

## Estimated prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in Guyana

Women aged 16 and above **200,000**

Likely number of women subjected to assault by a current or ex-boyfriend, lover partner or husband **126,000**

Likely number of women subjected to at least one physical assault by a male partner within the last **60,000**

Estimated number of women who are chronic **26,000**

## Facts about Gender-Based Violence

- ◆ More than 20 percent of women worldwide are reported to have been abused by men with whom they live.
- ◆ Women who are victims of domestic **violence** are 12 times more likely to attempt suicide than those who do not experience such **violence**.
- ◆ Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused by a man in her lifetime.
- ◆ Among women aged 15-44 years, **gender-based violence** accounts for more death and disability among women than the combined effects of cancer, malaria, traffic injuries and war.
- ◆ Trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation by men is most common among poor women and girls.

## Guyana Signatory to Human Rights Instruments

### Gender-based violence as a human rights violation

- Human rights were first comprehensively listed in 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was written. The Universal Declaration is precisely that: universal. Nowhere does this declaration say that women are to be excluded from any of the rights mentioned in the document.
- In 1979, the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- In 1993, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and created the post of Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.



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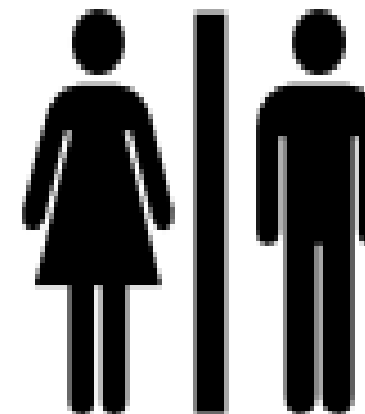


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**GENDER**

**BASED**

**VIOLENCE**



**A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE**

**IS EVERYONE'S RIGHT**

# Gender Based Violence

Gender-based violence can be defined as:

*“violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim and which arises from unequal power relationships between men and women”.*

**Violence** against women and girls is often referred to as “**gender-based violence**” because it evolves in part from women’s subordinate **gender** status in society. In most cultures, traditional beliefs, norms and social institutions legitimize and therefore perpetuate **violence** against women.

## Difference between Sex and Gender

- ◆ **Sex** refers to the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and do not change.
- ◆ **Gender:** This refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women by society. The roles are learned, vary between cultures and change over time, e.g. both men and women can be leaders, engineers, cooks and nurses.
- ◆ **Gender** also refers to social attributes that are learned or acquired during socialisation as a member of a given community. Because these attributes are learned behaviours, they can and do change over time (with increasing rapidity as the rate of technological change intensifies), and vary across cultures.
- ◆ **Gender** also refers to the socially given attributes, roles, activities, responsibilities and needs connected to being men (masculine) and women (feminine) in a given society, at a given time, and as a member of specific community.

Gender based violence takes many forms, these are some examples;

- ◆ Female genital mutilation
- ◆ Domestic Violence
- ◆ Forced pregnancy
- ◆ Dowry related violence
- ◆ Emotional abuse such as coercion and abusive language
- ◆ Abduction of women and girls for prostitution (T.I.P)
- ◆ Rape, Sexual assault/harassment

Such **violence** not only occurs in the family and in the general community, but is sometimes also condoned or perpetuated by the state through policies or the actions of agents of the state such as the police, military or immigration authorities, the majority of whom are men.

All of these forms of **violence** are associated with power inequalities: between women and men or between children and their caregivers, as well as with growing economic inequalities within and between countries. However, the primary inequality that gives rise to **gender-based violence** is the power inequality between women and men.

## Impact of Gender-based violence on individuals and communities

**Gender-based violence** may result in physical, psychological and/or social harm. Survivors of **gender-based violence** may experience deep psychological trauma, depression, terror, guilt, shame and loss of esteem. Some survivors commit suicide rather than bear the burden of societal shame. In many societies, they may become socially marginalized because they are viewed as being unmarriageable or without virtue or honor.

Other **gender-based violence** survivors who witness this social marginalization are unlikely to report the incidents themselves and, therefore, will not receive the support services they need. Physiological consequences of **violence** include unwanted pregnancy and sexually-transmitted infections (STI’s) such as HIV or others.

# Contributing factors

## Gender Based Violence

- Poverty
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Low academic achievement
- Traditional gender norms which supports male superiority
- Witnessing violence as a child
- Previous history of abuse
- Social norms that tolerate or even justify violence against women
- The phenomenon of masculinity and femininity, or what it means to be either male or female
- Violence being tolerated in a society as a means of conflict resolution
- Cultural practices
- Religious beliefs and practices
- State policies and laws
- Media