Gender-based Violence in Bangladesh : Agendas for Media and Suggested Action Plan

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[Abstract : This paper aims at identifying the gender-based violence in Bangladesh through addressing the agendas for Media with suggested action plan. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global human rights violation and a substantial development challenge. It is a severe social, cultural and economic problem in Bangladesh. The study is mainly based on the secondary data but data have also been collected through the checklist questionnaire from the victims and stakeholders as well as Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Qualitative method like descriptive analysis and content analysis have been used in this study. Various types of gender-based violence and subsequent consequences have been investigated in this paper. Role of media have also been analyzed here as it is considered with the eyes, ears, and limbs of society that may curb gender-based violence against women. Based on findings and analysis, agendas for media have been identified to fight against gender-based violence. Finally, the author has suggested action plan of media to emphasize violence against women through highlighting the awareness of gender-based violence.]

Key words : Gender-based violence (GBV), Violence against Women (VAW), Women, Physical, Media.

1. Introduction

Women have been subordinated to men in almost every sphere of their lives in developing countries like Bangladesh in spite of equally contributing to the national economy. Though they contribute to the economy by doing households chores and income generating activities within and outside households, women's control over their own lives and belongings remain significantly limited.

In developing country, women are very much dependent. For this dependency, they are facing various types of problems. Women, around the globe, are vulnerable and facing danger due to physical, emotional and psychological harassment, threats, terrorization, humiliation, degradation, and exploitation. They are also being the victims of physical and sexual torture, injury, violence with enduring health consequences even death.

Violence against women (VAW) is recognized as a global public health problem and considered as fundamental violation of human rights, and a problem with considerable social and economic cost to individuals, communities and countries.

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There are many forms of gender-based violence, including violence by an intimate partner, rape, sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by someone other than a partner, child sexual abuse, forced prostitution, trafficking of women etc. There is growing international interest in how to prevent this pervasive human rights violation.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is now treated as severe social problem in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, domestic violence against women is common picture and almost one out of three women has experienced gender-based violence during their lifetime. Violence against women means violation of fundamental human rights as well as enduring gender discrimination. It occurs in our country as well as the worldwide that affects most women regardless of their age, situation or socio-economic condition. Violence against women occurs around us in our homes, families, communities, institutions, workplaces and societies in regular basis. In our country, violence against women rejects women from their most basic rights together with freedom of opinion, equality and justice. It is identified that rape and other forms of sexual violence can be used as a weapon of personal, social, regional, national and ethnic conflict of expressing anger, frustration, and revenge at the family and community levels.

Different types of gender-based violence generally take place in Bangladesh such as murder by husband, physical and mental torture by husband, physical and mental torture etc. Domestic violence is a very widespread, serious societal problem in both developed and developing countries. Women who are victims of domestic violence do not only suffer from health-related complications, they also suffer from low self-esteem, feeling of isolation and powerlessness, and often suffer from a sense of guilt (Islam and Rahman 2006)

It is evident that different types of violence against women are increasing. Recently eve-teasing, acid violence, rape, and material violence have become serious social problem in the country. In order to arrest this increasing trend of violence against women, proper intervention strategies need to be undertaken (Hossain & Sumon, 2013).

Our government has significant role to adjust the gap between national commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women by ensuring adequate new laws, policies, budgets to ensure access to justice and protection systems and services to women. Along with government initiatives public awareness, social values, mindset against violence on women, and above all media role and action is significant to stop the gender-based violence.

This study tries to identify the following statement based on which data collection, data analysis, and the findings have been accumulated.

"Gender-based violence in Bangladesh as well as the agendas for Media with suggestive action plan"

2. Rationale of the Study

Gender-based violence is the curse of the human civilization. To commit violence against women is basically meant the violence against human rights. According to the constitution of Bangladesh, all citizens irrespective of religion, gender and community get the equal fundamental right. It is matter of concern that women folk are the most vulnerable.

At present, most girls and women in Bangladesh are affected by some form of GBV. According to a 2015 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics survey, more than 70 percent of married women and girls faced some form of intimate partner abuse. 35 percent become the victims of physically assaulted of which almost below than 3 percent of them took legal action. According to the media reports of Bangladesh human rights group Ain o Salis Kendra (2020), during the last nine months at least 235 women were reportedly murdered by their husband or his family (The daily Star, 2019).

Bangladesh has witnessed a dramatic and forbidding rise in sexual violence and rape in 2019. Various incidents of terrible sexual violence have raised a very serious concern for women as well as the children safety and life. According to the report given by human activist Sultana Kamal (November 2019), the number of rapes was as high as 5,000 in the last ten months of 2019. Bangladesh Mahila Parisad (BMP) estimated that 731 women and children were raped in the first six months of 2019 (The daily Star, 2019).

Children have become more vulnerable and become victimized of sexual brutality. It is very alarming that the numbers of children sexually abused and raped are unusually increasing. We notice that children are being abused by a close relative, neighbors or acquaintance at home, school and other familiar settings. At times, children and girls are victims of several types of sexual harassment as well as gang raped.

According to the report of Dhaka Tribune (2018), two –thirds of women in Bangladesh, around 66% have been the victims of domestic violence and 72.7% of them have never disclosed their experience to others. According to the reports of AsiaNews, in Bangladesh, 87% of Bangladeshi married women are abused by their husband and become victims of any other domestic violence. The purpose of the present study is to represent the agendas for media for stopping GBV in Bangladesh.

3. Review of Literature

Gender-based violence has historically been silenced, ignored or overlooked. But this issue is the focus of international and national public debate at present (Michau et al., 2015) due to advocacy and programming by women's movements and feminist activists. Violence against women is considered as a fundamental violation of human rights as well as a social and economic problem cost to individuals, communities and countries. According to UN definition, violence against women comprises a wide range of physical and emotional abuse that can occur within the private or public spheres (United Nations General Assembly 1994).

Gender-based violence is now regarded as a universal public health problem of epidemic proportions (García-Moreno et al., 2015). Violence against women and girls is associated with injury, disability, death, induced abortion, low birth weight and prematurity in women's babies, poor sexual health, suicide, depression, anxiety, and harmful alcohol use (World Health Organization, 2013). Most often physical, sexual and emotional intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence are responsible for causing serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for women (Campbell, 2002).

According to WHO (2013), thirty-five percent of women around the world have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence. To counter violence against women, the emphasis should be on changing people's views on whether it is acceptable to engage in such violence (Wagman et al. 2015). Domestic violence by males over females tends to be a natural phenomenon (Gottfried 1998; Gelles and Loseke 1993). Gender-based violence is the result of perceived differences such as for wealth, power, status, and prestige between men and women as recognized by norms of patriarchy (Hossain, Imam and Khair, 2001).

According to Heise (1998), violence against women is challenging to summarize because it draws from a wide array of disciplines like health, gender studies, psychology, criminology, sociology, political science, anthropology, law. Basically, the emphasis is mainly given on psychological factors such as social dominance orientations or beliefs about gender hierarchy that impel men to commit assault or rape (Ellsberg et al.; 2008, Fulu and Heise, 2015). Besides, the personal histories of men who commit violence, such as their childhood experiences as witnesses or victims of violence, both of which seem to be correlated with increased propensity for violence as adults (Hotaling and Sugarman 1986).

Gender-based discrimination against women as well as the inequality of power and resources is the root causes of violence against women and girls (Fulu et al., 2016). According to international agreements, violence against women is characterized by the use and abuse of power and control in public and private spheres and is

intrinsically linked with gender stereotypes (United Nations, 2013). Violence against women is the act of gender-based violence that happens in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty occurring in public or private life (United Nations, 2013). It comprises many forms of violence such as violence by an intimate partner, rape, sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by someone other than a partner, child sexual abuse, forced prostitution, trafficking of women, as well as harmful traditional practices such as early forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honor killing (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2015).

In fact, gender-based violence is not caused by any one, single factor (Crowell and Burgess, 1996, Heise, 1998). There are a variety of factors in a person's life, interact and contribute to violence occurring (Heise, 1998, Jewkes et al., 2015, Solotaroff and Pande, 2014, Ellsberg et al., 2008, Fulu and Heise, 2015). For example, individual characteristics such as alcohol abuse or mental illness with other factors to increase the likelihood of men using violence (UN Women, 2018). Studies over than 35 countries around the world indicates that because of ignoring intimate partner violence is highly connected with women's victimization (Fulu and Heise, 2015, Fournier et al., 1999, Guoping et al., 2010, Khawaja et al., 2008, Rani and Bonu, 2009, Uthman et al., 2010). A few countries, such as Bangladesh, Bolivia, Malawi, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe, men's attitudes towards justifications for violence are associated with their perpetration of intimate partner violence (Kishor and Subaiya, 2008). The use of violence against women by men is an expression of gender inequality and a mechanism for perpetuating it (Jewkes et al., 2015).

In some countries, men who get involved in quarrels with other men, control the behavior of relationships, have multiple sexual partners, have transactional sexual intercourse or have sex with sex workers, more likely to be violent against women (Fulu et al., 2013, Jewkes and Morrell, 2012). Almost 90 percent men in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and PNG, and more than 80 percent of men in Timor-Leste, agreed with the statement that 'to be a man, you need to be tough' (Fulu et al., 2013, The Asia Foundation, 2016).Working women may face the risk of violence higher in relationships if the man is unemployed (Fulu and Heise, 2015). The dynamics of force at the family level vary strongly by gender and support the use of violence against women by men.

According to many studies, despite significant advances in women's independence, education and employment, women are still considered a financial burden, and unfulfilled dowry demands lead to violence against women (Bradley and Pallikadavath, 2013, Chowdhury, 2015). Practice of dowry and bride price can worsen gender inequality in the family and linked to higher rates of violence against women (UN Women, forthcoming, 2018). Social norms and attitudes can

contribute to the continued practice and experience of violence against women and prevent social change (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016). Therefore, even with the introduction of new legislation, women will have greater access to financial resources and changes in personal knowledge and attitudes. There may be no reduction in violence experience and use (UN Women, forthcoming, 2018). In Vietnam, social norms about women and their responsibility to maintain family peace discourage abused women from seeking support, separation and divorce, and reconciliation parties often focus on to protect marriages rather than protect them from violence (Vu et al., 2014).

Violence affects girls and women around the world. Around the globe intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence are the most common forms of violence experienced by women and girls (Devries et al., 2013). This violence is usually severe and recurrent, but most women do not report violence and very few use formal support services (García-Moreno et al., 2005, United Nations, 2015; UNICEF, 2014). Women and men can be victims of violence, but men are the main perpetrators of violence against both men and women (Ellsberg et al., 2008). Women are also more likely to experience violence from partners and acquaintances, and men are more likely to experience violence from other men in public (UN Women, forthcoming, Ellsberg et al., 2008).

Sometimes intimate partner violence is considered typical or acceptable; it is unlikely that a man will be punished by another man in his community for refusing to hit his wife. In situations, higher rate of relative violence against women for example, gender roles, power, and other social norms regarding the broader acceptance of violence reinforce this behavior and contribute to the general expectations of men's use of violence (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016).

In media, women and their activities as well as gender-based violence should be presented positively. They should not be presented as a commodity or product from the business point of view. Media has to be generated sensitively. Media can play significant role to the development of women specially at their vulnerable situation. Women should be given equal rights, access and opportunities in every sector through the demonstration of media. Media should be responsible for reflecting the values of a society and make people aware of gender-based violence. Media may raise awareness by speaking out the necessity to secure and protect women’s rights and motivate others to learn to respect these rights for raising voice against GBV. Litigation is a main tool for women's legal empowerment and media has a very significant role to play supporting progressive litigation to the victims of gender-based violence. Media has to make the people of Bangladesh more aware of their fundamental human rights and constitutional protections through campaigning against gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

Most studies identified that media misrepresent the realities of women’s experience

of violence perpetrated against them. Media reports of violence against women were highly skewed towards event-based reporting or 'episodic framing' (Bou-Franch, 2013; Halim & Meyers, 2010; Marhia, 2008; McManus & Dorfman, 2005). Sims (2008), identified that examined media reporting of emotional abuse, suggested episodic framing positioned violence against women as an anomaly in society. They described those readers were typically left with the impression that abuse, in any form, was not a part of everyday life for most women.

Easteal et al.'s (2015) statement that online and social media platforms may simply mirror myths and stereotypes that appear in traditional media. A recent study of press portrayals of violence against women in the Arabian Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait) noted very little difference from news frames used by media in Western cultures, whereby most reports ignored the systematic nature of violence against women (Halim & Meyers, 2010).

Many studies highlighted the way news media construct stories that either directly or indirectly attribute blame and/or assign responsibility for violence to women (Barnett, 2012; Dwyer et al., 2012; Gillespie, Richards, Givens & Smith, 2013; Richards et al., 2011; Saroca, 2013). It is most often referred to as "victim blaming", and refers to circumstances in which victims of crime are portrayed so that it appears they are partially or entirely responsible for the transgressions committed against them. Sexual deviancy or promiscuity was commonly identified in studies that examined media coverage of sexual violence and rape, but researchers also found that it featured as a background detail in media reports on all forms of violence against women (Barnett, 2012; Noh, Lee, &Feltey, 2010; Saroca, 2013; Skilbrei, 2013).

Richards et al. (2011), studied over 900 newspaper articles in the US state of North Carolina, found that ten percent of press coverage directly blamed women who were killed in the context of intimate partner violence because they did not take the necessary action to protect themselves: by not reporting the violence, not filing charges or for not leaving the relationship.

While communication and media interventions have not, on their own, been found to change behaviors around violence, they can play a key role in provoking public discussion and breaking the silence about the issue (Jewkes et al., 2015, Fulu et al., 2015). Studies consistently found that the stories that gained most traction tended not to focus on the most common forms of violence perpetrated against women but were instead concerned with the most severe forms of physical violence, fatal incidents, random acts of violence and violence perpetrated by women (Carlyle, Slater &Chakroff, 2008; Marhia, 2008; Morgan & Politoff, 2012; Sims, 2008).

Researchers also noted that sensational and exceptional language was commonly used in media reports of violence against women (Ahmed, 2014;

Comas-d'Argemir, 2014; End Violence Against Women Coalition, 2012; Mason & Monckton-Smith, 2008; O'Hara, 2012). Media rely heavily, and sometimes exclusively, on those connected to law enforcement and the criminal justice system as their main source of information (Barnett, 2012; Bullock, 2010; Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Lindsay-Brisbin, DePrince& Welton-Mitchell, 2014; Richards, Gillespie & Smith, 2013).

This very study actually deals with the agendas for media in stopping gender-based violence. It is evident that media has immense role in stopping the violence against women. As the media is influential in defining what we think, how we look and our social place and issues in the society. The term mass media is well-defined as a means of communication that operates on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in the society to a greater or lesser degree. Basically, mass media can influence the social, cultural, economic, spiritual, political and religious aspects of society as well as personal level thinking, feeling and acting. Media can actively represent and feed the people with the latest information and create the need for change in contemporary society. The stated literature actually lacks this very issue of media roles and actions against gender-based violence in Bangladesh. Therefore, the present study attempts to assess the agendas for media in stopping gender-based violence against women in Bangladesh as well as suggesting action plans to stop GBV.

4. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are –

1. To review the current status of gender-based violence in Bangladesh.
2. To assess the agendas for media in stopping gender-based violence against women.
3. To suggest action plans that curve/stop gender-based violence.

5. Research Methodology

This paper is written based on the secondary sources such as news, features, reports published in different national and local daily newspapers. Data are also used compiled and collected by BBS, WHO, Bangladesh Mahila Parisad (BMP), Bangladesh human rights group (Ain o Salis Kendra), human activist and national NGOs such as BRAC. Based on the objectives of the study qualitative method like descriptive analysis and content analysis have been used. Data have also been collected through the checklist questionnaire from the victims and respondents of stakeholders as well as Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) from the victims of violence, human rights activists, leader of women associations, representative of national and international agencies, stuff of the print and electronic media etc. Author own analysis, arguments and observations are also incorporated while analyzing the stated topics of agenda for media. Author also suggests pragmatic action plans that curve/stop violence against women.

6. Current status of gender-based violence in Bangladesh

Gender-based violence is common in this country. Women are contributing to their families, often become victims of violence at the hands of their husbands or in-laws for various reasons. Dowry-related violence, rape, acid-throwing, domestic violence, sexual harassment and social discrimination are occurring against women. In spite of passing more than 100 years of the declaration of women's day and 50 years of independence of Bangladesh, there is much room for improvement the condition of women in Bangladesh. During the period of January 2010 and December 2019, almost 9,875 women and girls were raped, 609 were killed after being raped and 74 committed suicides after being raped and about 3,299 women were victims of violence for dowry. According to the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP), a women's right organization, a total of 3,918 women and children were victims of violence in 2018 for different reasons, while the number increased to 4,622 in 2019. Of them, 697 were victims of rape and 182 were gang-raped in 2018. The statistics show the figures increased in 2019—1,370 were victims of rape and 237 were gang-raped (the Independent, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic affects both the physical health of and other phases of our social life – ultimately resulting in mental health issues and domestic violence. Therefore, domestic violence against women has been declared as a 'public health problem' by international statutory authorities such as the World Health Organization. During COVID-19 pandemic Bangladesh is also facing an alarming 'shadow pandemic': the rise of violence against women. In addition to domestic violence, rape against women and children has increased. According to information gathered by various NGOs, between January and September 2020, almost 919 women and children were victims of rape. Among the victims, 325 were women and 569 were children. The most alarming news is that the rape of children is nearly two times higher than that of adult women. According to the report of BRAC, a major Bangladeshi non-government organization, almost 70% incidents of gender-based violence against women increased in March and April 2020 compared to the previous year.

In Bangladesh, violence against women is increasing for political influence, administrative failure and lack of social resistance and implementation of laws. All these reasons lead to the committers going free. In fact, various types of violence against women like dowry violence, rape, acid violence and sexual harassment. Very often, victims of rape face severe social stigma where in majority cases victims are treated as the guilty party by the police. As a result, a majority of victims as well as their families do not seek justice and try to hide incident. Due to a weak criminal justice system, insensitivity, corruption, wrong postmortem reports the judicial procedure is hindered. Deep rooted patriarchal mindset and lack of awareness is behind such violence. The inaction and corruption of law enforcement

agencies and their reluctance to investigate or arrest the accused also contribute to the continuing crime of violence against women. Recently, Bangladesh has signed many international treaties and conventions, and enacted different national laws and policies in favor of establishing women's rights.

7. Analysis and Findings

7.1 Content Analysis from KII report and survey

Based on the data collected through the checklist questionnaire from the victims and respondents of stakeholders as well as Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) from the victims of violence, human rights activists, leader of women associations, representative of national and international agencies, stuff of the print and electronic media etc.the following contents have been investigated and observed -

1) Domestic violence

Domestic violence in Bangladesh is the dowry related violence, child marriage, marital rape or violence, verbal abuse, harassment, humiliation and physical torture. Due to the lack of sufficient empowerment for women, domestic violence against women by men is widespread in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. It is more pronounced in poorer, relatively uneducated classes.Usually, these types of violence against women are done by the males. The existing social norms and values system allows men to dominate women within their families and also allows men control over the productive resources.

It is recognized as a 'public health problem' by the World Health Organization. Different types of gender based domestic violence generally take place in Bangladesh such as murder by husband, physical and mental torture by husband, physical and mental torture etc. Women who are victims of domestic violence suffer from low self-esteem, isolation, helplessness as well as health problems.

2) Dowry related domestic violence

It is observed that taking money is the most common form of dowry practiced in the lower socioeconomic classes. Inability to pay the dowry demand causes different types of violence against women. Sometimes, some women even commit suicide due to unbearable mental and physical torture. Though dowry is prohibited it is being practiced both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. It is observed that dowry related domestic violence against women is increasing in an alarming rate. In order to realize dowry, different types of violence are resorted to by the husband/husband's family. Women became victims of physical torture became victims of murder due to the demand of dowry. Women also became victims of acid violence.

Almost every day, we find the case of violence against women in national dailies.

These are involved in verbal abuse, mental torture, humiliation, physical torture, death, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and violence on house maids etc., are perceived as common practices of domestic violence against women by men.

3) Violence on wives

Married women are sometimes found incapable of giving birth to a child; usually face humiliation, verbal abuse, mental or physical torture by husband or husband's family members. At this stage, she becomes stigmatized. Very often husband divorces her or marries another wife. Another important aspect is son preference in this male dominated society. If a wife fails to give birth to a male child, husband tends to convince or force his wife to conceive again and again until a male child is born. Even if she gives birth to a male child, but husband desires to have more than one male child, she has to conceive again in order to agree with husband's decision. In rural areas, the picture is most common. This situation of the wife's subsequent pregnancy generally causes pregnancy-related complications, physical injuries, malnutrition, illness, and other related illnesses.

4) Violence against domestic help

Domestic help means different types of abuse, humiliation and violence by male or female members of the household. Making some mistakes in the domestic work, working slow, breaking crockery and other utensils etc. are the common causes of such abuse and violence against female house maids. Again, male members such as husband, adult son sometimes commit to sexual harassment and violence against female domestic help. These types of violence are from touching female organs, cuddling and molestation, to forced sexual coitus on house maids. Due to severe poverty, need for survival becomes primary consideration for the victims. As a result, victims usually cannot protest such offences. But in some cases, they fall victims of similar sexual violence in the new work place as well.

5) Female child marriage and violence

Female children between 13-15 years of age get married because of the family's desires and decisions in rural areas. Though law prohibits, early marriages take place frequently in rural areas of Bangladesh. It is very challenging for a 13- or 14-years girl to understand and adjust with the new situation of husband's family, family's desires, expectations, and socio-cultural demands. Inability to meet the demands and desires of the husband/husband's family members results in verbal abuse, humiliation and sometimes physical torture on the newly married girl by her husband or husband's family members.

Besides to establish mutually agreed sexual relation becomes nearly impossible in such unequal marital relation. A man's desire to have sex with his wife turned out to be undesirable for a woman. Very often, when husband forcibly has sex with his

wife, it turns out to be a sexual violence. Instead of sexual satisfaction, women often suffer injuries and pain to their organs. This can be called marital rape.

6) Rape

Rape is considered one of the most vicious violence against women in Bangladesh. Rape is physical assault comprising sexual intercourse by the offender. Normally this kind of crime takes place when one or more males initiate such an act against any female without consent of the victim. Rape is an act that may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority etc. Rape is mostly injurious to a woman's self-identity and social future as well as her physical and psychological wellbeing. The ever-increasing rate of rape is an alarming phenomenon and it illustrates the weakening value of women in society. Sometimes it is seen that rape is followed by murder, particularly when gang rape takes place.

7) Marital violence

In Bangladesh, marital violence is not a new phenomenon. It is a weapon used to maintain the unequal power dynamics between men and women. For this marital rape, coerced sexual intercourse, between husband and wife, is not recognized as a criminal offense in Bangladesh. The general cultural background supports the idea that all sexual intercourse between a husband and wife is legal and private matters and external interference are unacceptable. The existing cultural background is that women are socially and religiously obliged to have sex with their husbands, but men do not feel the same pressure to satisfy their wives' sexual desires, and in most cases, Women suggest that they are sexually dissatisfied. Consequently, women have to tolerate domestic violence and make the best of their tragic situation with having no choice.

8) Acid violence

Acid violence is used as a weapon to attack females. It is a crime that has been quite alarming in recent Bangladesh. Acid violence involves throwing acid at a person's body to harm/disfigure and scare the person. Generally acid attacks occur when men want to take revenge for the refusal of proposals for sex or marriage, or demands for dowry. There are a few other causes such as family dispute, protest against husband’s second marriage, infertility, getting divorce from wife. Typically, acid is thrown on the face of a girl or a woman in order to damage her appearance. The effect of acid violence means physical harm and pain, and so the victims also may suffer from prolonged/lifetime social isolation or stigmatization, resulting in loss of self-esteem and inability to study or work, living in shame, hiding the disfigurement with a veil etc.

9) Eve-teasing

When the girls are the victims of teasing by the boys is called eve-teasing. In

Bangladesh, eve-teasing is not a new problem and is a great concern today in the discussion of violence against women. Recently, it has become a big social crisis for the country. This problem is dealt with seriously, by different types of professionals, especially social activists and academics. More precisely, when a boy or a group of boys try to disturb a girl or girls by shouting, showing sexual gesture and instruments obstructing, offering bad proposal etc., while walking on the street, staying somewhere, or riding on any vehicle and other places. It basically causes vulnerability and insecurity for the girls.

It may be mentioned that eve-teasing has now become a serious social infection in Bangladesh. Government along with NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other social organizations are trying their best to combat the situation by enforcing existing laws and implementing motivational/awareness raising activities.

7.2 Role and actions of Media

In the present era, mass media is actively playing significant role to develop the nation. Mass media are playing substantial role for development of women and representing the real picture of gender-based violence against women in every nock and corner of the society in Bangladesh. Media tries to present a clearer and more accurate picture of the roles and responsibilities of both men and women in the society. Media reveals the facts behind every case of violence and play the influential role of making consciousness as well as to enquire the causes to stop the violence against women around the country.

8. Findings

Based on the analysis of the collected data the following consequences have been found –

8.1 The Consequences of gender- based violence

Physical, sexual and psychological violence cause physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for women. All these affect the women's health and wellbeing. This violence leads to high social and economic costs for women, their families and societies. The consequences of gender-based violence actually depends on the nature and particular incident, mentality of the perpetrators and the context in which it happened. Gender-based violence typically has physical, psychological, economic, and social consequences. All these have negative effect on the victims.

8.1.1 The consequences of gender-based violence on women's health

Gender-based violence has numerous serious physical health consequences. These are-

- ✓ May have fatal outcomes like homicide or suicide.
- ✓ May lead to injuries as well as disability of women.
- ✓ May lead to unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, gynecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- ✓ May increases the problem of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies.
- ✓ May lead to depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts.
- ✓ Health effects also include headaches, pain syndromes (back pain, abdominal pain, and chronic pelvic pain) gastrointestinal disorders, limited mobility and poor overall health.
- ✓ May be affected by HIV/AIDS and ultimately lead to death.

8.1.2 The consequences of gender-based violence on women's psychology

Gender-based violence has several serious psychological consequences. These are-

- ✓ They may suffer a range of behavioral and emotional disturbances in family and society.
- ✓ Anxiety, fear, mistrust to others, loneliness, depression and inability to concentrate may be increased.
- ✓ May lead to psychosomatic illness, drug or alcohol use.

8.1.3 The consequences of gender-based violence on economic aspect

Economic growth and activities are disrupted exceedingly due to gender-based violence.Other consequences are-

- ✓ Reduced ability to actively participate in economic activities.
- ✓ Job loss due to absenteeism as a result of violence.
- ✓ Incompetence in work and loss of wages.
- ✓ Negative impact on women's income generating power.

8.1.4 The consequences of gender-based violence on social aspect

The social aspects have ripple effects throughout the society due to gender-violence. Several other consequences are-

- ✓ Limit their ability to care for themselves and children.

- ✓ Rejection and social stigma at community level.
- ✓ Damages women's confidence and increase vulnerability to other types of gender-based violence.
- ✓ Acute fear extends beyond the individual victims to other members of the community.
- ✓ Damages the existing judicial systems of the society.
- ✓ Higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity may be increased.
- ✓ Breakdown of trust in social relationships.

9. Agendas for Media in stopping gender-based violence in Bangladesh

Based on the findings and analysis of the study, the following agendas may be incorporated in stopping violence against women in Bangladesh-

- ➢ Respect the privacy of victims of rape by not printing their names without their permission.
- ➢ Support to make violence against women unacceptable and work to deal with these violence as public health issues.
- ➢ Avoid sensational cases of violence against women. Place the event in the appropriate context and use it as an information and educational opportunity.
- ➢ Promote gender norms as part of life skills and comprehensive sexuality education to young people.
- ➢ Provide free airtime or space for gender-based violence news and announcements of available services.
- ➢ Find out evidence on the magnitude of the problem by carrying out population-based surveys, demographic and health surveys, as well as in surveillance and health information systems.
- ➢ Reduce the level of violence depicted on TV.
- ➢ Development of socially responsible radio and television programs depicting fair and non-violent relationships between men and women.
- ➢ Mobilize communities and individuals in exposing, engaging and promoting action in contributing against GBV.
- ➢ Development of programs that generate public dialogue on sexual assault, rape and abuse.

- Create awareness, attitudinal and behavior change
- Change social norms and attitude.

10. Suggested Action Plans for media to stop gender-based violence

Depending on the findings and analysis of the study the author suggests the stated action plans based on the three major criteria –Prior measures on violence against women, Emergency response measures on violence against women and Post measures on victims on violence against women presented on the following diagram -

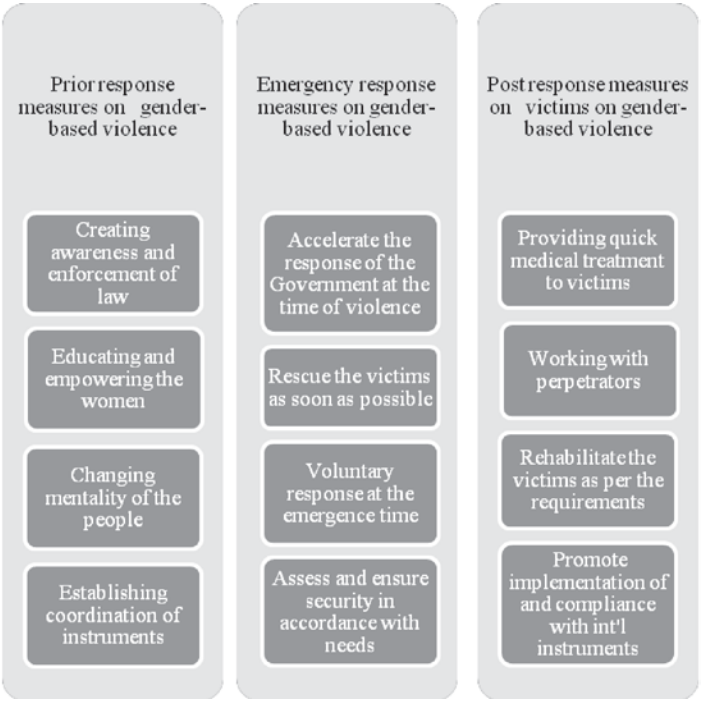


Figure : Suggested action plans for media to stop gender-based violence (GBV)

10.1 Prior response measures on gender-based violence

- **Creating awareness and enforcement of law :** Media should take the initiatives for making awareness among the general people. Media must hold program for making consciousness in enforcement of existing laws against the gender-based violence.
- **Educating and empowering the women :** Media should highlight programs for women education assurance in order to make them empowered which may assist in stopping gender-based violence.
- **Changing mentality of the people :** Only media can motivate common people to change their mentality against gender-based violence. Media can also highlight the punishment of committing violence to demotivate committing any types of violence.
- **Establish coordination of instruments :** Media should establish aim to provide accessible,prompt, confidential, andappropriate services to survivors/victims as well as advocate in raising funds from the government, NGOs and civilian community.

10.2 Emergency response measures on gender-based violence

- **Accelerate the response of the Government at the time of violence :** Media should actively keep eye on the occurrence of any types of violence and should have emergency response to address and accelerate the responsive efforts of the body of government.
- **Rescue the victims as soon as possible :** Media should increase its active involvement as well as real time rescue initiatives to save the victims as soon as getting the information of any types of violence.
- **Voluntary response at the emergence time :** Media should take initiatives voluntarily to find out the reasons and consequences behind gender-based violence. Media should not wait for anything else in discovering clues of any types of violence case.
- **Assess and ensure security in accordance with needs :** Media should enthusiastically contribute in assessing and ensuring security according to the need of the survivors/ victims.

10.3 Post response measures on victims on gender-based violence

- **Providing quick medical treatment and health care to** the **victims :** Media can ensure the required medical treatment of victims of gender-based violence through ensuring quick communication with concerned authority. To recognize and quick response to gender-based violence in one of the effective ways of identifying and assisting the victims.

- **Working with perpetrators :** Media should play significant roles in broadcasting and patronizing the program for perpetrators to refine them both mentally and emotionally as well as demotivate in any types of GBV.
- **Rehabilitate the victims as per the requirements :** Media can also contribute in reforming the life of victims, make them confident enough to turn back in their previous life, upgrade the scope of social acceptance and dignity, raise the common people opinions for ensuring post rehabilitation of the victims as per their requirements.
- **Promote implementation of and compliance with international instruments :** Media should promote the implementation of required requirements for the victims in compliance with United Nations, human rights, and humanitarian agencies to share the responsibility with the aim at ensuring human rights protection.

11. Conclusion

Media has a dominant role in fighting against gender-based violence as it can ensure accountability and transparency from the public and private sectors. Media mirrors society's confusion and inconsistency about violence against women.Though there are many known factors to influence public perceptions about violence against women, this paper actually tries to examine the role of media. The link between media reporting and behavior should be well-established to represent the media agendas in dispelling myths and reinforcing information about the true nature and extent of the problem. It is unfortunate that reporting on violence against women challenges rather than reinforces cultural and social norms about gender is still the minority. The more knowledge-based research is needed as to the impact of news coverage on public understandings, attitudes and behaviors to more effectively promote progressive social change. Mass media through proper investigative journalism are relentlessly playing a crucial role in exposing and fighting against all types of GBV.

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