



GENDER EQUALITY DEPARTMENT
MINISTRY OF LABOUR - INVALIDS AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS



WHY DO SOME WOMEN EXPERIENCE MORE VIOLENCE BY HUSBANDS THAN OTHERS?

SUMMARY REPORT

Results of the analysis of risk
factors for violence by husbands



November 2014

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FOREWORD

Violence against women (VAW) is symptomatic for deep-rooted gender inequality that is prevalent in most societies, including Viet Nam. Violence against women jeopardizes the autonomy of women to claim and to enjoy their human rights. It also severely impacts upon women's health, in particular women's reproductive health, and often results in physical and psychological trauma, including unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS. According to the 2010 national study on domestic violence in Viet Nam, 58% of ever-married women experienced at least one form of physical, sexual and emotional violence from their husbands at some point in their lifetime (GSO, 2010). However, 87% of victims did not seek help from public services. The effects of gender-based violence (GBV) in Viet Nam are not limited to individuals and families. GBV is also negatively affecting Viet Nam's economic development. The cost of GBV in the form of domestic violence (DV) against women in Viet Nam, in out-of-pocket expenditures and lost earnings, represents nearly 1.4% of national gross domestic product (UN, 2012).

Viet Nam has a quite advanced legal framework, which includes the Gender Equality Law, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control and related policies to promote gender equality and address domestic violence. However, the traditional patriarchal system remains powerful and strongly impacts on women's lives. Women are expected to be subordinate and "belong" to their husbands and in-laws after marriage. Women are frequently subjected to physical, psychological and emotional threats, but within marriage, violence is rarely recognized because of culturally-defined gender expectations, gender norms, moral standards related to gender issues, as well as patriarchal ideology; all this makes violence against women in their homes 'invisible'. Therefore, while having an equal de jure protection, women's de facto status is lower than that of men, reinforced by dominant societal expectations. All of the above factors have contributed to a situation in which domination of men and violence against women seem natural and inevitable to women.

In 2013, the UNFPA, in partnership with GSO and MOLISA, commissioned a secondary analysis of data from the National Study on Domestic Violence, which was conducted by GSO in 2010. This report should be seen as a supplement, or 'Part 2', of the report *"Keeping silent is dying - Results from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam"*. The study intends to shed some more light on the reasons why in the same cultural context, some women experience more violence by their husbands than do others. This understanding should help the government design more effective interventions and develop necessary policies to address VAW in a more comprehensive manner.

As VAW is one of the key national indicators to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the UNFPA in Viet Nam commits to continue supporting the Government of Viet Nam in its efforts to address VAW, in close partnership with development and civil society partners. We hope this paper will contribute to improved policies, programmes and support systems to help women who are experiencing violence or are at risk of being exposed to violence. Indeed, we need more of this type of evidence to fully understand the root causes of VAW and devise the ways to stop this severe form of human rights violation and gender-based discrimination. With the evidence in our hands, we must work together to realize a society where no woman has to live in the fear of violence.

Arthur Erken

UNFPA Representative in Viet Nam

BACKGROUND



Violence against women is the most common manifestation of gender-based violence. Although men and boys can also be victims, it is predominantly women and girls who suffer from violence by their husbands or male partners. The fundamental cause of violence against women is gender inequality which translates in unequal power and control over resources between men and women.

In 2010, the *National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam* was undertaken as part of the United Nations - Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality as a joint endeavour between the General Statistics Office (GSO), the Ministry of Health, WHO, UNFPA and the Centre for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population. The study was conducted by the General Statistics Office (GSO), with technical assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO), overall support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the participation of national consultants from the Centre for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP), the Ministry of Health and an international consultant.

The research in this study consisted of a population-based survey of 4,838 women between 18 and 60 years old representing the general population of women of these ages in Viet Nam. These women were interviewed by specially-trained interviewers. In addition, 30 in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions were conducted in Ha Noi and in Hue and Ben Tre provinces.

The quantitative research component replicated the methodology of the *World Health Organization Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence*. The standardized questionnaire and methodology, fully complying with ethical and safety recommendations, ensures comparability of data with other settings.

The National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam sought, for the first time, to obtain detailed nationwide information about:

- (1) the prevalence, frequency and types of the different forms of violence against women and children;
- (2) the extent to which domestic violence by husbands is associated with a range of health and other outcomes;
- (3) factors that may either protect or put women at risk of domestic violence by husbands; and
- (4) strategies and services that women use to cope with domestic violence by husbands, perceptions about this violence and how much women know about their legal rights.

The findings of objectives (1), (2) and (4) were presented in the first report *"Keeping silent is dying", Results from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam* (2010). The results of objective (3) are presented in the second report *The hidden side of family harmony, factors associated with violence against women by husbands in Viet Nam* (2013).

Analysis of factors associated with violence against women helps to understand what may either protect or put women at risk of violence. This information is essential for programming prevention and protection activities, and was lacking from the first report of the national study. Under the framework of the One Plan 2012-2016 as part of UNFPA support to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Department of Gender Equality, MOLISA, collaborated with the UNFPA office in Vietnam and the Social and Environmental Statistics Department, GSO, and an international expert to conduct this secondary analysis.

The report with the detailed analysis as well as this summary report have been written by Dr. Henrica A.F.M. (Henriette) Jansen, with Ms. Nguyen Thi Viet Nga and Ms. Hoang Tu Anh. The results of this analysis provide more evidence that can be used to respond to current gaps in the policy response to gender-based violence.

This summary report reflects the main findings of the risk factor analysis in the second report, without presenting details of the statistical techniques nor detailed statistical findings.

How was violence against women by husbands in the past 12 months measured?

A woman is considered to have experienced recent physical or sexual violence by a husband if she reported to have experienced one or more of the acts below at least once in the 12 months preceding the interview.

Physical violence by husband

- a) Slapped or threw something at her that could hurt her.
- b) Pushed/shoved her or pulled her hair.
- c) Hit her with a fist or something else that could hurt her.
- d) Kicked, dragged or beat her up.
- e) Choked or burned her on purpose.
- f) Threatened to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against her.

Sexual violence by husband

- g) Physically forced her to have sexual intercourse when she did not want to.
- h) She had sexual intercourse when she did not want to because she was afraid of what her husband might do if she did not.
- i) He forced her to do something sexual that she found degrading or humiliating.

In the whole of Viet Nam, 9% of ever-married women, or almost one in ten women, reported to have experienced physical or sexual violence by a husband in the past 12 months.

What factors were considered in this analysis?

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