

Measuring Gender-based violence: Results of the Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal rights for both men and women in all spheres of state and public life. It also declares that steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life. Bangladesh Government has been continuously adopting of the preemptive policies, legislations, strategies and taking national affirmative action plans and program for accelerating the implementation process in achieving the goal of holistic empowerment of women. Violence against women (VAW) is a global phenomenon that exists even beyond cultural, geographical, religious, social and economic context. Violence against women is widespread in terms of Physical, psychological, sexual and economic aspects. Despite the increased attention to the problem of VAW, there is still a substantial lack of information and data on the scope and extent of the incidence. Detailed data on women's experience of violence is needed in order to better understanding the phenomenon and developing targeted policies and measures to prevent and combat VAW. Bangladesh has become one of the pioneers through conducting the VAW Survey 2011. The results of VAW Survey 2011 identified that as many as 87% of currently married women have ever experienced any type of violence by current husband and 77% reported any type of violence faced during the past 12 months from the survey time. The higher percentage of any type of violence is predominantly contributed by psychological violence. Almost 90% of those who have ever violated by current husband has the past 12-month experience of violence which implies the persistence nature of violence by the husband. 65 percent of married women reported that they had experienced physical violence committed by their current husbands during their lifetime. About one-third of women who have ever violated by non-partner have the past 12-month experience also. More than four percent of women have ever experienced sexual violence by non-partner, and one percent of women experienced during the past 12 months. To maintain international comparability the standard questionnaire recommended by United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) was customized to fit with the socioeconomic context of Bangladesh. For this customization group consultation meetings were conducted with different stakeholders. Local female registrars among BBS's Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS) were recruited as interviewers as they are well trained on data collection and have rapport with the ultimate respondents. Stakeholders like UN agencies, civil society and INGO/NGOs working for VAW issue along with different government bodies were involved with the survey processes. The report on Violence Against Women survey recommended to conduct the survey to follow up the changes in the results at every two years. Consultation with the users, experts, policy makers, planners, researchers and NGOs should be expanded with special care for future episodes of the survey.