



**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SURVEY**  
FREQUENTLY ASKED  
**QUESTIONS**



**VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN SURVEY**  
BANGLADESH 2024





## We know violence against women (VAW) is a problem, but how does collecting data on VAW help?

- ▶ VAW prevalence data reveals the extent, nature, and trends of violence experienced by women in a population. This data is essential for creating effective, 'evidence-based' policies and programs to prevent and respond to VAW.
- ▶ VAW data helps identify which (groups of) women are most vulnerable: in other words who and where the women are most at risk of violence.
- ▶ VAW is often hidden and difficult to document. Data brings it to light, making the elimination of VAW a national priority for policymakers.
- ▶ Multiple data collection efforts using comparable methods enables monitoring changes, informing the design of policies and programs, and measuring their impact.
- ▶ VAW data provides insights into emerging forms of violence (e.g. technology-facilitated violence against women), helping us identify and understand its diverse manifestations and impact.
- ▶ VAW data that examines women's help-seeking behaviors provides insights into 'what works,' specifically which support services women use (or do not) and the reasons behind their choices.
- ▶ Data on health impact and economic costs of violence can reveal the impact of violence on families, communities, and nations – making VAW everyone's business.

# How does VAW prevalence in one country compare to other countries?

It is difficult to make comparisons across different country contexts. Even if data have been collected using comparable methods, it is important to note that direct comparison with other countries can be misleading at times, including for the following reasons:

- First, the national VAW prevalence rates can hide regional differences. Notably, the survey conducted in Bangladesh provides regional disaggregations.
- Second, countries use different methodologies to measure violence against women (i.e. dedicated surveys versus a module in a broader survey) that limits the comparability of data.
- Third, even with the best possible data, there always will be context-specific variations in levels of 'nondisclosure' (underreporting) of violence, the extent of which we will never know.
- Fourth, for comparison of partner violence, conventionally 'physical and/or sexual violence' is used because these measures are the most reliable and have been validated for international comparison. With these comparisons, however, we overlook other forms of violence.
- Finally, as the data from the Asia-Pacific region shows: the 'ranking' of countries differs depending on the type of violence looked at, the period during which the violence occurred, and the type of perpetrator (intimate partners or others).

It is thus a good practice to be cautious when ranking and comparing countries. It is more accurate to report that violence against women is a global crisis, but that the levels and types of violence differ.

## What about other forms of violence, such as violence against children, honour crimes, trafficking, child marriage?

- While all these forms of violence should be measured – giving every survivor a voice, different methodologies are used to measure different types of violence.
- The 2024 VAW survey is a dedicated household survey on violence against women, and therefore, does not measure violence against children. Its recommended target population is women aged 15 or older. However, women, who are currently 15 or older to *and* were married as children, are also included in the sample, and their experiences of violence are measured starting from the time of their marriage.
- Finally, this particular survey methodology does not lead itself to address trafficking and forced prostitution, as women in these situations are often not easily accessible for interviews. Specifically targeted studies are required, rather than surveys of a representative sample of the population.





## Why don't you conduct this survey more frequently?

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) recommends that nationally representative VAW surveys are carried out every 5-10 years as a basis for raising awareness and formulating the appropriate policies, laws and interventions.<sup>1</sup> Not only does it enhance data quality by allowing time for rigorous planning, ensuring standardised methodologies, and robust data collection and analysis tools, but it also helps track changes over time in terms of identifying trends and evolving patterns of violence.

Additionally, VAW surveys, by their very nature, involve sensitive topics and carry inherent risks for both respondents and interviewers. Therefore, data collection on such issues should not be conducted simply because it is technically feasible or for general statistical interests, particularly when it could expose women to risk.

Moreover, policy changes and programmatic interventions often require time to implement and demonstrate their impact. 5-10 year intervals provide sufficient time to assess the effects of these measures and make necessary adjustments based on the evidence. With the last two rounds of the survey conducted in 2011 and 2015, and a new dataset becoming available in 2025, Bangladesh has a unique opportunity to enhance monitoring of women's experiences of VAW, identify emerging trends, and implement appropriate policy responses.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. Statistical Office. *Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women: Statistical surveys*. Vol. 110. UN, 2014.



## How does the survey address how experiences of violence may differ across various groups of women?

The patterns and drivers of violence against women across a population are often diverse; therefore, an overall prevalence rate can prove misleading if it is not disaggregated by various socio-demographic factors. This survey in Bangladesh will provide these detailed breakdowns, offering a more nuanced, multivariate understanding of the issue, and ensuring that the experiences of marginalized women are accurately represented.

We also know that the prevalence rates, on their own, cannot capture the lived experiences of women; they may even exclude the perspectives of certain marginalized groups or communities of women. As a result, the 2024 VAW study employs a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research, as per global best practices, to better contextualize the survey findings.

# What key insights does this survey offer?

The survey, along with a complementary qualitative study, will provide the following information:

- What proportion of women has ever experienced violence in their lifetime and over the last 12 months
- What forms of violence women are subjected to
- Who the perpetrators of violence are
- Where violence occurs in the country
- How frequently and severely women experience violence
- How many women experience physical and/or sexual violence during pregnancy
- What the differences in women's experiences of violence are across various groups
- What the risk and protective factors associated with violence are
- What the trends and patterns of violence against women are
- What the attitudes and beliefs among men regarding violence against women are
- How women's health is impacted by violence
- What the out-of-pocket expenses related to violence for women, their families or attendants are in last 12 months
- How women respond to this violence, including insights on help-seeking behaviors and barriers faced by women





## What do you mean by the ‘cost of violence’ other than the physical and/or psychological damage to the survivors themselves?

While survivors bear the greatest cost of violence, the economic repercussions for families, communities, and national economies are also substantial. For many families, these costs can strain resources, competing with essential needs like food and education. Globally, gender-based violence costs the world economy an estimated \$1.5 trillion each year – 2% of the global GDP, a staggering figure that underscores its wide-ranging impact, including lost productivity, increased healthcare needs, diminished human potential, and strain on legal and justice systems.<sup>2</sup>

This particular survey focuses specifically on the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by individual women and their attendants (i.e. family members, close friends etc.) in the 12 months preceding the survey. These expenses include costs associated with seeking healthcare, police fees, legal proceedings (i.e. filing cases, court costs), transportation, food and accommodation for both the survivor and any accompanying members, lost wages for both the woman and her spouse, and the replacement of damaged property. It is important to note that this survey does not capture the broader costs borne by government and non-government actors for providing health, legal, and judicial services, nor does it account for the long-term financial impact on survivors over their lifetimes.

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2 Lakshmi Puri, “The Economic Costs of Violence Against Women, High Level Debate,” UN Women, September 21, 2017



## What are the limitations of this survey?

While prevalence surveys like the 2024 VAW survey provide the most reliable estimates available, they rely on women's self-reporting and therefore reflect only what they choose to disclose. Furthermore, because the most severe cases of violence – those resulting in death, hospitalization, or displacement – are not captured in household surveys, prevalence surveys underestimate the true extent of VAW, representing only 'the tip of the iceberg.' Finally, prevalence data also falls short of addressing the underlying 'why' question behind why violence takes place and why its prevalence may change. While the qualitative study will be helpful, its scope is not broad enough to comprehensively address the complex "why" questions, which requires more extensive secondary research.



# What can I personally do to end violence against women?

Change begins with each of us. All of us have a role to play in preventing violence against women and supporting survivors. Here are some actions you can take:

- Listen to survivors with empathy, sensitivity and respect toward their agency.
- Challenge the stigma and silence surrounding violence against women by initiating conversations within your network. You can begin with raising awareness about the findings of the 2024 VAW Survey.
- Take a stand against hateful speech, gender stereotyping and violent rhetoric against women and girls both online and offline.
- Know your rights and demand accountability for building a future where women are safe and empowered in all spaces—public, private, and digital.
- Advocate for essential, lifesaving & quality services for survivors, including shelters, helplines, psychosocial counseling, legal aid, health services, and other vital support.
- Educate yourself and others about harmful social and gender norms, become aware of your own biases, and work to dismantle them with patience and self-compassion.
- Practice non-violent conflict resolution in your daily life and learn about healthy communication strategies.
- Familiarize yourself with available support services for survivors and share this information within your network.





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