

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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# OVERVIEW



- Violence against women (**VAW**) is the most pervasive violation of human rights worldwide – affecting some 1 in 3 women and girls in their lives
- **VAW is also an economic issue**, which carries significant costs to individuals, households, the public sector, businesses, and society.
- VAW and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) are closely **interlinked**, but the relationship between them is **not linear**
  - **VAW** – both at home and in the workplace – **hinders WEE**, significantly impeding women's ability to fulfil their true potential
  - **WEE can both increase and decrease VAW** – benefits are not automatic



# THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



- Violence against women significantly undermines **women's educational and employment opportunities, income earning capability, and advancement in the workplace.**

- Violent relationships often include **economic abuse** – controlling assets & income, limiting movement

- VAW, both at home and at work (such as sexual harassment), has a significant negative **impact on women's performance and productivity** in the workplace.





# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: IMPACT CUTS ACROSS GENERATIONS



- It is estimated that **150 million girls are subjected to sexual violence** each year.
- **Child marriage** and **violence against girls at school** can reduce the likelihood of school attendance and result in a reduction in girls' long-term potential.
  - A survey among Benin schoolchildren found that 43% of primary students and 80% of secondary students knew girls who had dropped out of school owing to sexual abuse.
- VAW has serious **inter-generational effects**: children from households where VAW is perpetrated have lower job performance and earnings in later life – and are at greater risk of engaging in violent behavior as adults.
- Surveys in the Philippines revealed that boys who witnessed their father using violence against their mother were 3 times more likely to use violence against their partners later in life.



# THE COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN - FOR WOMEN



- VAW results in **loss of income** and **increased costs** for women who experience violence, due to the **cost of accessing services** and **days off work**. In addition, women who face violence tend to have **lower earnings**.
  - in Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea, 30 - 40% of women suffer workplace sexual harassment.
  - Women who are exposed to intimate partner violence are employed in higher numbers in **casual and part-time work**.
  - Their earnings from formal wage work are **60% lower**, compared to women who do not experience such violence.
  - In Vietnam, direct costs of domestic violence represent **21%** of women's monthly income and domestic violence survivors **earn 35% less** than women not abused.
  - In Papua New Guinea, on average, each staff member **loses 11 days of work** per year as a result of the impacts of gender violence.



# THE COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN - FOR SOCIETY



- The economic costs of VAW have been estimated at between **1.2% and 3.7% of GDP**.
  - In Vietnam, the persistence of domestic violence has resulted in a total loss of earnings equivalent to nearly **3%** of the country GDP.
  - In Fiji, the annual estimated cost of intimate partner violence cost was **7%** of the GDP
- VAW significantly lowers the productivity and profitability of businesses, through higher turnover, lower individual work's performance, increased health expenses, absenteeism, lateness and HR costs
  - Peru businesses lost 70 million workdays due to partner violence, equivalent to 3.7% of GDP in 2013.





# THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VAW AND WEE



- Women's empowerment can **reduce the risk of violence** by improving women's financial autonomy, bargaining power and self-esteem.
- Earning an income and owning assets **can reduce economic stress** for women, which is a frequent factor in domestic violence.
- Women's enhanced financial contributions to their households **can increase their bargaining power** at home, which can reduce their vulnerability to domestic violence.
- WEE can also give women the means to prevent and **escape abusive relationships** and help women to support themselves.



A research in India showed that women's ownership of property is associated with significant lower levels of both physical and psychological violence

# THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VAW AND WEE (CONT.)



- On the other hand, in some contexts, women's economic empowerment can **increase the risk of violence** – especially in the short term.

- A 2014 baseline study for a VAWG reduction programme in India found that women who earned and controlled their own income were more likely to report violence experienced both at home and in public spaces



- By disrupting traditional gender roles, WEE can result in **increased risk of violence** against women.

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