

SPORT AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITY

Background Reading Material for Activity Workbook 5

Violence Against Women and Girls

This background reading material is a component of Activity Workbook 5 part of the Sport Against Gender Inequality (SAGI) online resource pack. Instructors must ensure that they read this document in detail before planning and delivering the session.

Around the world, at least one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime [1]. Most often the abuser is a member of her own family. Violence against women and girls includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. It is often known as ‘gender-based’ violence, because it evolves in part from women's subordinate status in society. Almost every society in the world has social institutions that legitimize, obscure, and deny abuse against women and girls.

Countless daily acts of violence create a climate of fear and powerlessness that limits women's freedom of action, and controls many of the movements of their lives.

1.Sources: UNIFEM, Amnesty USA, Stopvaw.org



The threat of male violence continues to keep women from stepping out from behind the traditional roles that they, as women, have been taught. Violence and the threat of violence keeps them “in their place.”

What is Violence Against Women and Girls (VAW/G)?

The United Nations’ definition of VAW/G lists the following as various types of violence endured by women:

- Acts of physical, sexual, and psychological violence in the family and the community
- Physical abuse, for e.g. beating
- Sexual abuse
- Dowry-related violence
- Rape, including marital rape
- Traditional practices harmful to women, such as female genital mutilation
- Sexual harassment and intimidation in school and at work
- Trafficking of women
- Forced prostitution
- Violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, such as rape during war



VAW/G refers to the violence inflicted on women and girls due to their sex. VAW/G cuts across cultures, class, caste, educational levels, income, ethnicity and age. It is the by-product of the unequal power relations in society between men and women. Violence is used as an instrument to reinforce and police gender roles, and coerce women to abide by the traditional roles ascribed to them. The onus of maintaining the ‘honour’ of the family rests solely on the female members. In many cases, rape and sexual violence are used by men to ‘dishonour’ families and communities.

Women and girls are prone to varied forms of violence throughout their life.

Stages of Life

Types of Violence

Pre-natal stage

- Sex selective abortions (foeticide)
- Wife battering during gestation

Infancy

- Female infanticide
- Discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition, and health care



Childhood

- Child marriage
- Sexual abuse
- Child prostitution
- Discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition, and health care

Adolescence

- Molestation
- Rape
- Incest
- Forced prostitution
- Trafficking
- Sexual harassment at workplace
- Violence associated with pre-marital pregnancy/abortion
- Kidnapping and abduction



Youth and Adulthood

- Molestation, sexual abuse and rape
- Domestic violence
- Marital rape
- Dowry related abuse and murder
- Forced pregnancy
- Homicide
- Sexual harassment at the workplace
- Discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition and health care

Old Age

- Abuse of the elderly, widows
- Threat of sexual violence
- Lack of access to care, nutrition, and medical facilities



Violence could be experienced in following forms:

- **Physical Abuse:** Punching, hitting, beating, choking, kicking, pushing, burns, throwing objects at a person, using weapons such as a knife to hurt someone.
- **Psychological abuse:** Criticizing, threatening, insulting, provoking someone to get angry, humiliating and frightening.
- **Sexual coercion:** Rape, sexual assault, molestation, forced marriage and marital rape.
- **Controlling behaviour:** Restricting the mobility of women, inhibiting economic independence and restricting access to information.

VAW/G leads to the following consequences on women and girls:

- **Physical/health related:** injuries, bruises, fractures, disability, psychological and emotional disorders, sexual or reproductive disorders, and even fatal health consequences such as suicide and homicide.
- **Others:** loss of income if the woman is working, economic burden and restriction of mobility and access to variety of developmental schemes.



Women and girls are prevented from talking or reporting about the abuse they face. This restriction is imposed on them from members within the family and outside the family. The government has enacted laws to keep a check on VAW/G, but the victim again gets violated by the patriarchal mindset of the people involved in the judicial system. The current situation can be changed only by bringing in attitudinal shifts among women and girls themselves, their male counterparts, family members, and the community.

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Activity Workbook 5
Reading Material



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