

Relationship between Gender Based Violence & Development in Bangladesh

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Abstract

There are various types of violence against women all over the world including Bangladesh. It acts as a negative influence for the development of a country. Most of the indicators used internationally for determining the development rank of a country take into account various issues including women's empowerment, women's education rate, women's entry into the workplace, discrimination against women, and women's safe workplace. Violence against women is the main obstacle to achieving these goals. And because of this, gender based violence is a threat to the development of a country. Through this research paper I have tried to find out how much gender based violence is harming the development of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Gender Based Violence, Development, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) will be at the forefront of all types of crime in the world, including Bangladesh. GBV includes different types of violence such as physical violence, emotional violence, sexual violence (Morrison & Orlando, 2004). There are also some other forms of GBV such as rape, trafficking, intimate partner violence dowry-related violence and female genital mutilation (Bloc & Rao, 2002). Gender based violence (GBV) not only brings disaster to the woman or her family, but also hurts a country's economy. (Heise & Ellsberg, 1999). There are some international standards for measuring how strong a country's economy is. Among them, Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Inequality Index (GII), Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are significant. (Beteta, 2006) These indexes usually take into account different factors and the ranking of a country's development is determined through different markings. (Beteta, 2006) This paper discusses how gender based violence (GBV) affects or harms these considerations. Through this, how gender based violence (GBV) is harming the country's economy will be highlighted in the light of these international standards.

Objectives of the Study

Through this paper, an attempt has been made to find out how much the development and economy of Bangladesh is affected every year due to gender based violence.

Methodology

The data used in this research paper is based on secondary analysis. This information has been taken from various websites, journals, newspapers and reports. This information has been taken from 27 websites, journals, 4 newspapers, 5 reports, 1 book.

Literature Review

Fajardo-Gonzalez painted a picture of the barriers to women's empowerment due to gender based violence(GBV)in Colombia in her research entitled “Domestic Violence, Decision-Making Power, and Female Employment in Colombia”(Fajardo,2020) .Morrison described the extent of the financial damage caused by gender-based violence in developing countries (Morrison,2004).Gruber finds out the relationship between the school enrollment rate of girls and gender based violence(Gruber,2015).

Results and Findings

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Gender based violence refers to violence that aims individuals or groups on the basis of their gender. However it is recognized all over the world that most of it's victims are women and girls (Save the children resource center, 2021). It includes physical, sexual, mental or economic harm to a person (Unicef,2020).GBV comes in many forms. Example: Rape, child marriage, trafficking for sex or slavery, Intimate partner violence(IPV),sexual harassment, dowry related violence, online gender based violence, domestic violence, acid throwing, forced abortion etc. (Plan International,2019)

Child marriage:

Child marriage refers to the legal or illegal marriage of a girl or boy under the age of 18 to another child or adult (Unicef,2021). Child marriage violates children's rights. Child marriage also drastically increases the risk of violence, exploitation, and abuse. (Unicef,2021). According to a report of Unicef (2018) 58.6% of women get married before the age of 18 in Bangladesh(UNICEF global databases, 2018). According to Yount's research , 44.5 % women reported incident physical IPV, and 68.9 % of them were married before age 18 (Yount et al., 2016).

Trafficking for sex or slavery:

There are different forms of trafficking around the world. Sex trafficking is the most profitable of them. Half of the profits from trafficking come through sex trafficking. Victims get only 5% of it.(Philipp,2020, January 18). According to the UNIFEM, about 300,000 Bangladeshi children have been trafficked to India over a period of time. It is reported that 13,220 children and women were trafficked out of the country between 2006 and 2011. It is also reported that only 4,700 women and children were rescued out of 13,220. It is assumed by the experts that about 4,500 women and children from Bangladesh are trafficked to Pakistan every year. (Amin & Sheikh,2011).

Intimate partner violence(IPV):

In Bangladesh, the number of women who have admitted to being abused by their lifetime partner, even if only once in a lifetime is 54.2% (UN Women Report,2015) In 2015, 26.9% of women were physically or sexually abused by their lifetime partner. At the same time,3% of women admitted to being physically

or sexually abused by their lifetime non partner(UN Women Report,2015).The rate of violence against women by intimate partners in rural areas is 74.8% of ever married women. On the other hand, the rate of violence against women by intimate partners in city corporation areas is 54.4% of ever married women. The rate of violence against women by intimate partners outside of city corporation areas is 71.1% of ever married women (UN Women Report,2015)

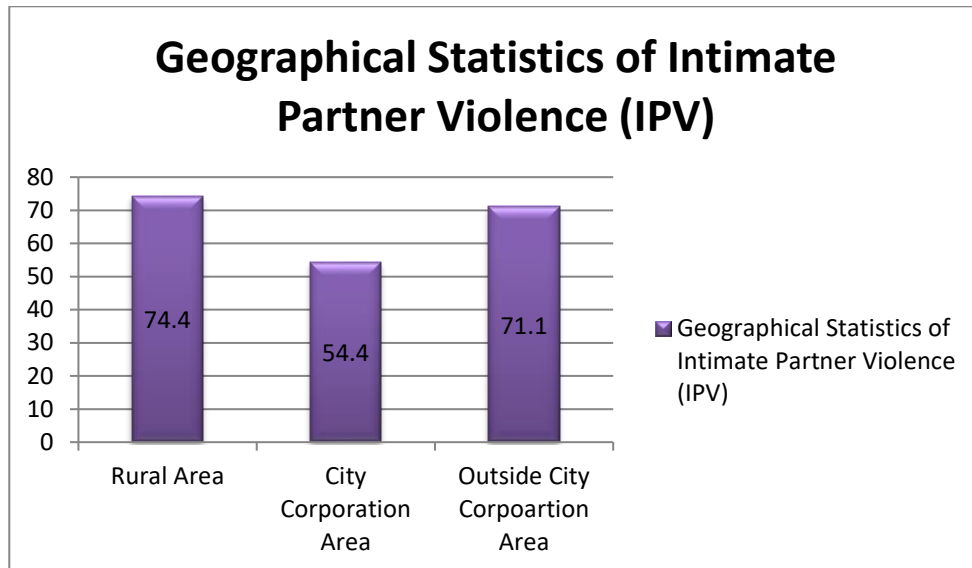


Figure-1:Types of Gender based Violence. Modified from Report on violence against women (VAW) survey 2015 (C-1).Global Database on Violence against Women. Gender-based violence,2015, retrieved from <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/bangladesh/2015/report-on-violence-against-womenvaw-survey-2015/> Copyright 2015 by UN Women.

Rape:

Between January and September 2020, it is reported that there have been 975 incidents of rape in Bangladesh. Of these, 208 are gang rapes, according to a statistics collected by human rights organization (Ain-o-Salish Kendra). And in forty cases death has occurred (Petersen, 2020, October 12).

Domestic Violence:

According to a report of Bangladesh Bureau 2015, 80% of women are victims of Domestic violence(DV).The human rights program of BRAC(a prominent NGO), recorded an 70% increase in the number of reports made this year compared to last year (Human Right Watch ,2020, November 12).

Sexual harassment:

According to a recent survey conducted by human rights organization among 38,125 women in 53 district out of 64 districts in Bangladesh, 1,839 women were physically abused, 203 women were sexually abused, 4,622 women were mentally tortured (Sifat, 2020).

Acid throwing:

In 2002, Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) recorded 494 acid attack cases. In 2020, that number has come down to 21. In other words, the incidence of acid throwing has decreased by 93% in 18 years (Dhaka Tribune,2020, October 21). The Acid Control Act 2002 and the Acid Crime Prevention Acts

2002 prohibit the sale of acid. These law also provides for the death penalty for acid attackers. (the highest form of punishment for the crime) (Dhaka Tribune,2020, October 21). But still the acid throwing incident has not been completely eradicated.

Female Infanticide:

A 2006 study of 850 families conducted by Promoting Human Rights Education in Bangladesh showed that 93 percent of Bangladeshi families preferred a son, viewing them as a “blessing” to the home and country, while 93 percent viewed girls as a “problem.” (“Son Preference”, Stop Violence Against Women, The Advocates for Human Rights) (Huda,2017, August 18).

Online gender based violence:

In Dhaka, about 70% of women aged 15-25 have been admitted to cyber harrassedment. Most of these women are victims of sexual harassment, cyber pornography online hacking, blackmail (Dhaka Tribune,2019, September 24). According to cybercrime tribunal report, 20% cyber harassment occurs by fake id ,hacking covers 20% of the cases, 18% defamation occurs, the amount of cyber pornography is 14%, the amount of financial fraud by mobile is 14%, the amount of blackmail and extortion is 7%, and the amount of terrorist activity 1% and other allegations comprise the remaining 6% of cases (Dhaka Tribune,2019, September 24)

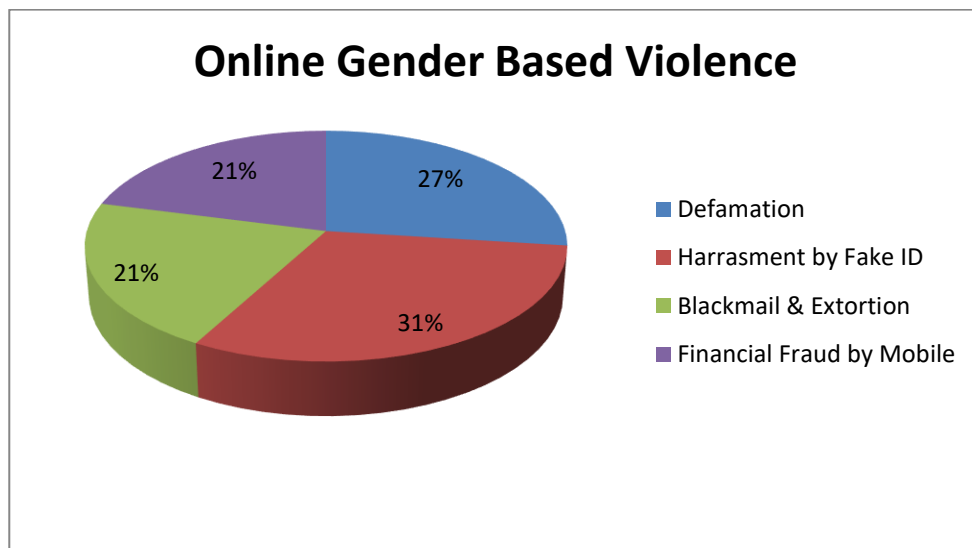


Figure-2: Online gender based violence. Modified from 70% of women facing cyber harassment are 15–25 years in age,2019, retrieved from <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/09/24/70-of-women-facingcyber-harassment-are-15-25-years-in-age/> Copyright 2019 by Dhaka Tribun

Sustainable Development Goals(SDG):

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is to set a few goals to ensure a safe and sustainable development for all countries of the world (UN Desa,2018).There are 17 goals in SDG.

Several goals of sustainable development goals (SDG) are greatly affected by gender based violence (GBV) in Bangladesh. These are described below:

No Poverty:

In 2019, the proportion of population living below the National Poverty Line is 20.5. (ADB,2004). Women make up 32% of the individuals under the poverty line (The Hunger Project. 2021, January 29). In 2016, the proportion of population below \$1.90 (Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)) a day is 14.3% (ADB,2004). On the other hand, the proportion of employed male population below \$1.90 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) a day is 5.3% in 2016. The proportion of employed female population below \$1.90 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) a day is 6.2% in 2016. (ADB,2004). It is clear from these statistics that girls are more vulnerable to poverty than men. As a result, there are many obstacles in achieving the number 1 and most important goal of SDG. Because almost half of the country's population is women and it is not possible to achieve the goal of 100 percent poverty alleviation without eradicating poverty from this huge population. (ADB,2004). Thus, women's poverty is hindering Bangladesh from achieving the goals of the SDGs and hindering the development of Bangladesh. Gender-based violence hinders women's education and at the same time hinders women's access to work and employment. As a result, women are deprived of the wealth and salary they deserve at home and workplace. As a result, 12 women fall into poverty. Thus, gender based violence (GBV) is hindering SDG's goal of 'no poverty' and the development of the country (Bernard, R. 2021, April 13).

Zero Hunger:

Poor families in Bangladesh tend to prioritize feeding on the basis of gender (Kabeer,1991). Parents love to feed their son more than their daughter (Kabeer,1991). In small villages the head of the family is in charge of food consumption (The Hunger Project. 2021, January 29). As a result, women are more discriminated against and suffer more from hunger and malnutrition. Women who are victims of violence lag behind in food production, lag behind in earning food, and are discriminated against by their husbands in getting food at home (FAO. 2021). Due to this, the number of hunger in the country is not coming down to zero quota. As a result, Bangladesh is lagging behind in achieving the 2nd goal (Zero Hunger) of SDG due to gender based violence (GBV) (The Hunger Project. 2021, January 29).

Key indicators of Development in Bangladesh

There are some parameters to measure how much developed a country is (Key Gap Indicators of Development, 2021). Several key parameters of development are greatly affected by gender based violence in Bangladesh. These are described below:

Gross Domestic Product(GDP)

According to BBS report, the contribution of women workforce in our GDP growth is 34% at present (Dhaka Tribune,2021,January 5). According to a report of Care Bangladesh(2013), a non-governmental organization(NGO),the country loses 2.10% of GDP due to domestic violence in 2013. (Rahman, 2021).

Gender Inequality Index (GII)

Gender Inequality Index (GII) is a kind of index which is used to measure gender disparity and determine the loss of achievement within a country due to gender inequality. This index is constructed by UNDP (Beteta, 2006). Three dimensions are considered to calculate this index. These are:

- I. Reproductive Health
- II. Empowerment

III. Labor Market Participation

Several dimensions of Gender Inequality Index (GII) are greatly affected by gender based violence (GBV) in Bangladesh. These are described below:

Reproductive Health:

A study has come up with this information that women who are victims of intimate partner violence are less likely to seek reproductive health care (Rahman et al., 2012). At the same time, they are less likely to seek the help of a skilled ANC or health care provider (Rahman et al., 2012). And that's why the births attended by skilled health personnel, percentage: 31% / 42% (Bangladesh: WHO statistical profile, BDHS 2014). As a result, the reproductive health care service in Bangladesh is not achieving the expected success. As a result, Bangladesh is lagging behind in the Gender Inequality Index. Thus IPV or gender based violence is hindering GII or development (Rahman et al., 2012).

Empowerment:

The number of reserved seats held by women in national parliament at present is 50. Women candidates can also contest 300 general seats in Parliament (Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh - Legislative and Parliamentary Division, 2015). According to a Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) study report, the number of women entrepreneurs is about 10% of the total business entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. On the other hand, women in advanced market economies own more than 25% of all kinds of business (Dhaka Tribune, 2021, January 5). This statistics shows that women lag far behind men in terms of business and entrepreneurship (Dhaka Tribune, 2021, January 5). A survey data of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) documented that women own only 2.8% of all non-agricultural enterprises in Bangladesh (Dhaka Tribune, 2021, January 5). Women entrepreneurs are mostly involved in manufacturing (54%) industries such as fashion (textile) products, handicrafts, boutique, printing etc (Dhaka Tribune, 2021, January 5). From these two statistics it is clear that the participation of women in policy making positions at the economic level is still very low (Dhaka Tribune, 2021, January 5). Gender based violence creates severe obstacles to women's empowerment (John & Gammage 2017, December 22). As a result, GBV creates obstacles to development of our country (John & Gammage 2017, December 22).

Labor Market Participation:

The rate of under employment is 35%. (Labor Force Survey 2010, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)). According to a study report, crime against women is on the rise while on the other hand, women's labor force participation rate (WLFPR) has been declining over the last two decades (Chakraborty et al., 2018). Sexual harassment makes women's access to the workplace unsafe. As a result, if they have an office far away from home, they refrain from joining the job or leave the job (Chakraborty et al., 2018). Thus, it hinders the participation of women in the labor market and also creates obstacles in development process of our country (Paul, 2016)

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is another kind of index which is used to measure gender empowerment and determine the development of a country in relation to gender empowerment and

gender inequality. This index is constructed by UNDP (Beteta, 2006). Bangladesh's rank in GEM is 133 (Human development reports,2020).A few things or issues are considered to calculate this index.

Estimates of women's relative economic income:

In Bangladesh, women's labour force participation rate is only 36.4 per cent whereas men's labour force participation rate is only 84.0 per cent in 2020 (Mujeri, 2021). Women's participation in formal labour force is rising (e.g. in RMG industry). But it is very unfortunate that huge gender inequality is still prevailing in labor market in Bangladesh.Women don't get paid properly. Again in the workplace women get paid less than men. (Mujeri, 2021)

Percentage of women in economic decision making positions (incl. administrative, managerial, professional and technical occupations): There is a relationship between domestic violence & decision-making power (Fajardo-Gonzalez, J. 2020). The number of reserved seats held by women in national parliament at present is 50 (Legislative and Parliamentary Division,2015).

Limitation of the study

Due to various restrictions, it was not possible to collect hardcopies of several reports. I have to rely on internet for all reports and data.

Conclusion

Due to GBV, women are lagging behind in various achievements including education, entry into the workplace, taking seats at the policy-making level. Success in indicators such as women's empowerment, women's education, women's employment, gender equality, etc. for development .Therefore, gender based violence is slowing down the development of Bangladesh by hindering the progress of the index.

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