors
 - Higher rates of sexual risk-taking
 - ✦ Sex at an early age
 - ✦ Multiple partners
 - ✦ Unprotected sex
 - Substance use
- Separation of families of trafficked women or women forced into prostitution and sexually-transmitted diseases
- FGM/C trauma: severe pain, shock, hemorrhaging, infection, ulceration of the genital area, death, abscesses, dermoid cysts keloid scars, obstructed labor, maternal & child morbidity, infertility psychological scars

Consequences of VAW



- Inter-generational consequences for children who witnessed prolonged violence
 - Trauma symptoms
 - Behavioral and emotional problems at home and school
 - Aggressive behavior toward peers and others
 - Anxiety, depression
 - Lower cognitive functioning and poor school performance
 - Poor health
 - Fearful and anti-social behavior
 - Dropping out of school

Consequences of VAW



- Political and social instability through intergenerational transmission of violence, as well as the funds required for programs for victims/survivors of violence
- Lack of personal and professional development
- Displacement



The roots of violence against women lie in historically unequal power relations between men and women and pervasive discrimination against women in both the public and private spheres.



Broad Context & Causes of VAW

Broad Context and Causes of VAW



- A global, systemic form of discrimination and a violation of human rights deeply rooted in historically unequal power relations between men and women and structural inequality between them in both the public and private spheres
- Patriarchal disparities of power, discriminatory cultural norms and economic inequalities serve to deny women's human rights and perpetuate violence
- VAW is one of the key means through which male control over women's agency and sexuality is maintained
- Vulnerability to violence is understood as a condition created by the absence or denial of human rights

Broad Context & Causes of VAW



- Ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, nationality and religion shape women's experiences of VAW
- Intimate partner abuse is significantly correlated with rigid gender roles that associate masculinity with dominance, toughness, male authority in the home and threats to male authority
- VAW operates as a mechanism for maintaining the boundaries of both male and female gender roles

Broad Context & Causes of VAW



- Customs, traditions, and religious values are also often used to justify VAW
- Certain cultural norms have long been cited as causal factors for VAW including the beliefs associated with “harmful traditional practices” (such as FGM/C, child marriage, son preference), honor killing, discriminatory criminal punishments imposed under religiously based laws, and restrictions on women’s rights in marriage.
- Women themselves either resist or reinforce cultural norms that promote VAW

Broad Context & Causes of VAW



- Some states, social groups, political and religious leaders, and other traditional authorities use cultural justifications for restricting women's human rights claiming to defend cultural tradition
- The politicization of culture in the form of religious “fundamentalism” in diverse geographic and religious contexts has become a serious challenge to efforts to secure women's rights

Broad Context & Causes of VAW



- Economic inequalities at the level of individual acts of violence and at the level of broad-based economic trends create or exacerbate the enabling conditions for VAW
- Economic inequalities and discrimination reduce women's capacity to act and take decisions, and increase their vulnerability to violence
- Globalization and its associated inequities and upheavals exacerbate the conditions that generate VAW by amplifying disparity of wealth and social privilege and impoverishing economies

Broad Context & Causes of VAW



- Economic disparities can expose women in the form of exploitative working conditions in inadequately regulated industries

Causal & Risk Factors for VAW



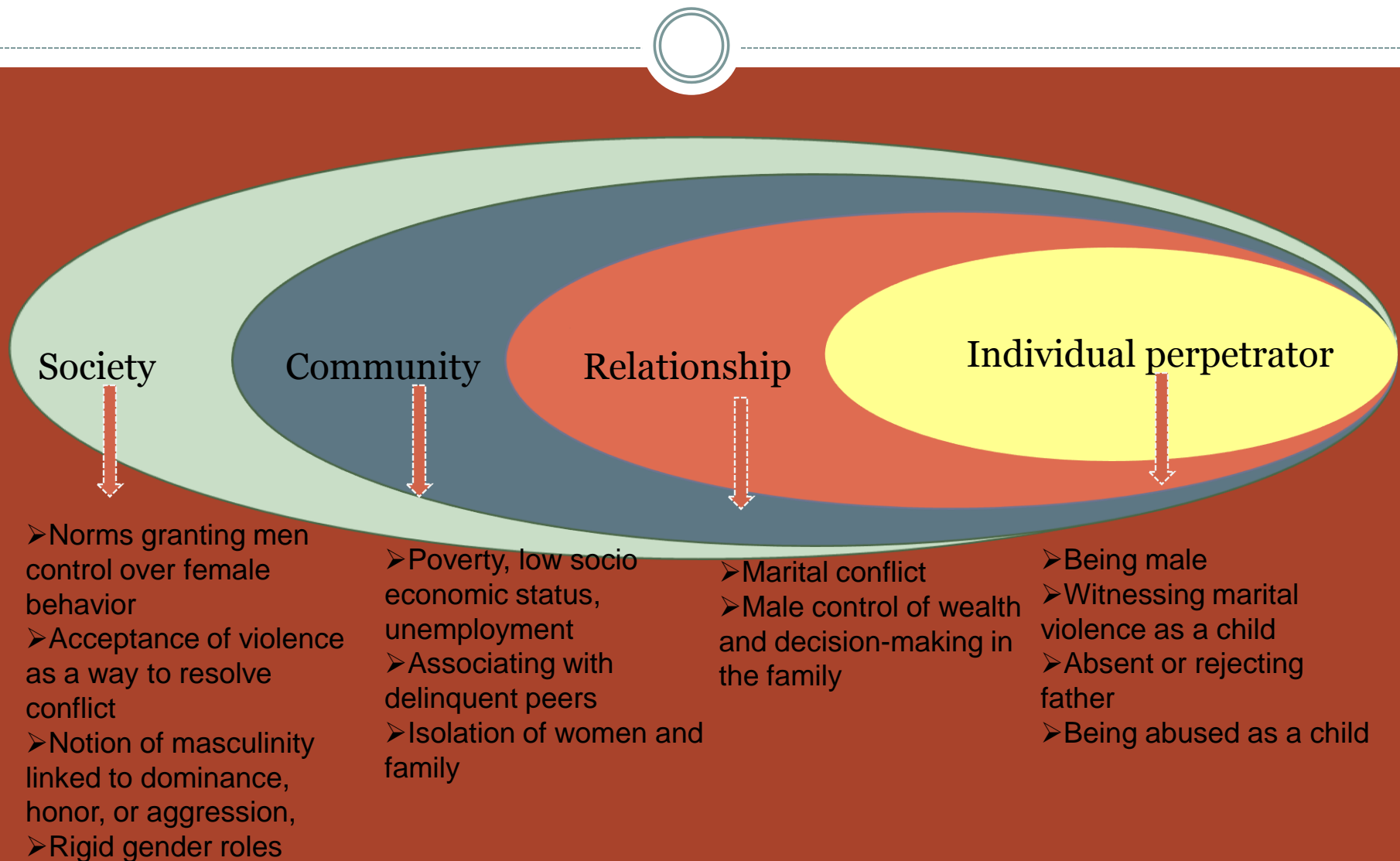
- Use of violence in conflict resolution at the individual, family, community, and national levels
- Doctrines of privacy
 - Deference to the privacy of the home, in both law and practice, contributes not only to impunity for VAW at the hands of family members, but also to impunity for VAW against domestic workers
- State inaction leaves in place discriminatory laws and policies that undermine women's human rights and disempower women
- States shift responsibility for preventive and remedial measure to NGOs and other groups in civil society

Causal & Risk Factors for VAW



- State inaction functions as approval of women's subordination that sustains violence and acquiescence in the violence itself
- State inaction encourages impunity for acts of VAW, encourages further acts of violence, and reinforces women's subordination
- Such inaction by the state to address the causes of VAW constitutes lack of compliance with human rights obligations

Causal & Risk Factors for VAW





Human rights treaties, equally applicable to women and men, set out a series of rights that are critical in the protection of women from violence. These include the right to life, liberty and security of the person; to be free from torture and from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; to be free from slavery and servitude; to equal protection under the law; to equality in marriage and family relations; to an adequate standard of living; to just and favourable conditions of work; and to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”



**STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**

**International Mandates
to End VAW**

International Mandates to Eradicate VAW



United Nations

- Women's rights activism
- UN Decade for Women
- 1975-1985

World Conference of the International Women's Year

- World Plan of Action for Women
- Mexico City, 1975
- Family

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

- 1979
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1982)

International Mandates to Eradicate VAW



Second World Conference of the UN Decade for Women

- Copenhagen, 1980
- Resolution focus: family & violence in health care context
- Elimination & protection of women & children from physical and mental abuse

Third World Conference on Women

- Nairobi, 1980
- The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women
- Focus: abused women in the home, trafficked women, involuntary prostitution, women in detention centers and armed conflict settings

United Nation Bodies

- Framework: Decade for Women
- Focus: Crime prevention and criminal justice, domestic violence

International Mandates to Eradicate VAW



World Conference on Human Rights

- Vienna, 1993
- Focus: Redefining the contours of human rights law to include women's experiences
- Delegation received almost half a million signatures from 128 countries demanding that such violence be recognized as a violation of women's human rights

General Assembly

- 1993
- **Declaration on the Elimination of VAW:**
- VAW "is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to the prevention of the full advancement of women."

Commission on Human Rights

- 1994
- Appoints a **Special Rapporteur on VAW, its causes and consequences**
- Institutional mechanism created for regular in-depth review and reporting on VAW around the world and to recommend how to eliminate VAW, its causes, consequences, and remedy

International Mandates to Eradicate VAW



Fourth World Conference

- Beijing, 1995
- **The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**
- Adopted by 189 countries
- VAW is both a violation of human rights and an impediment to the full enjoyment by women of all human rights
- States must prevent and eliminate VAW according to 3 objectives:
 - Taking integral measures to prevent & eliminate VAW
 - Studying the causes & consequences of VAW & the effectiveness of measures
 - Eliminating trafficking in women & assisting victims of violence due to prostitution & trafficking

Five-Year Review of BDPA

- 2000
- **VAW&G**, whether occurring in public or private life is a human rights issue and highlighted state's responsibility in addressing such violence

Security Council Resolution 1325

- 2000
- To protect women and girls from gender-based violence in armed conflict
- Mandates states to put an end to the impunity of perpetrators

International Mandates to Eradicate VAW



General Assembly Resolution 58/147

- The Elimination of Domestic Violence against Women
- Domestic violence definition is widened to include economic deprivation and isolation and that such conduct may cause imminent harm to the safety, health, or wellbeing of women



States are responsible under international law for human rights violations and acts of violence against women perpetrated by the State or its agents as well as non-state actors and civil societies



Consequences of Addressing VAW as a Human Rights Concern

Consequences of Addressing VAW as a Human Rights Concern



- It becomes the duty of States to take steps to respect, protect, promote, and fulfill human rights by using a unifying set of norms embodied in these human rights
- It is no longer discretionary for states to take all appropriate measures to respond to VAW but a legal obligation

Consequences of Addressing VAW as a Human Rights Concern



- Empowers women, positioning them not as passive recipients of discretionary benefits but as active rights-holders
- Enhances the participation of men and boys, who become stakeholders in addressing VAW as part of building respect for all human rights
- Enables human rights discourse and practice to become more inclusive by encompassing the experiences of women everywhere and thus making them universal

Consequences of Addressing VAW as a Human Rights Concern



- Does not preclude education, health, development, and criminal justice, humanitarian, peace building, and security approaches to preventing and eliminating VAW
- Encourages an indivisible, holistic, and multi-sectoral response that adds a human rights dimension to work in all sectors



States have binding obligations to prevent, eradicate, and punish such violence and are held accountable internationally and regionally if they fail to comply with these obligations



**States Mandate to Eradicate
VAW**

State Mandate to Eradicate VAW



- States should make the eradication of VAW their priorities
- Eradication of VAW requires:
 - a comprehensive and systematic response by states, the UN, and all stakeholders
 - Strong institutional mechanism at national and international levels to ensure action, coordination, monitoring, and accountability

State Actions Required to Eradicate VAW



- Urgent and concrete measures to secure gender equality and protect women's human rights
- The exercise of leadership at all levels and by all sectors
- Closing the gaps between international standards and national laws, policies, and practices
 - Ending impunity and ensuring accountability for VAW are crucial to prevent and reduce such violence
 - Investigating, prosecuting, and punishing all state or non-state perpetrators; and providing redress for victims

State Actions Required to Eradicate VAW



- Build and sustain strong multi-sectoral strategies, coordinated nationally and locally
 - Political will and commitment
 - Systematic and sustained action, backed by strong, dedicated and permanent institutional mechanisms
 - Build on NGOs' work, scale up and institutionalize it and share experiences with other countries
- Allocate adequate financial and human resources to programs to address and redress VAW
 - Justice, health, housing and education support services are critical in assisting survivors

State Actions Required to Eradicate VAW



- Strengthen the knowledge base on all forms of VAW to inform policy and strategy development
 - Governments should take responsibility for the systematic collection and publication of data, including support NGOs, academics, or others engaged in such activities

Need for Int'l Standards in the Measurement of VAW



- Absence of statistical data on VAW raises these issues:
 - It constitutes an important obstacle to the eradication of VAW
 - It hinders the design of public policies for preventing and eradicating violence, because this requires a diagnosis of the nature, prevalence, causes, and consequences of VAW
 - No baseline has been established from which to monitor and evaluate the effect of policies, legislations, plans, and programs
 - Countries where surveys have been carried out and where data is available on VAW, the indicators are not standardized or comparable, within and between countries

Challenges & Obstacles in Eradicating VAW, Discrimination, & Inequality between Men and Women



- Lack of political will expressed in inadequate or lack of
 - legislation
 - national plans of action
 - resource allocation
 - mechanisms to address VAW at the highest levels
 - efforts to overcome impunity
 - visible condemnation of VAW
 - sustained support by leaders and opinion makers of efforts to eradicate VAW
 - economic and social policies

Challenges & Obstacles in Eradicating VAW, Discrimination, & Inequality between Men and Women



- Elimination of discriminatory socio-cultural attitudes and economic inequalities that reinforce women's subordinate place in society
- Elimination of norms about the control of female reproduction and sexuality
- Emergence of backlash against advances in the status of women
 - Organized political forces, cultural or religious “fundamentalism” have put pressure on governments to reverse advances in women's rights

Challenges & Obstacles in Eradicating VAW, Discrimination, & Inequality between Men and Women



- Disagreements over how best to counter trafficking in women, whether and when prostitution constitutes VAW, and where to draw the line between a woman's freedom of choice and victimization
- Inadequate and uneven data on various forms of VAW and on how they affect different groups of women

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