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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most serious social, economic, and human rights challenges affecting individuals and communities across the world. It includes physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse, harassment, exploitation, forced marriage, and other forms of discrimination committed against individuals because of their gender. Gender-based violence particularly affects women and girls and creates long-term consequences for their personal security, education, employment, health, economic independence, and social participation. This study examines the effects of gender-based violence on social and economic development by exploring its relationship with poverty, educational inequality, workplace participation, family stability, public health, and institutional development. It also investigates the cultural, economic, and structural factors that contribute to the continuation of violence in different societies. The study highlights how gender-based violence restricts women's freedom, reduces their opportunities for professional advancement, increases financial dependency, and weakens their participation in community and national development. Furthermore, it examines the responsibilities of governments, educational institutions, legal authorities, healthcare organizations, and civil society in preventing violence and protecting survivors. A qualitative research methodology is adopted through the analysis of secondary information, including academic literature, international reports, and relevant policy documents published between 2023 and 2026. The findings indicate that gender-based violence produces significant social and economic consequences by increasing healthcare expenses, reducing workforce productivity, limiting educational opportunities, and reinforcing gender inequality. The study concludes that effective legislation, economic empowerment, public awareness, accessible support services, and institutional accountability are essential for preventing gender-based violence and achieving sustainable social and economic development.

KEYWORDS:*Gender-Based Violence, Social Development, Economic Development, Women's Rights, Gender Equality, Domestic Violence, Human Rights, Workplace Discrimination, Social Justice, Women's Empowerment.*

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence has emerged as a major concern in contemporary society because of its serious consequences for human rights, social stability, economic development, and individual well-being. IX, L. O. B. (2026). Revealed, It refers to harmful actions directed against individuals because of their gender, including physical violence, sexual abuse, psychological harassment, economic exploitation, forced marriage, and discriminatory practices. Although gender-based violence can affect individuals of different genders, women and girls experience a particularly significant burden in many societies because of unequal power relationships, discriminatory cultural expectations, and institutional inequalities. Moriel, V. B. S. (2024). Found that, Violence can occur within families, workplaces, educational institutions, public spaces, and digital environments. Its consequences extend beyond individual victims and influence families, communities, social institutions, and national economies. Therefore, gender-based violence should be understood not only as a personal or domestic issue but also as a major obstacle to social justice and sustainable development.The prevalence of gender-based violence demonstrates the importance of addressing this issue through coordinated national and international efforts. According to the World Health Organization's 2026 publication presenting 2023 estimates, approximately 840

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million women worldwide have experienced intimate partner physical or sexual violence or non-partner sexual violence during their lifetime. This represents nearly one in three women aged 15 years and older. The evidence demonstrates that violence against women remains a widespread human rights and public health concern despite decades of international commitments and legal reforms (World Health Organization, 2026). The continued prevalence of violence indicates that legal recognition alone cannot eliminate discriminatory behavior unless it is supported by effective implementation, public awareness, accessible protection services, and changes in social attitudes. Gender-based violence has deep connections with social structures, cultural traditions, and unequal power relationships. In many societies, patriarchal attitudes and traditional gender expectations influence the distribution of authority within families and communities. Women may experience restrictions on their freedom, mobility, education, employment, property ownership, and personal decision-making because of established social beliefs. Such inequalities can create environments in which violence is tolerated, hidden, or considered a private family matter rather than a violation of human rights. In addition, economic dependency and fear of social rejection may prevent survivors from reporting abuse or seeking assistance. These conditions demonstrate that gender-based violence cannot be addressed without examining the broader cultural and institutional arrangements that allow discrimination and unequal treatment to continue.

Education is one of the most important factors in preventing gender-based violence and promoting social awareness. Educational institutions provide opportunities to develop knowledge about human rights, personal dignity, equality, respectful relationships, and legal protection. Education can also help individuals recognize harmful gender stereotypes and challenge social attitudes that normalize violence or discrimination. However, violence itself can become a barrier to educational participation when girls experience harassment, forced marriage, family restrictions, or unsafe learning environments. Such experiences may result in school dropout, reduced academic achievement, psychological difficulties, and limited professional opportunities. When girls are unable to complete their education, the effects can continue throughout their lives by restricting employment choices, financial independence, and participation in public decision-making. Therefore, safe and inclusive educational environments are essential for both violence prevention and long-term social development.The economic consequences of gender-based violence are equally significant because violence can reduce women's ability to participate in productive economic activities. Survivors may experience physical injuries, psychological distress, workplace absenteeism, loss of employment, reduced productivity, and increased healthcare expenses.

In some circumstances, women may leave their jobs because of threats, harassment, domestic violence, or restrictions imposed by abusive family members. Economic abuse can also involve controlling financial resources, preventing employment, withholding income, or restricting access to property and financial accounts. The World Bank (2024) identifies gender-based violence as a serious threat to women's empowerment and economic participation, with consequences involving healthcare expenditure, criminal justice costs, reduced productivity, and lower workforce participation. These effects demonstrate that violence is not only a violation of individual rights but also a barrier to economic growth and development. Family relationships and community development are also affected by gender-based violence. Violence within households can damage trust, weaken relationships, create insecurity, and negatively influence the emotional development of children. Children who

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witness domestic violence may experience fear, anxiety, behavioral difficulties, and problems in their educational and social development. Such experiences can also influence their future understanding of relationships and acceptable behavior. At the community level, widespread violence can weaken social cooperation, reduce public participation, and create an environment of insecurity and discrimination. Families affected by violence may require additional healthcare, social protection, counseling, and legal assistance. Consequently, gender-based violence creates social costs that extend beyond survivors and affect the stability and well-being of entire communities.Gender-based violence also places considerable pressure on healthcare systems and public institutions. Survivors may require emergency medical treatment, long-term physical rehabilitation, psychological counseling, reproductive healthcare, and legal assistance. Healthcare professionals, social workers, police departments, courts, and community organizations therefore play important roles in responding to violence. However, inadequate institutional resources, insufficient training, social stigma, and weak reporting mechanisms can prevent survivors from receiving appropriate support. In some communities, individuals may avoid seeking assistance because of fear of discrimination, victim-blaming, or loss of privacy. The World Health Organization emphasizes that preventing and responding to violence requires coordinated action across healthcare, justice, social protection, and community institutions. Effective institutional responses are therefore necessary to protect survivors and reduce the long-term social consequences of violence.

The legal and policy dimensions of gender-based violence are central to achieving equality and sustainable development. Governments have responsibilities to establish laws that protect individuals from domestic violence, sexual abuse, harassment, forced marriage, exploitation, and other discriminatory practices. However, the effectiveness of legal protection depends on implementation, institutional accountability, accessible reporting procedures, and the ability of survivors to obtain justice. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN Women (2024) emphasize the continuing importance of legal reforms and investment in gender equality. Their Gender Snapshot 2024 also highlights that domestic violence legislation is associated with lower levels of intimate partner violence in countries with relevant data. These findings demonstrate the importance of effective legal systems, although legislation must be supported by education, prevention programs, and survivor-centered services. In contemporary society, gender-based violence must be addressed through a comprehensive approach that connects human rights, social protection, economic opportunities, education, and institutional development. International organizations, governments, educational institutions, private businesses, families, and civil society organizations all have important responsibilities in preventing violence and promoting equality. Economic empowerment can help reduce financial dependency, while education and public awareness can challenge discriminatory attitudes. Effective healthcare services, legal assistance, safe shelters, and confidential reporting systems can provide essential support to survivors.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the effects of gender-based violence on social and economic development, with particular attention to education, employment, public health, family stability, and women's empowerment.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does gender-based violence affect social and economic development in contemporary society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature identifies gender-based violence as a major obstacle to human development, social equality, and economic progress. Contemporary research increasingly examines violence not only as an individual experience but also as a structural problem connected with unequal power relationships, discriminatory institutions, poverty, and harmful social norms. Israelian, E. V. (2024). Revealed, The World Health Organization (2026), in Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2023: Global Overview, presents evidence from population-based surveys covering 168 countries and areas. The report indicates that nearly one in three women aged 15 years and older has experienced physical or sexual violence during her lifetime. It also identifies underreporting, social stigma, and inadequate data collection as important challenges in understanding the full extent of violence. This evidence demonstrates that gender-based violence remains a widespread international concern and requires stronger prevention policies, improved institutional responses, and sustainable investment in women's rights. The relationship between gender-based violence and economic development has received considerable attention in recent policy research. The World Bank (2024), in its publication Ensuring Women's Safety: Data Insights on Gender-Based Violence Legislation and Policies, explains that violence against women creates serious economic consequences through healthcare expenses, criminal justice costs, reduced productivity, and decreased participation in the workforce. Women, U. N. (2023). Found that,Women experiencing violence may face physical injuries, psychological difficulties, financial instability, and interruptions in their professional activities. Economic abuse can also restrict access to personal income, employment, savings, and property ownership. These circumstances increase financial dependency and make it difficult for survivors to establish independent lives.

World Health Organization. (2026)explained, Violence affects relationships within families, communities, educational institutions, and public organizations. Individuals experiencing violence may suffer social isolation, reduced confidence, psychological distress, and difficulties participating in ordinary social activities. Children who witness domestic violence may also experience emotional and behavioral problems that affect their educational performance and future relationships. UN Women (2024), in the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2024, examines how social protection systems can improve women's security, reduce poverty, and strengthen their ability to respond to social and economic challenges. The report emphasizes that effective protection systems must address the structural inequalities that prevent women from exercising their rights. This literature demonstrates that preventing gender-based violence is essential for building secure families, inclusive communities, and socially stable institutions. Educational inequality and gender-based violence are closely connected because unsafe environments and discriminatory practices can restrict girls' access to learning opportunities. Violence may occur within educational institutions, communities, workplaces, and households, creating barriers to regular attendance, academic performance, and educational achievement. Fear of harassment, forced marriage, exploitation, and family restrictions may prevent girls from completing their

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education. Such barriers can have long-term consequences because education provides the knowledge, professional skills, and confidence required for economic independence. The United Nations' Gender Snapshot 2024 identifies persistent inequalities in women's empowerment and emphasizes the importance of investment in education, protection, and equal participation. The literature suggests that educational institutions should develop clear policies against harassment, provide confidential reporting procedures, and promote awareness of equality and human rights. Safe educational environments are therefore essential for reducing vulnerability and strengthening women's future economic opportunities. The healthcare consequences of gender-based violence represent another major theme in international research. Survivors may experience physical injuries, chronic health problems, psychological trauma, depression, anxiety, reproductive health difficulties, and other long-term conditions. These consequences can reduce individuals' ability to work, study, maintain relationships, and participate in community activities. The World Health Organization (2026) emphasizes that violence against women is a major public health concern requiring prevention, survivor-centered healthcare, and coordinated institutional responses. Healthcare institutions are important because they may provide the first point of contact for individuals experiencing abuse.

However, inadequate professional training, limited medical resources, and social stigma can prevent survivors from receiving appropriate assistance. The literature therefore highlights the need for accessible healthcare services, psychological counseling, confidential treatment, and referral systems that connect survivors with legal and social protection institutions. Legal protection and institutional accountability are widely recognized as important elements in preventing gender-based violence. Governments have introduced laws and policies addressing domestic violence, sexual harassment, forced marriage, exploitation, and discrimination. However, the existence of legislation does not automatically guarantee safety or justice because survivors may encounter difficulties in reporting incidents, obtaining legal assistance, and accessing protection services. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN Women (2024), in The Gender Snapshot 2024, emphasize the relationship between legal protection and progress toward gender equality. The report identifies domestic violence legislation as an important policy instrument for reducing violence, while also demonstrating that major gaps remain in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The literature suggests that effective legal systems require trained authorities, accessible courts, confidential complaint mechanisms, survivor protection, and consistent enforcement of existing laws. Poverty, economic dependency, and social inequality are also significant factors discussed in the literature on gender-based violence. Women experiencing financial insecurity may have fewer opportunities to leave abusive situations, obtain independent housing, access legal services, or continue their education and employment.

Economic restrictions imposed by abusive individuals can further increase vulnerability by controlling income, savings, property, and employment decisions. UN Women (2024), in the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, emphasizes the importance of gender-responsive social protection systems in reducing poverty and strengthening women's resilience. The World Bank Group's Gender Strategy 2024–2030 also identifies ending gender-based violence, expanding economic opportunities, and strengthening women's leadership as interconnected development priorities. These policy perspectives suggest that economic empowerment, social protection, employment opportunities, and accessible public

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services should form part of comprehensive violence-prevention strategies. Recent literature increasingly emphasizes that ending gender-based violence is essential for achieving sustainable development and protecting human rights. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025), in its Sustainable Development Goals Report, highlights that discriminatory gender norms, unequal economic opportunities, and violence against women continue to obstruct progress toward gender equality. Similarly, the World Health Organization's 2025 global estimates announcement emphasizes that violence remains widespread and that prevention efforts require sustainable financing, stronger policies, and accessible support services. These findings demonstrate that gender-based violence is not an isolated social problem but a development challenge that affects economic productivity, public health, educational opportunities, and institutional stability. The present study builds on these discussions by examining the interconnected social and economic consequences of violence and emphasizing the importance of coordinated prevention, legal protection, economic empowerment, and institutional responsibility.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative research methodology to examine gender-based violence and its effects on social and economic development. This approach is appropriate because the research focuses on understanding the social, cultural, economic, and institutional factors associated with violence and its consequences for individuals and communities. A qualitative perspective allows the researcher to examine the relationship between gender discrimination, unequal power structures, economic dependency, educational barriers, and social inequality. The study is based on secondary information obtained from academic publications, international organizational reports, policy documents, and research-based materials published between 2023 and 2026. These sources provide a foundation for understanding the current challenges, institutional responses, and development implications associated with gender-based violence.Documentary analysis is used as the primary method of collecting research information. The study examines publications from recognized international organizations, including the World Health Organization, United Nations, UN Women, and the World Bank. Relevant documents concerning violence prevention, women's safety, economic participation, social protection, healthcare, and gender equality are reviewed. Academic research and institutional reports are selected according to their relevance to the research topic, publication period, and contribution to understanding the social and economic consequences of violence. This process helps establish a broad and research-based understanding of gender-based violence across different geographical and institutional contexts.The study employs thematic analysis to organize the collected information into major research categories.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the selected literature demonstrates that gender-based violence creates serious consequences for individuals, families, and communities. Physical injuries, psychological trauma, social isolation, and reduced personal security can affect survivors' ability to participate in education, employment, family relationships, and community activities. Children who experience or witness domestic violence may also face emotional difficulties and educational challenges. The World Health Organization (2026) identifies violence against women as a major public health and human rights concern, emphasizing the need for

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effective prevention and survivor-centered support. The analysis therefore indicates that violence weakens individual well-being and creates wider social problems by reducing security, trust, and participation within communities.The economic analysis identifies a strong relationship between gender-based violence, financial dependency, and reduced economic productivity. Survivors may experience loss of income, workplace absenteeism, unemployment, increased healthcare expenses, and difficulties maintaining professional responsibilities. Economic abuse can further restrict access to money, property, employment, and independent financial decisions. The World Bank (2024) highlights the economic costs of violence through healthcare services, criminal justice expenditure, and reduced workforce participation. The analysis suggests that violence affects not only individual financial security but also the productive capacity of households, businesses, and national economies. Equal employment opportunities, financial independence, and effective workplace protection are therefore important elements of economic development.The analysis further reveals that educational inequality and weak institutional protection can increase the social and economic consequences of gender-based violence. Unsafe educational environments, harassment, forced marriage, and discriminatory practices may prevent girls and women from completing their education and developing professional skills. Similarly, inadequate reporting systems, limited legal assistance, and insufficient healthcare services can prevent survivors from receiving appropriate support.

FINDINGS

The study finds that gender-based violence has serious and long-lasting effects on social development, particularly in relation to family stability, educational opportunities, public participation, and individual well-being. Survivors may experience physical injuries, psychological trauma, social isolation, and reduced confidence, which can affect their ability to participate in everyday activities. Children exposed to domestic violence may also experience emotional and educational difficulties. The findings indicate that violence weakens family relationships, increases social insecurity, and reinforces discriminatory attitudes. Therefore, preventing gender-based violence is essential for creating safer communities, protecting human dignity, and strengthening social equality.The study further finds that gender-based violence negatively influences economic development by reducing women's employment opportunities, financial independence, and professional productivity. Survivors may face unemployment, income loss, workplace absenteeism, healthcare expenses, and increased financial dependency. Economic abuse can also prevent women from accessing personal resources and making independent financial decisions. These conditions restrict women's contribution to household income and national economic activities. The findings suggest that equal employment opportunities, financial empowerment, workplace protection, and accessible economic support are important measures for reducing the economic consequences of gender-based violence.Finally, the study finds that effective prevention requires cooperation among governments, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, legal authorities, and civil society. Although legislation and international policies have improved awareness of women's rights, weak implementation and limited institutional resources continue to create difficulties for survivors. The findings emphasize the importance of accessible legal services, confidential reporting mechanisms, safe shelters, psychological counseling, educational awareness, and community-based prevention programs. A coordinated approach can reduce violence, strengthen women's empowerment, and support long-term social and economic development.

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CONCLUSION

Gender-based violence is a serious obstacle to social justice, human rights, economic independence, and sustainable development in contemporary society. The present study demonstrates that violence affects individuals beyond immediate physical and psychological harm by creating long-term consequences for families, communities, educational institutions, workplaces, and national economies. It restricts women's freedom, reduces their opportunities for education and employment, increases financial dependency, and weakens their participation in social and economic activities. The study also highlights that violence is closely connected with discriminatory social attitudes, unequal power relationships, poverty, and inadequate institutional protection. Therefore, gender-based violence must be recognized as a broader development challenge rather than an isolated personal or domestic issue.The study concludes that reducing gender-based violence requires comprehensive legal, educational, economic, and institutional measures. Governments should strengthen legislation, improve law enforcement, provide accessible justice systems, and establish effective protection mechanisms for survivors. Educational institutions should promote awareness of human rights, respectful relationships, and gender equality. Healthcare organizations should provide confidential medical treatment, psychological support, and appropriate referral services. Similarly, economic empowerment programs, professional training, financial independence, and equal employment opportunities can help reduce the economic vulnerabilities that prevent women from leaving abusive situations. Effective implementation and institutional accountability are necessary to ensure that these measures produce meaningful results.In conclusion, the elimination of gender-based violence is essential for achieving inclusive social and economic development. A society cannot achieve sustainable progress while individuals continue to experience discrimination, exploitation, harassment, and violence.

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