

India among countries where women face most violence by partner

WHO findings suggest that it can negatively affect a woman's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health

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Global estimates published by the World Health Organization (WHO) indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

Worldwide as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner. What makes this worse for countries like India is the fact that intimate partner violence is the highest at 37.7% in the WHO South-East Asia region.

As per figures released by WHO, the violence ranges from 23.2% in high-income

countries and 24.6% in the WHO Western Pacific region to 37% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region.

"Violence against women – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence – is a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights. WHO together with UN Women and other partners has developed a framework for prevention of violence against women called Respect which can be used by governments to counter this menace," noted WHO.

Multiple ramifications

Meanwhile, healthcare professionals cautioned that violence can negatively affect a

woman's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.

Explaining how gender-based violence is perpetrated, the global health organisation said that men are more likely to perpetrate violence if they have low education, a history of child maltreatment, exposure to domestic violence against their mothers, harmful use of alcohol, unequal gender norms, including attitudes accepting of violence, and a sense of entitlement over women.

Women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence if they have low

education, exposure to mothers being abused by a partner, abuse during childhood, and attitudes accepting violence, male privilege and women's subordinate status.

Warning that intimate partner violence cause serious short-and long-term problems for women and adversely affect their children besides leading to high social and economic costs for women, their families and societies, WHO said: "There is now evidence that advocacy and empowerment counselling interventions, as well as home visitation are promising in preventing or reducing intimate partner violence against women."

When the home is not safe



• Sexual violence, particularly during childhood, can lead to increased smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, and risky sexual behaviours in later life

Sexual violence also leads to behaviours leading to perpetration of violence (for males) and being a victim of violence (for females)

(Source: WHO)

• 42% of women who experience intimate partner violence report an injury as a consequence of this violence

• Women who were physically or sexually abused were 1.5 times more likely to have a sexually transmitted infection and, in some regions HIV too, compared with women who had not experienced partner violence

• Violence can lead to depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts

• Adverse health effects can also include headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, gastrointestinal disorders, limited mobility and poor overall health

• They are also twice as likely to have an abortion