

5. Gender-Based Violence against Women and Children in Our Communities: The Unspoken Epidemic

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5.1 Introduction:

One of the most serious human rights abuses is gender-based violence (GBV), which has its roots in institutional discrimination and unequal power relations. GBV affects people all around the world and is not limited by age, culture, or socioeconomic background. Survivors and communities are frequently left with permanent wounds. This chapter examines the relationship between GBV and human rights, emphasizing international efforts, legal frameworks, and ongoing difficulties in resolving this important issue. It includes a wide range of abuse that stems from gender inequality and power disparities, including physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional abuse. Although it can also affect men, boys, and gender minorities, GBV disproportionately affects women and girls, whether it takes the form of sexual harassment, human trafficking, domestic violence, or dangerous customs like female genital mutilation.

Fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by international human rights legislation to all people are fundamentally violated by gender-based violence because of this. These include the freedom from discrimination and violence; the right to life, liberty, and security; and the right to engage in society to the fullest extent possible. In addition to causing acute physical and psychological injury, GBV has a lasting effect on victims, their families, and their communities, which feeds the cycles of inequality, poverty, and trauma.

The continuation of gender-based violence exposes structural problems with patriarchy, social norms that accept abuse, and the inadequacy of institutional and legal frameworks in defending the rights of marginalized groups. Gender-based violence persists in spite of international initiatives, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Therefore, the task at hand involves not only denouncing this violence but also tearing down the legal, social, and cultural institutions that support it.

This chapter examines the intricate connection between human rights violations and gender-based violence, looking at the underlying causes, the wide-ranging effects, and the local and international efforts needed to overcome this evil. We can take significant action to create a more just and equitable world where everyone, regardless of gender, can live without fear or violence by realizing the close links between human rights violations and gender inequality.

5.2 Understanding Gender-Based Violence:

The United Nations defines gender-based violence as "harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender."¹ This type of violence disproportionately impacts women and girls and includes physical, sexual, psychological, and financial harm. Honor killings, trafficking, sexual harassment, domestic abuse, and female genital mutilation (FGM) are examples of GBV. GBV mostly affects women and girls, but it also affects men, boys, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, though in different ways.

The global epidemic of gender-based violence (GBV) cuts beyond country boundaries, cultural norms, and socioeconomic strata.² It causes severe physical, psychological, and emotional harm to millions of people annually.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in three women worldwide have been the victim of physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives, usually at the hands of an intimate partner. GBV is incredibly common, as this statistic shows, but it's crucial to understand that serious underreporting means the problem's actual scope is probably considerably larger. The concealment of these crimes is facilitated by societal norms that frequently accept or ignore violence, fear of reprisals, cultural stigma, and limited access to support networks.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 35% of women globally have been victims of physical or sexual assault³; however, this number is considered to be conservative.

In addition to being a personal tragedy for the victims, violence against women has significant societal repercussions. For instance, the prevalence of sexual assault rises sharply in conflict areas; estimates indicate that up to 50% of women in these areas may experience sexual violence at some point in their lives.

Gender-based violence has equally significant financial repercussions. A World Bank analysis estimates that the yearly global economic loss from intimate partner violence alone is \$1.5 trillion, or 2% of the world's gross domestic product.⁴ This covers expenses for social welfare programs, legal services, lost productivity, and medical treatment. GBV has similarly serious social repercussions, as it contributes to poverty cycles, mental health problems, and lost opportunities for impacted individuals and communities.

¹Christine Chinkin, *Violence Against Women: The International Legal Response* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

²Flavia Agnes, *Law and Gender Inequality: The Politics of Women's Rights in India* 45 (2d ed. 2020) x.

³*Finding Violence Against Women: Essential Strategies and Best Practices*. 20th ed. United Nations Publications, 2024.

⁴Academia,

https://www.academia.edu/29020681/Intimate_partner_violence_Economic_costs_and_implications_for_growth_and_development(Accessed in November 2024)

Despite these alarming figures, underreporting has kept the full scope of gender-based violence hidden. The stigma and social taboos surrounding sexual assault, domestic violence, and other types of abuse keep victims from reporting their experiences or seeking assistance in many areas. Survivors are frequently silenced by societal attitudes that accept violence as a means of control or discipline as well as anxieties about reprisals. The court system may fail victims, leaving them without recourse and sustaining the cycle of violence in nations where legal frameworks may not offer sufficient protection or where law enforcement may be complicit in the continuation of abuse.

Given these facts, combating gender-based violence necessitates a multifaceted strategy that involves changing societal perceptions, bolstering legal safeguards, and holding offenders accountable in addition to increasing awareness and offering resources to survivors. This problem has a huge scope, and it is imperative that something be done immediately. A serious human rights violation, the ongoing global epidemic of gender-based violence necessitates swift and continuous response at all societal levels.

5.3 The Multifaceted Nature of Violence Against Women:

Gender-based violence (GBV) is not a single problem; rather, it refers to a broad category of violent behaviors that can take many different forms, occur in a variety of contexts, and have deep-rooted causes.

These elements—power disparities, gender inequity, cultural standards, and societal norms—intersect to sustain violence against women, children, and gender minorities. Addressing GBV necessitates a thorough and nuanced grasp of its many dimensions due to its heterogeneous nature. The various forms of violence, their settings, and the underlying factors that contribute to them will all be covered in this section.

Contributing Factors to Gender Based Violence:

1. Patriarchy and gender inequality
2. Poverty and lack of education
3. Cultural norms and societal acceptance
4. Weak law enforcement and judicial systems

Systemic injustices and deeply ingrained societal norms are the root causes of GBV. Important contributing elements consist of:

1. A patriarchal culture and gender inequality: A Patriarchal culture is one that emphasizes male supremacy and female submission.⁵
2. Poverty and lack of education: Inequalities in wealth frequently make people more vulnerable and keep them in abusive relationships.⁶

⁵ Connell, R. W. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

⁶vol. 20, Kabeer, Naila. "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." *World Development*, no. 4, 1994.

3. Cultural norms and societal acceptance: Cultural norms and societal acceptance refer to the unwritten rules and expectations of a society that shape people's behaviors, beliefs, and values.⁷
4. Weak law enforcement and judicial system: When laws are not adequately enforced, survivors are discouraged from pursuing justice.⁸

5.4 Gender-Based Violence as a Human Rights Violation:

GBV violates fundamental human rights enshrined in international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

International Frameworks Addressing GBV:

1. **The UDHR (1948):** Asserts the right to life, liberty, and security of person, all of which are compromised in cases of GBV⁹
2. **CEDAW (1979):** Mandates state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women.¹⁰
3. **Istanbul Convention (2011):** Focuses specifically on preventing violence against women and domestic violence.¹¹

5.5 Types of Gender-Based Violence:

The Diverse Characteristics of Gender-Based Violence: Forms, Contexts, and Origins. The sources provide a thorough analysis of gender-based violence, shedding light on its complex character, which goes beyond physical acts to include a range of abuse that takes place in both public and private contexts.

5.5.1 Violence Types:

Five interrelated forms of gender-based violence are identified by the sources:

- **Physical Violence:** This includes actions like beating, burning, kicking, punching, and using weapons that are meant to cause bodily discomfort or harm. It might also cover slavery and human trafficking, when there is often initial coercion followed by maltreatment.

⁷ *Gender and Violence in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*" edited by Jyoti Atwal and Iris Flessenkämper.,2016

⁸ Human Rights Watch. "World Report 2023." HRW, 2023.

⁹ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc. A/810 at 71 (1948). A/RES/3/217 A - Universal Declaration of Human Rights - UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements(Accessed in November 2024)*

¹⁰ *United Nations. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979 | OHCHR(Accessed in November 2024)*

¹¹ *Council of Europe. Istanbul Convention, 2011. Home - Istanbul Convention Action against violence against women and domestic violence(Accessed in November 2024)*

- **Hate Speech and Verbal Violence:** Words can be used as weapons to cause psychological harm, eroding a person's feeling of security and self-worth. Personal traits or backgrounds, such as religion, culture, sexual orientation, or gender identity, can be the focus of verbal abuse. It might take the form of insults, mockery, threats, or hate speech meant to degrade, dehumanize, and arouse fear.
Any non-consensual sexual act, such as rape, attempted rape, marital rape forced sexual activity, sexual harassment, and abuse associated with reproduction (forced pregnancy, abortion, or sterilization), is considered sexual violence. It can have disastrous physical and psychological effects and is a violation of a person's bodily autonomy.
- **Psychological Violence:** There is an underlying psychological component to all types of violence. However, acts intended expressly to cause emotional harm are referred to as psychological violence.¹²
- **Socioeconomic Violence:** A cycle of poverty and abuse can be exacerbated by economic hardship, which makes people more susceptible to various types of violence. Socio-economic violence can take the form of targeted abuse that renders a victim unfit for employment, depriving them of their earnings, or prevents them from obtaining an independent income.

Settings of Gender-Based Violence:

Gender-Based Violence occurs in various settings, both private and public, each with its own dynamics and challenges for addressing the issue.

1. Private Sphere: The Domestic Realm: The most common type of gender-based violence is intimate partner violence, often known as domestic violence. It is frequently typified by a recurring pattern of abuse that includes economic, sexual, psychological, and physical forms of control and manipulation.

2. Public Sphere: The Street, Workplace, and Educational Institutions: Physical assault, hate crimes, and verbal abuse are all examples of violence in public areas. It frequently targets people based on their presumed sexual orientation or gender identity and can be committed by both organized organizations and stranger

5.5.2 Root Causes of Violence:

The sources highlight the necessity of addressing the underlying reasons in order to effectively combat gender-based violence, pointing to a complex interaction of elements that contribute to its persistence:

¹² World Health Organization. "Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates." Geneva: WHO, 2021.

1. Cultural Aspects: Many societies are firmly rooted in patriarchal and sexist ideologies that justify violence as a means of upholding male authority. The acceptance of violence as a form of punishment and control is influenced by gender stereotypes, discrimination, and conventional assumptions about what it means to be a man or a woman.

2. Legal Factors: Victims are discouraged from reporting abuse because of an environment of impunity created by inadequate legal safeguards, uneven enforcement of current laws, and societal views that downplay or condone violence against women and LGBTQ+ people.

3. Economic Factors: Dependency and economic inequality can increase a person's susceptibility to violence, especially for women and LGBTQ+ people. Men using violence to demonstrate their masculinity might also be a result of unemployment and poverty.

4. Political Aspects: Women and LGBTQ+ people are underrepresented in positions of authority, which restricts their capacity to advocate for policies that address gender-based violence and advance equality.

5.5.3 Forms of Gender-Based Violence:

A} Domestic violence: Physical, emotional, and economic abuse

Domestic violence is a serious issue that affects many individuals and families globally. It involves a pattern of abusive behavior, including financial, emotional, or physical abuse, used by one partner to maintain power and control over the other in an intimate relationship.

Recognizing the warning signs of domestic violence is crucial. Some common indicators include some different forms, such as financial, emotional, or physical abuse:

1. Physical Abuse:

The most obvious type of domestic violence is physical abuse, which encompasses any act that results in bodily harm. Among the examples are:

- a. Kicking, punching, slapping, or hitting.
- b. Using tools or weapons to cause injury.
- c. Limiting mobility, like confining someone in a room.
- d. Refusing medical treatment or enforcing drug abuse.

Physical abuse can cause psychological stress and long-term health problems in addition to injuries.

2. Emotional Abuse:

Emotional or psychological abuse erodes an individual's self-esteem and mental health through:

- a. Verbal assaults, insults, or humiliation.
- b. Isolation from friends, family, and support systems.
- c. Manipulation or gaslighting, making the victim question their perceptions.
- d. Threats of harm or abandonment to instill fear.

Emotional abuse often accompanies other forms of abuse and can have long-lasting effects on a person's mental well-being.

3. Economic Abuse:

Economic abuse seeks to control the victim by restricting access to financial resources, such as:

- a. Preventing the victim from working or pursuing education.
- b. Access to money or assets.
- c. Forcing the victim to account for every expense or withholding funds.
- d. Damaging the victim's credit or creating financial dependence.

This form of abuse traps victims, making it difficult for them to leave abusive relationships due to financial insecurity.

{B} Sexual violence: Rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, and exploitation

Sexual violence is a serious issue that affects individuals, communities, and societies as a whole. It is a violation of human rights and can have severe physical, emotional, and psychological consequences for survivors.

Sexual violence can take many forms, including rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation. It can be perpetrated by individuals, groups, or institutions, and can be facilitated by social norms, cultural practices, and power imbalances.

It is essential to recognize that sexual violence is never the victim's fault and that survivors deserve support, belief, and justice. Efforts to prevent sexual violence must address the root causes of this issue, including gender inequality, harmful gender stereotypes, and societal attitudes that perpetuate violence. Below is a detailed exploration of its key forms:

1. Rape:

Rape is a serious crime that involves forced sexual intercourse without consent. It can have severe physical and emotional consequences for the survivor.

Legally, rape is a criminal offense in most countries, punishable by law. However, despite the existence of these laws, survivors often face significant barriers when seeking justice, including systemic issues, social stigma, and lack of support.

Prevention is key, and this can be achieved through education on consent, stricter law enforcement, and community support systems.

2. Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is a form of gender-based violence and a violation of human rights.

It can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and non-verbal behavior.

It can occur in various settings, such as workplaces, educational institutions, public spaces, and online platforms.

It can have severe consequences for the victim's mental and physical health, career, and overall well-being.

3. Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking is a serious violation of human rights and a pressing global issue. The definition encompasses the illegal trade, transportation, and exploitation of individuals, typically for forced labor or sexual exploitation. ¹³The global scenario is alarming, with millions trapped in modern slavery, majority being women and children.¹⁴

Some consequences faced by victims include:

1. Lifelong physical and emotional scars
2. Mental health issues
3. Social ostracism
4. Economic dependence

4. Sexual Exploitation:

Sexual exploitation is a serious violation of human rights and can have severe physical and emotional consequences for its victims. It is important to address this issue through a multifaceted approach that includes:

- Enforcing laws and policies that protect vulnerable populations
- Supporting victims through comprehensive services and resources
- Raising awareness and promoting education to prevent exploitation
- Encouraging international cooperation to dismantle exploitation networks

Broader Implications:

- **Social:** Erodes community trust and perpetuates gender inequality.

¹³ *International Labor Organization (ILO) Global Wage Report 2024-2025 in figures | International Labour Organization(accessed in November 2024)*

¹⁴ *National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Home | National Crime Records Bureau (accessed in November 2024)*

- **Economic:** Survivors face difficulties reintegrating into society, impacting economic productivity.
- **Cultural:** Societal taboos and victim-blaming hinder progress in addressing these issues.

{C}Harmful Cultural Practices: Child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM)

Harmful cultural practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) are recognized as human rights violations under international law. Here are some key points:

1. Child Marriage:

Child marriage and FGM are recognized as human rights violations under international law. Here are some key points about child marriage:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as anyone under 18.
- The CRC emphasizes that governments should ensure no child is forced to marry.
- Article 12 of the CRC states that children have the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them.¹⁵

Prohibition Under International Law

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) prohibits child marriage in Article 16(2) (UN, 1979).¹⁶

These international laws and conventions underscore the importance of protecting children's rights and preventing harmful practices like child marriage.

2. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is indeed a serious human rights violation, as recognized by several international treaties. These include:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) emphasizes the obligation of states to address violence against women as a form of gender-based discrimination. It calls for measures to eliminate violence in all its forms, whether physical, sexual, or psychological, occurring in public or private life. CEDAW underscores the importance of legal protections, support systems, and societal change to combat domestic violence, trafficking, and exploitation.

¹⁵ *Convention on the Rights of the Child, Nov. 20, 1989, 1577 U.N.T.S. 3, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>.(Accessed in December 2024)*

¹⁶ *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>.(Accessed in December 2024.)*

By promoting gender equality, CEDAW aims to create environments where women are free from fear and harm, ensuring their full participation in society.¹⁷

- **The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**
The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a United Nations treaty adopted in 1989 to safeguard the rights of children worldwide. It emphasizes that children, as individuals, are entitled to protection, development, and participation. The CRC outlines fundamental rights such as the right to life, education, health care, and freedom from exploitation. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty, urging governments to ensure children's well-being and development. The CRC also highlights the importance of considering children's best interests in all decisions affecting them.¹⁸
- **The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence)**, which explicitly prohibits FGM under Article 38.¹⁹

These treaties emphasize the importance of protecting the physical and psychological well-being of girls and women, and of eliminating harmful practices such as FGM.²⁰

{D}Cyberviolence Online harassment, cyberstalking, and revenge pornography

Cyberviolence, including online harassment, cyberstalking, and revenge pornography, can take many forms. Here are some common modes of violence:

1. Cyberbullying:

- **Trolling:** Posting provocative or inflammatory content online in an attempt to spark a response is known as trolling.
- **Flaming:** Sending hostile or irate messages online is known as "flaming"
- **Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is when someone is threatened, intimidated, or degraded by digital means.
- **Hate Speech:** Distributing hateful or discriminatory content online is known as hate speech.

2. Cyberstalking:

- **Monitoring:** Cyberstalking monitoring is the practice of following someone online without that person's permission.
- **Threats:** Sending intimidating emails or messages.
- **Identity Theft:** Identity theft is when someone's identity is stolen or they are impersonated online.

¹⁷ *United Nations. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979.*

¹⁸ *Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR*

¹⁹ *Council of Europe. Istanbul Convention, 2011.*

²⁰ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210>

- **Location Tracking:** Tracking someone's physical location via technology is known as location tracking.

3. Revenge Pornography:

- **Image-Based Abuse:** Disseminating private photos or films without permission.
- **Sextortion:** Threatening to release private photos or videos until demands are fulfilled is known as sextortion.
- **Online Exploitation:** Online exploitation is the practice of taking advantage of or forcing someone to share private information via online platforms.

Other Forms of Cyberviolence:

- **Doxxing:** Sharing someone's personal information online without their consent.
- **Swatting:** Making false emergency calls to provoke a response from law enforcement.
- **Online Impersonation:** Creating fake online profiles to impersonate someone else.

These modes of violence can have serious consequences for individuals, including emotional distress, reputational damage, and even physical harm.

Cyberviolence, including online harassment, cyberstalking, and revenge pornography, is a growing concern in India. The Indian legal system has several laws and provisions to address these issues. Here are the key points:

1. **Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act):** Section 66A was initially used to penalize sending offensive messages through communication services, but it was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 for being unconstitutional.

However, other sections like 66C (identity theft), 66D (cheating by personation), 66E (violation of privacy), and 67 (publishing obscene material) can still be used against cyberviolence. Section 67A specifically deals with publishing sexually explicit material, and Section 67B addresses child pornography.²¹

2. **Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS):** Several sections of the BNS can be used to address cyberviolence. Section 78 deals with stalking, including cyberstalking. Section 351 can be used for online defamation, and Section 356 for criminal intimidation, which can include online threats.²²

3. **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986:** This Act prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements, publications, writings, paintings,

²¹ [Information Technology Act, 2000]

(<http://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A2000-21.pdf>)(Accessed in December 2024)

²² "Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023: Law & Practice" by **Taxmann Publications Private Limited**, 2024, SECTION 356 BNS - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023,

figures, or any other manner. This can be applied to revenge pornography and other forms of online harassment targeting women.²³

4. ****Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO)**:** This Act can be used to protect minors from sexual exploitation in digital form. Section 13 addresses using a child for pornographic purposes, and Section 14 deals with storage of pornographic material involving a child.²⁴

5. ****Supreme Court Judgement on Privacy (2017) **:** The Supreme Court declared privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution. This judgement can be used to argue against non-consensual sharing of private images or information.²⁵

5.6 Case Studies:

- **Women:**

- *Example:* The 2012 Nirbhaya case in India and its global implications for women's safety
- *Impact:* Legislative reforms (e.g., Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013)

An important turning point in Indian history was the Nirbhaya case of 2012, which made clear the urgent need for reforms to protect women. Significant legislative revisions resulted from the case's considerable indignation and demonstrations.

Important Reforms:

The 2013 Criminal Law (Amendment) Act: Several provisions of the Indian Evidence Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) were modified by this act. The goal of the modifications was to strengthen the laws against rape while also taking victims' needs into consideration.

Definition of Rape: In addition to adding new provisions to address acid assaults, stalking, and voyeurism, the modified law expanded the definition of rape to encompass non-penile penetration.

Increased Penalties: The law raised the maximum penalty for rape to life in prison and the minimum penalty from seven years to ten years.

²³ [Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986]
(<https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/indecnt.pdf>)⁹ Accessed in December 2024)

²⁴ [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012]
(<https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/POCSO%20Act%2C%202012.pdf>)(Accessed in December 2024)

²⁵ Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017). Fundamental Right to Privacy – Supreme Court Observer

Fast-Track Courts: In an effort to shorten the time it takes for justice to be served, the government set up fast-track courts to speed up rape case proceedings.

Worldwide Consequences:

Global Attention: The Nirbhaya case brought attention to the problem of violence against women worldwide.

Inspiring Protests and Reforms: In other nations, including as the US, UK, and Canada, the case sparked demonstrations and calls for reform.

UN Initiatives: In response to the case, the UN started a number of programs, such as UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, to address violence against women.

An important turning point in India's attempts to combat violence against women was the Nirbhaya case. Even if much more needs to be done, the case has sparked a national dialogue about women's safety and resulted in significant legal changes.

- **Children:**²⁶

- *Example:* Malala Yousafzai's case highlighting violence against girls advocating for education
- *Impact:* Global campaigns like *Education for All*

Key Impacts of Malala Yousafzai's Advocacy:

Raising Awareness about Girls' Education: Malala Yousafzai's case has brought international attention to the importance of girls' education and the challenges that many girls face in accessing education.

Inspiring Global Campaigns: Her advocacy has inspired global campaigns, such as:

- **Education for All:** A UNESCO-led initiative aimed at providing quality education to all children by 2030.
- **Malala Fund:** A non-profit organization co-founded by Malala Yousafzai, which works to provide education to girls in countries where it is denied or difficult to access.

Promoting Policy Changes: Malala's advocacy has led to policy changes and commitments from governments around the world to prioritize girls' education.

²⁶Global health education and learning INCUBATOR at Harvard University Discussion Guide: Case Study 2: "Malala Yousafzai: A Young Female Activist"(Accessed in December 2024)

Empowering Girls and Women: *Malala's story has inspired countless girls and women to stand up for their rights and demand access to education.*

5.7 Recommendations:

1. Strengthen Legal Frameworks and Enforcement:

All types of gender-based violence should be addressed by comprehensive laws that are enacted and strictly enforced by governments.

Prosecution, prevention, and protection must be the main goals of policies, along with quick ways to administer justice.

2. Enhance Support Systems:

Create and grow support services for survivors of gender-based violence, such as shelters, counseling centers, legal assistance, and helplines. This ought to be reasonably priced, easily available, and considerate of the needs of women and children

3. Promote Education and Awareness:

Incorporate human rights education and gender sensitivity into school curricula to dispel myths and promote respect for women and children. Campaigns for community awareness should focus on the cultural norms and attitudes that support violence.

4. Community Involvement:

Encourage local influencers, civil society groups, and community leaders to play a proactive role in recognizing and combating gender-based violence. Creating safe spaces can be greatly aided by grassroots efforts.

5. Economic Empowerment of Women:

Increase women's economic power by expanding their access to jobs, education, and vocational training. Being financially independent lessens one's susceptibility to violence.

6. Data Collection and Research:

To help guide policy and initiatives, make an investment in gathering precise and de-identified data on gender-based violence. Research can assess the efficacy of interventions and reveal hidden facets of the issue.

7. Strengthen International Collaboration:

Promote global collaboration in the fight against gender-based violence by exchanging resources, best practices, and international advocacy campaigns.

5.8 In conclusion:

Gender-based violence against women and children is a grave human rights violation that requires immediate and continuous response. To address this epidemic, a multipronged approach involving economic, social, legal, and educational measures is required.

Progress necessitates ensuring accountability, challenging social norms, and empowering survivors. While governments and organizations play a significant role, everyone in society shares responsibility for creating a safe and equitable environment.

Ending gender-based violence is about more than just protecting human rights; it's about ensuring that women and children may thrive and live without fear in our communities. It also aims to advance justice, equality, and human dignity for all. The time has come for action.