

**State of Violence against Women in
Bangladesh**

Research Report 2012

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Executive Summary

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad is conducting research to comprehend the situation of violence against women in order to resist and prevent such atrocities. On the basis of research findings Bangladesh Mahila Parishad prepare work plan to prevent violence. One of the regular research works is 'Situation of Violence against Women' which is done every year and the sources of data is reports published in the daily newspaper. The research report of the year 2013 published in November and the title of the report is, 'State of Violence against Women: Research Report 2012' (in bangla).

Objective: The main objective of the research is to analyses the present situation of violence against women, to identify the types and causes of violence, to understand the social reaction and find out the measures to prevent violence against women.

Methodology: It is a qualitative research work and data has been collected from 14 daily newspapers of 2012. Then the data has been coded according to research requirements. After that collected data has been analyzed following qualitative method.

Findings: The research showed 14 types of violence prevalent against women – Domestic Violence, Dowry, Assassin, Child marriage, Acid attack, Fatwa, Abduction, Violence by police, Trafficking and Sexual Harassment and Assault which include Stalking, Rape, Gang rape, Indecent Behavior and Violence using new technology. Among various kinds of violence most widespread is sexual harassment and assault (47%) where the rate of rape – including gang rape- is 27.66% and rate of stalking is 19.39%.

Housewife, student, house maid, garments worker, service holder, physician – women of all profession and age became victim of violence. It has been found that rate of victimization of housewives and students are highest. In case of sexual assault students are mostly victimized whereas housewives are mostly victimized in case of domestic violence and dowry. Students who are victimized mostly belong to high school and the majorities are sexually assaulted. It is also found that, large numbers of those victimized girls are from economically poor family and lived in villages.

Victimized women or girls are affected physically, mentally, socially and economically. But it should be mentioned that physical and economical impact is easily noticed whereas mental and social effect are long term and not so easy to detect or comprehend. That's why the research based on news reporting dealt mostly with the victim girls or women affected either physically or economically or both but could not ascertain their mental trauma.

Women mostly become victim of violation by their surrounding people or relatives whom they trust most. In case of domestic violence or dowry women are tortured by their husbands. In case of sexual assault most of the perpetrators are neighbors. People of all ages (16 – 65) are found as perpetrators but predominantly they are young people between the ages of 21 to 30.

In most cases family members of the victim and perpetrators both, even powerful and local influential persons try to compromise the situation through Salish. The main reason behind Salish is to protect perpetrators since they represent power elite of the society. Rate of Salish is highest in sexual assault (rape) whereas Salish is forbidden – in rape case - according to law (Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Domon Aain, 2003).

One positive factor found in the research is the growing social awareness against VAW. It has been found that the members of the community promptly reacted to the incidents of violence. The women organizations, Human Rights bodies, social organization took various actions to resist the violence and bring the perpetrators to the court of law.

The research has highlighted few alarming trends of VAW which requires greater attention and action from the society. It has been found that most of the victims of violence are adolescent and young women and the perpetrators are also mostly young man. When the young generation of the nation becomes victim and perpetrators of such heinous crime it calls for greater action from the society and the state. Further research is also required to understand the broader dimension of the crisis. It seems that the advent of new technology and globalization has opened up great world before the youth. They are more exposed to see world consumerism which remain beyond his reach and create tension and frustration that ultimately promotes violence.

But most important issue is that to change the patriarchal attitude of the society towards the women. A victim of sexual violence should not consider her as impure or one who has lost her honor. Violence is an attack not her body but on the fundamental human rights and the violation is only an accident that can harm her today but not her self esteem or self - rights.

In order to promote a healthy humanist culture in the state and society it is imperative to take a holistic view. It is also necessary to establish good governance, formulate and implement gender sensitive law, adapt uniform family code and bring structural changes to promote the rights of women. It's also a long way to go and everybody must realize that VAW is not a problem of women but society as a whole and that calls for concerted effort of men and women together.