



Gender Based Violence and Its Impact on the Society

Faraha^{a*}, Nazia Ansari^b

^aFaculty of Law, N.A.S. (P.G.) College, C.C.S. University, Meerut, U.P., India

^bDepartment of Law, N.A.S. (P.G.) College, C.C.S. University, Meerut, U.P., India

E-mail: farah.rhmn@gmail.com^a

Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive global issue that affects individuals across all demographics, but disproportionately impacts women and girls. This abstract examines the multifaceted nature of GBV, encompassing various forms such as physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence. Using a socio-ecological framework, it explores the complex interplay of individual, relational, community, and societal factors that contribute to the perpetuation of GBV.

Furthermore, the abstract delves into the profound consequences of GBV on individuals and society at large. Beyond the immediate physical and psychological trauma experienced by survivors, GBV perpetuates cycles of poverty, hinders economic development, and undermines social cohesion. It exacerbates existing inequalities and impedes progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

Drawing on empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks, this paper underscores the urgent need for comprehensive, multi-sectoral approaches to address GBV effectively. Such approaches should encompass prevention, intervention, and response strategies that engage diverse stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, communities, and individuals. Moreover, efforts to combat GBV must be underpinned by a commitment to challenging harmful gender norms, promoting human rights, and fostering gender-equitable societies.

By shedding light on the pervasive nature and far-reaching impacts of GBV, this abstract seeks to inform policy, advocacy, and programming efforts aimed at eradicating this grave violation of human rights and fostering a more just and equitable society for all.

Key Words: GBV, Socio-Ecological Framework, Far-Reaching Impacts of GBV, Multi-Sectoral Approaches, Response Strategies.

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*Corresponding Author

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1. INTRODUCTION

*yatra nāryastu pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ yatra itāstu na pūjyante sarvāstatrāphalāḥ kriyāḥ.*¹ "Where women are worshipped, there the Gods dwell. Where they are not revered, all actions are fruitless."

The verse marks that the dignity and reverence for women are decisive for the prosperity and triumph of any endeavor. The place becomes divine if women are honored, and all actions performed there bear fruit. Vice Versa, all efforts become futile if women are not respected. However, in the current context, its meaning seems to be losing its significance because the challenge for women is their very identity as women.

In the Vedic period, women have strong social status, but in the present context, the status of women is deplorable. The reason behind this is the patriarchal mindset prevalent in society. A son is considered the successor who will carry forward the family lineage. "Why educate a girl? She is Paraya Dhan," they say. "A girl is a burden; she will take dowry with her." This mentality shows that merely being a girl is seen as a sin, and this very mindset is the root cause of gender-based violence.²

Violence against women and Gender-based violence (GBV) are two notions that are used vice-versa, as most violence against female is strike for gender-specific reasons, and gender-based violence influence women strangely. Gender-based violence is an inescapable global issue that influences individuals across all demographics. This phenomenon encompasses a wide range of harmful behaviors, including physical, sexual, economic and psychological violence. This violence is not only violation of human rights but also compelling public health concerns that have extensive connotation for the well-being of individuals and the fabric of society.

The crash of GBV extends ahead of the instant trauma experienced by survivors. It perpetuates and hinders economic development, cycles of poverty and undermines social consistency. Gender-based violence intensifies existing inequalities and creates blockade to achieving women's empowerment and gender equality. The trepidation of violence restricts women's freedom of participation in public life, restricts their opportunities to serve fully to their communities and societies.

GBV also restrained implications for the physical and mental health of survivors, distracting learning and occupation opportunities and perpetuating to cycles of abuse. The corrosion of trust within communities and the undermining of social cohesion.

To define "Violence against Women" the (DEVAW)³ says "violence against women as 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 arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life". This definition underscores the different

¹ Manusmriti 1/56.

² Sah, A.K. "Position of Women in the Rig Vedic Period", *Anthropo-Indialogs*, 3: 1, 15-20, (2023).

³ UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women



forms of violence that women may face and highlight that such violence can occur in any setting, whether it is the public sphere or within the confines of private life⁴.

The terms " Gender-Based Violence " and " Violence Against Women " have been merged to form the term "gender-based violence against women in recent legal frameworks," The Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention⁵, states a comprehensive definition in Article 3: "Gender-based violence against women shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately." This definition point up that violence can be directed at women specifically because of their gender or that it can have a disproportionately adverse impact on women compared to men.

Such definitions are crucial being gendered nature of violence. They address that gender-based violence is not only about the physical aspect of violence but also includes economic and psychological aspects. They stress the significance of understanding the inspiration behind the violence, which are often rooted in societal norms and power imbalances that perpetuate gender inequality.

However, gender is more multifaceted than the binary understanding of female and male. Gender identity can be fluid, with individuals identifying as male, female, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. The definition of gender-based violence also covers violence against LGBT+ individuals (gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual and any person who do not fall the traditional gender categories or heterosexual norm). These individuals often face violence based on their sexual inclination and gender identity. Therefore, violence against LGBT+ people is recognized as falling within the regime of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, while women are excessively affected by gender-based violence, it is required to acknowledge that male can also be victims. Although statistically, the number of men experiencing gender-based violence is much smaller compared to women but their experiences should not be neglected. Men can also be victim of corporal, voluptuous, or psychological violence, often linked to societal norms and expectations about masculinity and gender roles.

Violence against women includes recognizing the various forms and contexts in which this violence occurs. It acknowledges the particular targeting of women due to their gender and the adverse impact on women. However, it also encircles violence against individuals of various sexual orientations and gender identities.

By understanding these definitions, society can better address and combat the foremost reasons and manifestations of violence, which are based on gender, ensuring a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to this pervasive issue.

⁴ The Legal Protection of Women From Violence: Normative Gaps in International Law, *available at*: <https://books.google.com/books?id=orJSDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT13> (last visited on Dec 20, 2024)

⁵ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, *available at*: <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e> (last visited on November 24,2024)

2. FACTORS BEHIND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence (GBV), particularly violence against female, is among the most notable expressions of the disparate power dynamics that exist between men and women. Understanding the causes of GBV requires a multifaceted approach, as numerous factors contribute to its prevalence. It is crucial to emphasize that the primary cause of GBV is the perpetrator, and an individual impacted by GBV is never accountable for the facilitator's actions. The roots of GBV lie in a complex interplay of cultural, social, and legal factors, each of which reinforce and perpetuate these harmful behaviors.

2.1. Cultural Aspects

Cultural factors contributing to viciousness against females are profoundly rooted in male-controlled and sexist ideologies. These views promote masculine hegemony and often justify violence to maintain male superiority. Key cultural factors include:

Gendered Expectations and Misogyny: Societal norms reinforce traditional gender roles, positioning women as subordinate and legitimizing male control and aggression.

Gendered Upbringing: Individuals are socialized from a young age into specific gender roles as *ladko ki terha mat chalo, ladko jise bal rakhti ho, ladko ki terha mat haso* etc. its promote inequality by normalizing male dominance and female submissiveness.

Domestic Realm: There's a cultural belief that the family is a private domain under male authority, allowing gender-based violence to persist unchecked. When a girl asks for permission to go on a trip, her mother says "Ask your father". This notion allows male dominance in the society.

Embrace of Violence: Some cultures accept violence as a method to resolve conflicts and assert dominance, both publicly and within households, normalizing abusive behaviors.

Religious and historical traditions often support the control of women as property, influencing attitudes toward women's sexuality and family honor. This control can lead to extreme actions such as honor killings to uphold societal norms.

These cultural factors collectively contribute to systemic sexual disparity and perpetuate violence against women, underscoring the requisite for comprehensive efforts to challenge and transform societal attitudes and norms.

2.2. Legal Aspects

The issues of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and legal differentiation of spaces highlight significant challenges in addressing viciousness against females globally. Victims of GBV often face stigma and blame in many societies, discouraging them from reporting incidents and leading to inadequate investigations. This societal perception perpetuates a cycle where victims fear retribution and prefer silence over seeking justice.

Legally, some countries, such as Pakistan Saudi Arabia, and Iran historically distinguished between public and private spheres, leaving women vulnerable to domestic violence in less regulated private spaces. This legal framework reinforces the idea that violence within the home is a private matter outside the jurisdiction of law enforcement, further marginalizing victims.⁶

For instance, Khap Panchayats in India exemplify how traditional practices can exacerbate gender discrimination and restrict women's rights. They enforce patriarchal norms and severely limit women's choices.⁷

The Istanbul Convention⁸ guarantees everyone, specifically women, and the right to live freely from viciousness in private as well as public spheres. Despite the criminalization of most arrangements of GBV in Europe, law enforcement often favors perpetrators, resulting in low trust in authorities and underreporting of these crimes.

Regarding the decriminalization of homosexuality, although it has occurred in many societies, recent progress such as the legalization of equal marriage has sometimes provoked a backlash. This backlash often reinforces traditional family values and introduces laws against "homosexual propaganda," which further marginalizes LGBT+ individuals and increases their susceptibility to violence.⁹

2.3. Economic Aspects

Economic factors significantly contribute to gender-based violence (GBV), particularly affecting women and vulnerable individuals. Financial dependence on abusive partners or family members can trap victims in violent relationships, limiting their ability to escape and seek support. Additionally, economic stress, such as job loss and poverty among men, can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and frustration, leading to violence as a way to assert masculinity or cope with economic challenges. These economic dynamics create cycles of viciousness and destitution that are difficult for victims to free from perpetuating their vulnerability to GBV.

2.4. Political Aspects

Political factors significantly shape the persistence of GBV due to the underrepresentation of females and marginalized groups in positions of power. This limits their ability to influence policy and resource allocation aimed at combating GBV and advancing gender equality. Globally, women hold only 26.2% of seats in National Parliaments¹⁰, underscoring a stark disparity in political representation that affects prioritization are difficult for victims to break free from, perpetuating their vulnerability to GBV of GBV and resource allocation. Insufficient attention and resources dedicated to GBV perpetuate cycles of violence, while movements advocating for women's and LGBT+ rights face resistance that hinders progress towards equality. Addressing

⁶ Rabia, M., Tanveer, F., Gillani, M., Naeem, H. and Akbar, S. (2019) Gender Inequality: A Case Study in Pakistan. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 7, 369-379

⁷ *Shakti Vahini v. Union of India* (2018) 7 SCC 192

⁸ *Supra* note 7.

⁹ *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* AIR 2018 SC 4321.

¹⁰ IPU Parline: Global data on national parliament(as of May, 2022)

these challenges requires increased representation of marginalized groups in decision-making roles to advocate effectively for policies promoting GBV prevention and support for survivors, fostering a more equitable society.

3. TYPES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence (GBV) encompasses a wide range of harmful behaviors, extending beyond physical violence to include various forms of non-physical abuse. The **Council of Europe Istanbul Convention**¹¹ identifies several types of GBV, which reflect the complexity and multifaceted nature of violence:-

- [i] Psychological Violence that cause emotional suffering or distress through threats, intimidation, coercion, or other forms of psychological manipulation.¹²
- [ii] Persistent Stalking and unwanted attention or surveillance that causes fear or distress.¹³
- [iii] Physical Violence involving physical harm or injury to the victim.¹⁴
- [iv] Forced Marriages conducted without the free and full consent of the parties.¹⁵
- [v] Sexual Violence, Including Rape, Non-consensual sexual acts, ranging from unwanted touching to rape.¹⁶
- [vi] Female Genital Mutilation i.e. the partial or total removal of female genitalia for non-medical reasons.¹⁷
- [vii] Compulsory Feticide and Sterilization coercing someone to go through an abortion or sterilization against their will.¹⁸
- [viii] Sexual Harassment, Unwanted behavior of any sexual trait that violates the prestige of a person.¹⁹
- [ix] Assisting or Supporting and endeavoring or attempting to execute anyone of the aforementioned acts of viciousness.²⁰

¹¹ *Supra* note 7.

¹² *Supra* note 7, art 33

¹³ *Supra* note 7, art 34.

¹⁴ *Supra* note 7, art 35.

¹⁵ *Supra* note 7, art 37.

¹⁶ *Supra* note 7, art 36.

¹⁷ *Supra* note 7, art 38.

¹⁸ *Supra* note 7, art 39.

¹⁹ *Supra* note 7, art 40.

²⁰ *Supra* note 7, art 41.



- [x] Deplorable Explanations for Law breaking, Comprising Delinquencies performed in the Label of So-Called Honor i.e. justifying actions of viciousness by citing cultural, religious, or traditional practices.²¹

4. INDIA'S LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

While India is not a signatory of the Istanbul convention, it has its own legal frameworks and laws to address challenges allied to viciousness against females and violent behavior at home.

4.1. Indian Constitutional Measures for Women

India's Constitution's²² Preamble outlines a vision of a "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic" ensuring justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all citizens.

Key provisions for women in the Constitution include:-

Article 14 guarantees equal treatment under the law and equal protection by the laws.

Article 15 restricts discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, birth-place, and permits for extraordinary regulations for women and children (Article 15(3)).

Article 16 ensures equal opportunity in the field of public employment.

Article 39 mandates equal rights to an ample livelihood (Article 39(a)) and identical remuneration for identical work (Article 39(d)).

Article 39A promotes equal access to justice and free legal aid.

Article 42 guides the State to provide humane atmosphere of workplace and maternity relief.

Article 51A (e) emphasizes the duty of citizens to abandon practices that undermine the nobility of females.

Articles 243D (3) and 243T(3) gives provision to reserve at least one-third of places in Municipal Corporations and Panchayats for women, and a similar proportion of leadership positions (Articles 243D(4) and 243T(4)).

4.2. Other Legal Measures for Women

Crimes specified under the **Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023**²³ includes:

Offenses related to dowry related murder²⁴

Provisions concerning acid attacks²⁵

²¹ *Supra* note 7, art 42.

²² Mamta Rao, Constitutional Law, EBC Publishing(P)Ltd., Lucknow, 2021

²³ Bhartiya Nyaya Sahinta 2023 (Act 45 of 2023).

²⁴ *Id.*, Sec.80 includes "Dowry Death" caused by husband and his relatives with the punishment of 7 years imprisonment up to imprisonment for life.

²⁵ *Id.*, Sec 124 defines acid attacks which makes a person disable or disfigure any part of the body shall be sentenced with 10 years of imprisonment up to imprisonment for life.

Laws addressing harassing women sexually and infuriating the humility of females²⁶

Offenses of rape and sexual abuse²⁷

Cruelty against married women²⁸

Laws pertaining to domestic violence²⁹

Laws deals with pregnancy loss³⁰ and pregnancy loss without the women's consent³¹

Above provisions aimed to provide legal recourse against emerging forms of harassment and abuse in the digital realm, reflecting the evolving nature of offence against female in modern society.

Section 354A to 354D was introduced³² as amendments to **the Indian Penal Code 1860** in 2013. Later on in BNS 2023 these sections were inserted properly.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, provides a legitimate structure for terminating pregnancies under specific circumstances: The Act prohibits compelling a female to abort her pregnancy against her will. Abortion is permissible under the Act when conducted according to its provisions.

Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) (PCPNDT) Act in 2004 prohibits sex determination tests and regulates the misuse of prenatal diagnostic techniques for sex determination.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

²⁶ *Id.*, Sec. 74 addresses assault with intent to molestation with the punishment of 1 year up to 5 years imprisonment.

Sec. 75 defines sexual harassment of women with the imprisonment of 1 year to 3 years.

Sec 76 addresses assault with the intent to disrobe of women with the punishment of 3 years to 7 years imprisonment.

Sec 77 covers voyeurism with the punishment of 3 to 7 years imprisonment.

Sec 78 defines stalking which may be physical or online with the punishment of 3 years to 7 years imprisonment.

Sec 79 includes any act, words, gestures intended to insult modesty of a woman with imprisonment of 3 years.

²⁷ *Id.*, Sec 63 defines rape with the maximum punishment of lifetime imprisonment.

²⁸ *Id.*, Sec 86 defines cruelty against a woman.

²⁹ *Id.*, Sec 85 defines cruelty against a woman by her husband and his relative with the max. punishment of 3 years

³⁰ *Id.*, Sec 88 provides miscarriage of a woman with 7 years of imprisonment

³¹ *Id.*, Sec 89 provides miscarriage without women's consent and sentence shall be 10 years up to life time imprisonment.

³² Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Act 13 of 2013).

5. CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The sway of GBV extends beyond individual victims, affecting families, communities, and societies at large. Key impacts include:-

5.1. Health: Sufferers of GBV frequently experience physical injuries, ongoing health complications, and psychological disorders like depression, anxiety, and PTSD.³³ Such violence put up to lifelong health issues – particularly for women, and homicides. Many major causes of homicide such as stroke, cancer, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS are the output of victims. Adopting behaviors such as drug misuse, smoking, alcohol, and unsafe sex in an effort to cope with the psychological impact of violence. Violence also places a heavy strain on health and criminal justice systems, social and welfare services and the economic fabric of communities.³⁴ Acid attacks can cause permanent bodily disfigurement, necessitating extensive and prolonged surgical care. Beyond physical challenges, survivors require continuous psychological support from psychologists and counselors throughout their recovery. Additionally, sexual violence can result in unsolicited maternity, sexually transferred contaminations, and progenitive wellness issues.

5.2. Economic: Gender pay gap in India refers to the difference of earnings between men and women³⁵. As per the global gender gap report published by the world economic forum (WEF) in 2011, India was ranked 113 on the gender gap index (GGI) among 135 countries polled³⁶.

In 2013, the labour force participation rate for women in India was 80.7%³⁷. According to Nancy Lockwood from the Society for Human Resource Management, while female labour participation has historically been lower than that of men, it has been increasing rapidly since the 1990s. In 2001, of India's 397 million workers, 124 million were women, as noted by Lockwood³⁸.

Agriculture employs more than 50% of India's labour force. Men predominantly work as cultivators, while women are mainly involved in livestock maintenance, egg and milk production³⁹. Around 78% of rural women are engaged in agriculture, compared to 63% of men. Women play an essential role in irrigation, weeding, winnowing, transplanting, and harvesting stages of farming. In 2004, women were responsible for about 70% of agricultural work. In specific sectors, women's labour participation rates were 47% in tea plantations, 46% in cotton cultivation, 45% in oilseed production, and 39% in horticulture⁴⁰.

³³ Post Traumatic stress Disorder.

³⁴ "Global status report on Violence Prevention" (World Health Organization, 2014).

³⁵ Dutta, Puja, "Accounting for Wage Inequality in India" 48 *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics* 29 (2005).

³⁶ "Gender Gap Report" 9 (World Economic Forum, 2011).

³⁷ Human Development Report" (United Nation Development, 2012).

³⁸ Lockwood, Nancy, "Perspectives on Women in Management in India" (Society for Human Resource Management, 2009)

³⁹ E. Krishna Rao. "Role of Women in Agriculture: A Micro Level Study" 2(2) *Journal of Global Economy*, pages 107-118 (June 2006).

⁴⁰ Roopam Singh and Ranja Sengupta, "EU FTA and the Likely Impact on Indian Women Executive Summary" (Centre for Trade and Development and Heinrich Boell Foundation 2009).

However, gender-based wage disparity persists. For example, in 2009, men earned Rs. 103 per day for manual ploughing, while women earned Rs. 55, resulting in a wage gap ratio of 1.87. The wage gap was smaller for sowing (1.38) and weeding (1.18)⁴¹. For tasks such as winnowing, threshing, and transplanting, the wage gap ranged from 1.16 to 1.28. Interestingly, for sweeping, men and women earned statistically similar wages across India in 2009. GBV incurs significant economic costs, including healthcare expenses, legal fees, and lost productivity. Victims may be unable to work due to physical or psychological trauma, further exacerbating economic disparities.

Human Rights: GBV is a severe violation of human rights, impeding individuals' rights to safety, health, and freedom. It hinders authorization and gender parity of marginalized groups.

6. THE IDEA OF 'GENDER AWARENESS' UNDERSCORES THE PROMINENCE OF UNDERSTANDING ISSUES

The notion of gender awareness is critical for understanding and addressing the complexities of gender and sexual identities, along with the social and cultural dynamics that shape our interactions and perceptions. Gender and sexual identities are complex and diverse, extending beyond traditional categorizations. Individuals express these identities through various conscious and subconscious means, shaped by societal norms. Our interpretation of others' gender is influenced by societal cues, often reinforcing stereotypes. Cultural images and norms guide our perception of gender and sexuality, impacting our understanding without our awareness. Gender significantly influences power dynamics, affecting entree to resources and opportunities. Addressing these dynamics is indispensable for achieving equality and combating discrimination.

7. IMPORTANCE OF GENDER AWARENESS

Gender awareness is crucial for youth workers and young people engaged in addressing gender and violence issues among peers. It enables them to identify and challenge stereotypes, fostering more inclusive interactions. While social and cultural processes shape identities and perceptions, reflecting on these influences is indispensable for personal and group development. Gender awareness is an unending progression that develops with time and context, facilitating adaptation to changing understandings and promoting equity.

Addressing gender-based violence (GBV) necessitates a multidimensional tactic comprising legal, social, and educational strategies. Strengthening legal frameworks through comprehensive laws and accessible support services is essential. Education campaigns and gender sensitivity training can challenge cultural norms that perpetuate GBV. Support services such as shelters and economic empowerment programs help victims rebuild their lives. Community involvement in prevention efforts is crucial for creating supportive environments and promoting gender equality.

8. THE IMPERATIVE OF GENDER-NEUTRAL LAWS: ENSURING EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

Gender-neutral provisions in India are pivotal in assuring equal rights, opportunities, and legal protections for individuals, rather than their gender identity or expression. These laws uphold equal treatment before the law, preventing discrimination in critical areas such as employment, education, healthcare, and inheritance. By challenging entrenched gender stereotypes, gender-

⁴¹ "Wage Rates in Rural India" (Ministry of Labour & Employment, 2010).

neutral laws contribute to a broader and unprejudiced society where individuals are not constrained by outmoded gender roles. They also provide essential safeguards against gender-based violence, harassment, and exploitation, ensuring justice and support for victims. By promoting gender equity through the elimination of gender-specific distinctions, these laws empower individuals to participate equally in societal roles and responsibilities. Anchored in Art. 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution, which mandate equality and prohibit disparities grounded on gender, gender-neutral laws are fundamental in upholding fundamental rights and ensuring justice for all, fostering a society where every individual can live with dignity, equality, and freedom from discrimination.

9. CONCLUSION

Gender-based violence is a critical issue with far-reaching impacts on individuals and society. Addressing GBV requires comprehensive, multi-sectoral approaches that engage a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, communities, and individuals. Effective strategies must encompass prevention, intervention, and response efforts, all underpinned by a commitment to challenging harmful gender norms, promoting human rights, and fostering gender-equitable societies.

Understanding the types of gender-based violence is crucial for addressing and preventing these pervasive issues. By recognizing the diverse forms of violence and their interconnected nature, society can develop comprehensive strategies to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Addressing GBV requires a multifaceted approach that considers the various contexts and types of abuse, ensuring that all individuals can live free from violence and fear.

Gender awareness is essential for recognizing and addressing the complexities of gender and sexual identities, as well as the power dynamics that shape social interactions. It involves understanding the limitations of traditional gender categories, reflecting on how we express and interpret gender, and recognizing the impact of societal norms on our perceptions and behaviors. For youth workers and young people, gender awareness is crucial for challenging stereotypes and promoting equality. By viewing gender awareness as a process, individuals can continually reflect on and adapt their understanding of gender and sexuality, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

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