<table>
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<th>LEARNING OUTCOME 1:</th>
<th>Participants will have a better understanding of gender-based violence (GBV) and key concepts related to GBV.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Objectives:</td>
<td>At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Explain the relationship between gender and social power</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>Explain causes and contributing factors of GBV</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>Identify 3 types of GBV</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>Describe at least 3 consequences of GBV</td>
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<th>LEARNING OUTCOME 2:</th>
<th>Participants will understand the links between humanitarian assistance and GBV and how to better protect women and girls.</th>
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<td>Specific Learning Objectives:</td>
<td>At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>Explain how emergencies can increase the risks of violence that women and girls face.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global problem and occurs in every country around the world. In cases of GBV, a survivor has no choice to refuse or pursue other options without severe social, physical, or psychological consequences.

Though survivors of GBV can be men, in most cases, survivors are women because in most cultures, most countries and most societies, women are in a disadvantaged position compared to men.

Did you know?
• Women perform two-thirds of the world’s work.
• Women earn one-tenth of the world’s income.
• Women are two-thirds of the world’s illiterates.
• Women own less than one percent of the world’s property.

These disadvantages are based on gender.

GENDER AND SEX

Gender is the English word used to describe cultural or societal differences between men and women. These differences can change and are determined by society, culture, religion, and family beliefs. By cultural and social differences we mean the roles or responsibilities assigned to a person based on whether they are a man or woman, boy or girl. Society, culture and tradition decide what the acceptable roles and responsibilities are for each gender.

Gender determines:
• Differences in power between males and females
• Roles and responsibilities men and women have
• Expectations of men and women
• Privileges men and women enjoy
• Rights men and women are given
• Limitations placed on men and women
• Opportunities men and women have
• Access and control of services and goods

Gender roles and responsibilities are learned and can be changed, but it is often a long-term process.
Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women. By biological differences we mean physical differences that people are born with. These differences include the ability and inability to birth children or to grow a beard. Sexual differences cannot be changed.

- What are some examples of roles, opportunities or privileges for men and women in Pakistan that are determined by gender?

**Gender and Social Power**

In trying to understand violence against women and girls, it is important to understand social power. Social power refers to the control exercised by one social group, institution or organization or its members over the actions and/or the minds of another group or its members, limiting the freedoms of others, or influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies.¹

- Which groups or institutions have power in Pakistan?
- What gives them their power?

Power abuse involves the abuse of force and may result in limiting the freedom of action of a certain group. It also, more crucially, may affect the minds of people. That is, through access to and control over public discourse and communication, dominant social groups or institutions may influence the structures of text and talk in such a way that, as a result, the knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are more or less indirectly affected in the interest of the dominant group.²

Those who have less power are always more vulnerable to abuse. Power is not, in and of itself, a bad thing. But those in positions of power may abuse their power for their own benefit.

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² Ibid.
Gender norms and relations determine women, girls, boys and men’s access and control over resources, opportunities, privileges, and decision-making processes. In most communities, most cultures and most societies, girls and women have less power than men and boys.

- How do gender roles in Pakistan affect the levels of power and authority afforded to women, girls, men and boys?

Let’s think about the example of access to education. In Pakistan, only 12% of girls are enrolled in secondary school compared with 22% of boys. Compare that with Bangladesh where 32% percent of girls and 35% of boys are enrolled in secondary school or Iran where 75% percent of girls and 78% of boys are enrolled in secondary school.

- What might explain lower secondary school enrollment rates amongst girls?
- What are some possible effects of these lower enrollment rates?

Consider the following facts:
- In Pakistan, the gap of ten percentage points leads to an estimated loss of $3.7 billion in economic growth every year.\(^3\)
- Girls who are educated are less likely to be exploited, less likely to fall victim to trafficking and less likely to be infected with HIV.
- There is a strong correlation between under-5 mortality rates and educational attainment of mothers; countries with higher rates of educational attainment amongst women have lower under-5 mortality rates.\(^4\)

**HUMAN RIGHTS, CULTURE AND TRADITION**

Gender-based violence must be looked at within a human rights framework. Acts of GBV violate a number of human rights principles protected by international human rights agreements and conventions and domestic law.

Some of these rights include:
- The right to life, liberty and security of the person
- The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- The right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment
- The right to freedom of opinion and expression
- The right to education and personal development
- The right to protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

Are these rights guaranteed to everyone?

While cultural norms and religious beliefs must be treated with respect, we should also keep in mind that some norms and beliefs could be harmful. Cultural sensitivity does not outweigh the mandate and legal obligation that humanitarian workers have to respect and promote the human rights of all

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members of an affected population. Though certain traditional practices are often part of a rite of passage or ceremonial event for women and girls, harmful traditional practices, including early marriage and forced marriage, cannot be overlooked nor justified on the grounds of tradition, culture or social conformity.

The United Nations works to eliminate harmful practices and support the human rights of women, girls, boys and men by working with communities to clarify human rights issues in the context of cultural beliefs, and to encourage cultural opinion leaders to understand that realization of human rights is instrumental to sound development and the health and well-being of all members of a community, and does not threaten cultural sustainability.

VIOLENCE AND CONSENT

Violence may be physical, psychological or mental (threats, coercion, manipulation), emotional, social or economic. Using violence involves forcing someone to do something against her or his will.

What kind of violence is happening in Pakistan?
What kinds of violence are generally directed against women and girls?

Even though a survivor may “agree,” acts of violence, such as gender-based violence, occur without consent.

What does it mean to give consent?

Informed Consent

Best practice and international standards in GBV, social work and healthcare dictate that client information only be shared if a client has given her informed consent to share the information. This is to establish the trust necessary to promote a client’s healing and recovery as well as to mitigate the very real risks that women and girls face in disclosing incidents to service providers.

Informed consent means that a person fully understands and voluntarily agrees to participate in an activity. In order to give informed consent, a person must:

• Have all information about the agreement and its consequences
• Be over the age of 18
• Be mentally sound enough to understand the agreement and the consequences
• Have equal power in the relationship

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that all persons under the age of 18 are children and that children are never able to give informed consent. This includes all acts of female genital cutting, marriage, and sexual relationships.
What might happen when all of the ingredients for informed consent are not present?

UNDERSTANDING GBV

Gender-based violence includes more than sexual assault and rape. In acts of gender-based violence, unequal power relationships are abused through the use of physical force or other means of coercion or threat.

Gender-based means:
- Based on gender roles, responsibilities, expectations, privileges, limitations
- Based on what it means to be female or male within a family, society or community

Gender-based violence is violence perpetrated against a person without her or his consent based on her or his gender role, responsibilities, expectations, privileges and limitations. Gender-based violence includes the word gender because survivors are targeted because of their gender or roles in society.

During acts of gender-based violence, unequal power relationships are abused through the use of force or other means of coercion or threat. In circumstances of GBV, a survivor has no choice to refuse or pursue other options without severe social, physical, or psychological consequences.

Most acts of GBV are directed against women because they are female and have unequal power in relationships with men and low status in general throughout the world. This lack of power and status make women more vulnerable to acts of violence.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, defines 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.

It encompasses, but is not limited to:
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape,

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5 Summarized from definitions in UNHCR guidelines and the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.

Articles 1 & 2 of the UN Declaration on Violence Against Women, 1993

What are some examples of gender-based violence happening in Pakistan?

**WHY DOES GBV HAPPEN?**

What is the root cause of gender-based violence?

The ABUSE OF POWER is the root cause of GBV.

What are some contributing factors that contribute to acts of GBV?

Contributing factors, or factors that increase the risk or severity of GBV, include:

- Gender roles where women have unequal power
- A desire for power or control
- Politics or national policies
- Collapse of traditional society and family supports
- Harmful religious or cultural beliefs
- Poverty
- Substance abuse
- War and displacement
- Corruption
- Harmful traditions
- Design or social structure of a camp
- Limited availability of resources, such as food, water, fuel wood
- Lack of police protection or other security
- General lawlessness
- Community lack of awareness or belief in human rights for all

How does gender make women and girls more vulnerable to acts of GBV? How do disasters and refugee or returnee situations increase a person’s vulnerability? What role does poverty play in GBV?

**TYPES OF GBV**

Many women and girls in Pakistan have encountered some form of gender-based violence in their lifetimes.

What are some examples of gender-based violence?
Understanding GBV in Emergencies

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is an umbrella term which includes rape, attempted rape, sexual abuse (including child sexual abuse) and sexual exploitation.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE encompasses a wide variety of abuses, such as:
- Sexual violence, including rape, attempted rape, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse
- Intimate partner violence
- Honor killing
- Trafficking and slavery
- Forced and/or early marriage
- Psychological abuse, such as sexual threats and humiliation
- Harmful traditional practices (swara or vani, karo-kari, etc)

SEXUAL VIOLENCE is any sexual act (or attempt to obtain a sexual act), unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic a person’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

Sexual violence is a serious, life-threatening issue affecting women and children. Though survivors of sexual violence can be men, in most cases, survivors are women because in most cultures, most countries and most societies, women are in a disadvantaged position compared to men.

Adequate, appropriate, and comprehensive prevention and response are lacking in most countries worldwide. Sexual violence can result in serious injury, death or illness, and contribute to unintended pregnancy, complications of pregnancy and childbirth, maternal mortality, unsafe abortion, HIV infection, child and infant mortality and a host of other adverse outcomes.

During acts of sexual violence, unequal power relationships are abused through the use of force or other means of coercion or threat. In circumstances of sexual violence, a survivor has no choice to refuse or pursue other options without severe social, physical, or psychological consequences.

Violence against women also undermines efforts to improve child, family, and community health and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. In fact, the World Bank estimates that violence against women kills and harms as many women of reproductive age as cancer and is a greater cause of illness than traffic accidents and malaria combined.⁶

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The consequences of sexual violence may make survivor even more vulnerable and social stigma may prevent them from seeking appropriate care and support.

**Rape**

Rape is all too often used as a weapon of war and armed conflict often increases a girl’s risk of surviving rape or other acts of sexual violence. Reports suggest that at least 250,000 women and girls, and perhaps as many as 500,000 were raped during the genocide in Rwanda.

**RAPE**

penetration of the vagina or anus with the penis, other body part or foreign object without consent. This includes forced oral sex.

Attempted rape is an effort to rape someone, which does not meet with success, falling short of penetration. Rape and attempted rape involve the use of force, threat of force, and/or coercion. Any degree of penetration is considered rape.

Rape includes:
- Rape of an adult female
- Rape of a minor, male or female, including incest.
- Gang rape, if there is more than one assailant
- Marital rape, between a husband and wife
- Male rape, sometimes known as sodomy
- Rape between spouses or intimate partners is also a type of domestic violence (discussed below).

**Sexual Assault**

**SEXUAL ASSAULT**

includes any form of non-consensual sexual contact or action that does not result in or include penetration.

Sexual assault type does not include rape, in other words where penetration has occurred. Examples of sexual assault include:
- Attempted rape
- Fondling or touching of genitalia or buttocks
- Insertion of foreign objects into the genitals
- Forced removal of clothing
- Forcing someone to engage in sexual acts or positions, including forced oral sex
- Forcing someone to watch sexual acts

Sexual assault includes acts performed on a minor. Again, even if a child gives consent, she or he cannot legally consent due to her or his age.
Sexual Exploitation

Vulnerable groups of people, like women and children, are exposed to exploitation during and after emergencies. Exploitation generally refers to someone in a position of power using someone less powerful for financial or social gain or personal pleasure. Indentured servitude, slavery, and child labor are some examples of economic exploitation.

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual violence and involves the use and abuse of power and vulnerability. In sexual exploitation, unequal power relationships are exploited through the use of physical force or other means of coercion (threat, promise of food or services, withholding aid, giving preferential treatment) to obtain sexual acts from a more vulnerable person. Those who have less power in relationships are always more vulnerable to abuse.

In most every emergency around the world, sexual exploitation is a serious issue that affects girls and women most severely.

Some examples of sexual exploitation include:

- A humanitarian worker requiring a sexual act in exchange for material assistance, favors, or privileges.
- A teacher requiring a sexual act in exchange for passing grade or admission to class.
- A refugee leader requiring a sexual act in exchange for favors or privileges.
- A soldier or security officer requiring a sexual act in exchange for safe passage or protection.
- A driver requiring a sexual act in exchange for a ride.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence is “the most prevalent yet relatively hidden form of violence against women and girls. While reliable figures are hard to come by, studies estimate that that, from country to country, between 20 and 50 percent of women have experienced physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner.”

Each year, an estimated 1.3 million women around the world are victims of physical assault.

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8 UNICEF, Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls, Innocenti Digest No. 6.
by an intimate partner. Worldwide, between 40 and 70% of all female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.  

Intimate partner violence can be sexual, physical, and/or mental or emotional abuse. What makes intimate partner violence different than other types of violence discussed is that the perpetrator and survivor are intimate partners.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE
is violence between intimate partners (spouses, boyfriend and girlfriend) and can occur within the home or community.

Some examples of intimate partner violence include:
- Slapping, hitting, beating, kicking, use of weapons
- Verbal and emotional abuse, including public humiliation, forced isolation
- Murder or threats to life
- Forced suicide
- Setting a partner’s clothes on fire (stove burning)
- Acid throwing
- A partner’s control and deprivation of the other partner’s access to food, water, shelter, clothing, health care, fertility, such as forced pregnancies and/or abortions
- A partner is beaten or abused for not performing his or her duties according to the other partner’s expectations. For example she might refuse sex or may prepare the meals too late and as a result will be beaten or otherwise abused.

Intimate partner violence is a type of domestic violence according to the legal definition of domestic violence in Pakistan. The 2010 Domestic Violence Bill defines domestic violence as:

All intentional acts of gender-based or other physical or psychological abuse committed by an accused against women, children or other vulnerable persons, with whom the accused person is or has been in a domestic relationship

Other Gender-Based Violence
Other gender-based violence includes physical, mental or social abuse that is directed against a person because of his or her gender role in a society or culture. In these cases, a person has no choice to refuse or pursue other options without severe social, physical, or psychological consequences.

Examples may include:
- Forced and early marriage, when parents or others (including the perpetrator) arrange for and/or force a minor to marry. A minor is anyone under the age of 18. Forced and early marriage is a form

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of GBV because a minor is unable to make informed choices. In Pakistan, 24 percent of 18-year-old girls are already married and 9 percent are mothers by the time they reach 19.11

- Female genital cutting (FGC) is the cutting of healthy genital tissue, usually in ceremonies, and done for purposes of tradition, a rite of passage and social acceptance. Adult women may consent to FGC due to social and cultural force, or may be physically forced. Minors are often physically forced; even if not, they are unable to give consent due to their age.

- A girl is not allowed to go to school because of gender role expectations in the family. For example, she may be expected to take care of the housekeeping, cooking, or to care of children.

- Girls and women are trafficked or smuggled for labor and/or for sexual purposes.

**Non-GBV Cases**

Some cases come to GBV workers, which are not gender-based violence. It is tempting to call these cases GBV because they may be at risk for GBV. These should not be categorized as GBV cases, but they might be counted when describing the program’s actions and activities in reports, particularly for the area of prevention.

Examples include:

- Child abuse or child beating which is not gender-based
- Family disputes, such as arguments over ration cards or non-food items
- Domestic arguments and problems. For example, polygamy-related problems or problems related to children with behavior issues
- Reproductive health problems, such as impotency, infertility, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy.

**CONSEQUENCES OF GBV**

Gender-based violence results in many negative consequences for the survivor. Remember, no one person is alike and responses to traumatic events will vary. Women and girls who have had very difficult experiences are often resilient. This resilience, and their ability to join together to support one another, are important resources to build on.

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<tr>
<th>FATAL OUTCOMES of gender-based violence include:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>Maternal mortality</td>
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<td>Suicide</td>
<td>Infant mortality</td>
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<th>NON-FATAL OUTCOMES of gender-based violence include:</th>
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<td>Acute Physical</td>
<td>Chronic Physical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shock</td>
<td>Somatic complaints</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disease</td>
<td>Chronic Infections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>Chronic pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemorrhaging</td>
<td>Gastrointestinal problems</td>
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*Understanding GBV in Emergencies*
Physical Consequences

Physical consequences of GBV can include: serious injuries, injuries during pregnancy, injuries to children, unwanted and early pregnancy, STIs including HIV/AIDS, increased vulnerability to disease, suicide and/or death.

Death and Suicide

Numerous studies report that most women who are murdered are killed by their partner or ex-partner. Violence that begins with threats may end in forced "suicide," death from injuries, or homicide. For women who survive an incident of GBV, the emotional and physical strain can lead to suicide.

Physical Injuries

The injuries sustained by women because of physical and sexual abuse may be extremely serious. Many incidents result in injuries, ranging from bruises and fractures to chronic disabilities, a high percentage of which require medical treatment. Survivors of GBV may develop serious gynecological problems, such as vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF) and rectovaginal fistula (RVF), the tearing of the delicate tissue between the bladder and vagina or the vagina and rectum. RVF and VVF leave women in pain and unable to control the release of urine and feces. The tissue can be repaired through surgery, but in most cases the surgery is very expensive and access to skilled surgeons is limited.

Violence during pregnancy is a risk to the health of both mothers and their unborn children. Children in violent families may also be victims of abuse. Frequently, children are injured while trying to defend their mothers.

Unwanted and Early Pregnancy

Though both males and females may suffer sexual violence, girls and women carry the additional burden of unwanted pregnancies. Violence against women may result in unwanted pregnancy, either through rape or by affecting a woman’s ability to negotiate contraceptive use. For example, some women may
be afraid to raise the issue of contraceptive use with their sexual partners for fear of being beaten or abandoned.

When an unwanted pregnancy occurs, some women try to resolve their dilemma through abortion. In countries where abortion is illegal, expensive or difficult to obtain, women may resort to illegal abortions, at times with fatal consequences, such as drinking or eating poisonous substances which can result in serious physical injuries or death.

Adolescents who are abused, or who have been abused as children, are much less likely to develop a sense of self-esteem and belonging than those who have not experienced abuse. They are more likely to neglect themselves and engage in risky behavior such as early or unprotected sexual intercourse.

A growing number of studies suggest that girls who are sexually abused during childhood are at much greater risk of unwanted pregnancy during adolescence. This greater risk of unwanted pregnancy brings with it many additional problems. For instance, early pregnancy, childbearing before girls are biologically and psychologically mature, is associated with adverse health outcomes for both the mother and child. Infants may be premature, of low birth weight, or be small for gestational age.

Risks of medical complications and pregnancy-related injuries are higher for adolescent girls and young women than adults. The maternal mortality rate for girls between 11 and 13 is three times greater than for women between the ages of 20 and 24.\textsuperscript{12}

Because a woman’s pelvis may be too narrow for childbirth, obstructed labor is amongst the more serious consequences of early marriage as women and girls who marry at a young age are likely to become pregnant. Obstructed labor can also increase a woman’s risk of fistula.

\textbf{STIs Including HIV/AIDS}

As with unwanted pregnancy, women are vulnerable to contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) because they are unable to negotiate protection or as a result of rape or sexual abuse. Women with STIs have a higher risk of complications during pregnancy, including sepsis, spontaneous abortion and premature birth. Some STIs increase a woman’s vulnerability to HIV, as well. Violent rape and sexual abuse may also increase their risks because resulting tears to delicate vaginal tissue allow the virus easier entry into the bloodstream. With HIV/AIDS, the consequences are usually fatal for the woman, and possibly for her children as well.

\textbf{Vulnerability to Disease}

Violence against women and girls increases their risk of poor health. A growing number of studies exploring the connections between violence and health consistently report negative effects. Compared with non-abused women, women who have suffered any kind of violence are more likely to experience a number of serious health problems.

It has been suggested that abused women’s increased vulnerability to illness may be due partly to lowered immunity because of stress resulting from the abuse. In addition, self-neglect and increased risk taking have also been implicated.

\textsuperscript{12} Mertus, Flowers and Dutt, 1999.
Psychological Consequences
Psychological consequences of GBV can include post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and fear, anger, shame, insecurity, self-hate, self-blame, mental illness, and/or suicidal thoughts and behavior.

Mental Health Problems
Research suggests that abused women endure enormous psychological suffering because of violence. Many are severely depressed or anxious, while others display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. They may be chronically fatigued, but unable to sleep; they may have nightmares or eating disorders; they may turn to alcohol and drugs to numb their pain; or they may become isolated and withdrawn.

Child rape and child sexual abuse can cause similar psychological damage. One occurrence of sexual violence may be sufficient to create long-lasting negative effects, especially if the survivor does not receive appropriate support. Like violence against women in the family, child sexual abuse often continues for many years and its disabling effects can carry over into adult life.

Effects on Children who Witness Violence
Research has shown that children who witness domestic violence often suffer many of the same symptoms as children who have been physically or sexually abused themselves. Girls who witness their father’s or stepfather’s violent treatment of their mother are also more likely to accept violence as a normal part of marriage than girls from non-violent homes. Boys who have witnessed the same violence, on the other hand, are more likely to be violent to their partners as adults.

Social Consequences

Effects on the Survivor
Survivors of gender-based violence often experience negative social consequences as the result of victim-blaming. These include: rejection from family, family breakdown, social rejection and isolation, social stigma, withdrawal from social and community life. This can lead to a vicious cycle.

As a result of the social stigma, many survivors never report incidents of gender-based violence. In some cases where a child is born as a result of rape, community stigma against the mother and her child may increase. With few options for income and an additional mouth to feed, these mothers may be forced to engage in high-risk behavior, such as transactional sex, in order to survive.

Effects on Society
Women experiencing violence may have a reduced contribution to society in addition to their own potential self-realization.

The economic impact of abuse may extend to losses in women’s earning potential or capacity to work. This may be due to a survivor’s anxiety, depression, decreasing their ability to perform to the best of their ability at school or in the workplace. Because of their experience of having no control over their own bodies, the world may become a threatening place where they avoid challenges of any kind. In the
United States alone, intimate partner violence-related homicides and injuries cost the country $37 billion each year.\textsuperscript{13}

In areas where sexual abuse of female students by male teachers is prevalent, girls may stay away from school to escape unwanted attention. Elsewhere, parents who fear that their daughters will be sexually assaulted may keep them at home until they are “safely” married.

In many countries, a girl who becomes pregnant is expelled from school, regardless of whether or not the pregnancy was the result of a rape. The consequence, in every case, is a curtailed education, a decreased chance of securing gainful employment, and a reduced contribution to the quality of life for her community.

**UNDERSTANDING EMERGENCIES**

Both natural disasters and complex emergencies have an enormous effect on human lives and well-being. Natural disasters, such as the 2010 floods in Pakistan or the earthquake in Haiti, resulted in massive loss of life, separated families, destroyed thousands of homes and buildings and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami is estimated to have killed over 225,000 people across twelve countries and is one of the deadliest natural disasters recorded in history.\textsuperscript{14} Haiti’s January 2010 earthquake is estimated to have killed over 230,000 and left more than 1.2 million people homeless.\textsuperscript{15}

But loss of life is not the only effect of emergencies.

All too often the human rights of disaster victims are not sufficiently taken into account. Unequal access to assistance, discrimination in aid provision, enforced relocation ... gender-based violence, loss of documentation, recruitment of children into fighting forces, unsafe or involuntary return or resettlement, and issues of property restitution are just some of the problems that are often encountered by those affected by the consequences of natural disasters.\textsuperscript{16}

Communities affected by emergencies may face restricted access to services, food and other resources. Human rights abuses, such as torture, extrajudicial killings and disappearances, unlawful imprisonment and forced labor, may occur. Violence against women and children, including sexual violence and trafficking, has been reported and well-documented in conflict settings as well as many natural disasters.


**Women and Girls in Emergencies**

Women and children are far more likely than men to die during natural disasters. In the 2005 tsunami, in parts of Indonesia and Sri Lanka up to 80% of those who died were women. In an analysis of data from 141 countries, natural disasters lowered the life expectancy of women more than that of men.\(^{17}\)

- Women and girls are at increased risk of violence in conflict and disaster-affected situations
- Women do not always have equal access to relief aid
- Women are often excluded from rebuilding and reconstruction efforts

Throughout the world, the rights of women and girls remain undervalued and overlooked. This is particularly true in emergencies when many humanitarian actors are focused on rolling-out health services, implementing water and sanitation programs and distributing food and non-food item distributions in the shortest amount of time possible, without regard to the particular needs, rights and vulnerabilities of women and girls.

Overlooking the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls can impact other parts of a disaster-affected community. After the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, many women were forced to share shelter with distant male relatives and/or non-related men. Diminished privacy led many women to stop breastfeeding as they felt uncomfortable exposing their breasts in front of men. As a result, children’s nutrition levels suffered. Aid workers highlighted the urgent need to created lactation corners to ensure continued breastfeeding.\(^{18}\)

Another particular problem that women faced in the camps was a lack of appropriate sanitation facilities. Facing a shortage of toilets, men used open spaces and fields, but women only felt comfortable doing so in the very early morning or at night. In one camp, in Balakot, two cousins were attacked while walking towards the latrine – they shouted for help and were rescued. Too embarrassed or fearful of their security to walk openly to latrines in the camps, many women relieved themselves in their tents despite the health hazards. The incidence of urinary tract infections was high and women also no longer had the privacy to wash and dry the strips of cotton they use during menstruation.\(^{19}\)

In most countries around the world, gender roles limit women and girls’ access to resources and opportunities, making them more vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and conflicts. They are disproportionately at risk of injury and death and as caregivers, are often responsible for meeting the increased basic needs of their children and other family members during an emergency. At the same time, due to pre-existing discrimination, many women find it difficult to secure the resources necessary to support themselves and others under their care; emergencies increase their responsibilities while limiting their access to support.

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\(^{18}\) IASC Gender Guidelines, page 71.

Women who have lost their husbands or partners and children who have been separated from their families face higher levels of insecurity. They are at risk of sexual and economic exploitation, trafficking, sexual violence and other types of violence.

It is important to remember that the effects of emergencies will differ between men and women, young and old and an individual’s vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and violence may be determined by specific aspects of her or his life.

**GBV IN EMERGENCIES**

In the early stages of an emergency, sexual violence is the most immediate and life-threatening form of GBV. This includes rape and the exchange of sexual acts for food, services or protection. The type and extent of sexual violence depends on the emergency. Sexual violence against women and girls has been widely-reported in conflict settings and during displacement. Violence against women and girls may increase as the systems and structures that protect them—including their families and communities, law enforcement, community norms, or religious codes—are weakened or destroyed.

It is important to remember that sexual violence is under-reported even in well-resourced settings worldwide, and it will be difficult if not impossible to obtain an accurate measurement of the magnitude of the problem in an emergency.

Though typically overlooked, sexual violence may also be a consequence of natural disasters as, like conflicts, disasters also break down social networks and systems that protect women and girls in times of peace and stability. Humanitarian actors designing responses to natural disasters rarely undertake measures to reduce this risk of sexual violence and the issue as a whole receives very little attention from the humanitarian community, the media, donors and other stakeholders.

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The gaps in recognition and response to GBV at the onset of the emergency mean that crucial protection systems and response services are implemented long after the initial days of a crisis. In the aftermath of natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina in the United States and the 2004 tsunami, communities were displaced in mass emergency temporary shelters. Shelters in Louisiana and makeshift camps in Aceh, Indonesia did not incorporate many elements of preventative safety measures to reduce the risk of violence against women and girls.

The humanitarian community typically prioritizes healthcare, water and sanitation services, and shelter from the onset of a response to a natural disaster, often preferring to wait until later in an emergency to address GBV. This leaves vulnerable populations, specifically women and girls, at high risk of preventable acts of sexual violence, including rape, sexual abuse and exploitation as well as domestic violence.

**Hurricane Katrina, USA, August 2005**

I had lain down and gone to sleep and somebody woke me up. They put their hand over my mouth, and a knife to my throat, and said ‘If you don’t do what I want, I’m gonna kill you and then I’ll do what I want to you anyway and throw your body over the side of the building.’

I found some police officers. I told them that a lot of us had been raped down there by guys who had come into the neighborhood, where we were, that were helping us to save people. But the other men, they came and they started raping women...and they started killing them. And I don’t know who these people were. I’m not going to tell you I know who they were because I don’t. But what I want people to understand is that if we had not been left down there like the animals that they were treating us like, all of those things wouldn’t have happened.21

*Survivor of rape speaking after Hurricane Katrina, September 2005*

As response and recovery efforts progress, displaced populations remain in constantly changing and unstable situations. This may increase incidents of domestic violence as gender roles and power dynamics between partners change. After the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, most of the camps were cramped and there was no private space for spouses, which resulted in tensions and conflict. Coping mechanisms for both males and females were non-existent, and domestic violence increased. A 23-year-old mother of two was taken to a hospital after her husband assaulted her for not cooking food to his liking.

Camp management and security were also critical issues, and increased incidences of sexual harassment were reported, adding to the challenges women faced.

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CASE STUDIES
The Impact of Emergencies on Women and Girls

REFERENCES AND SOURCES


38. ______, Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies.