

An Analysis of Gender-Based Violence in Dhaka City

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to provide a comprehensive scenario of gender-based violence in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. Some sorts of violence are so sophisticated that it is considered a familial or personal issue. So, digging out the insights of the fact is too tough but it is required to clearly understand what the driving forces of the problem are. In terms to address the problem, this study focuses on the facts beyond our eyes.

Methodology: On the basis of the nature of the problem, this study has followed the snowball non-probability sampling method of a total of eighty respondents in Dhaka city. Primary data were collected through a structured, semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interview. Moreover, secondary sources of national and international levels have been used in this study.

Findings: This study found that attitudes or belief patterns encourage individuals to show such kind of negative behavior. More importantly, a family member or nearest one of the perpetrators intensely influences in support of such a heinous attitude. Besides these, social and cultural norms and factors create circumstances that induce an individual to such violent behavior.

Implication: The impact of socio-economic conditions amid the covid-19 period as well as the humanitarian crisis might accelerate the existing situation of violence which has introduced a new format of violence. The study emphasizes the intensive exploratory study and will provide an insight into different types of gender-based violence as well as the detrimental effects of such heinous behavior patterns. So, it will provide a better understanding and intensity of the problem.

Originality: Although innumerable studies of gender-based violence have been published, underlying causes are not properly focused on. Therefore, it would obviously help for further study as well as policymaking.

Limitation: In the context of a patriarchal society like Bangladesh, women are compelled to be submissive and silent in facing violence due to prevalent social and cultural norms and conditions. So, it is too difficult and time-consuming to reveal the underlying causes of gender-based violence.

1. Introduction

Gender-based violence is happening in each culture and every corner across the world. The term is frequently used as violence against women because it is recognized that women and girls are mostly affected by such kind of behavior due to many factors like unequal power and resources. Victims of gender-based violence suffer many consequences. Gender violence is associated with our behavior patterns so, it is found in all types of societies, variations of such kind of behavior depend on the socioeconomic and cultural background. (UNFPA, 2008-2011) The consequences of gender-based violence affect both males and females but particularly influence women's life wherever it occurs. Though the effects of violence depend on several socio-economic factors, it changes the life of

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women as well as their associated member directly or indirectly. Moreover, the prevalence of gender-based violence also hinders the economic advancement of a country. At this and national level losses of 2.10% of GDP due to aggressive behavior in the household (CARE Bangladesh, 2013). Gender violence is a common and debatable phenomenon whether it is violence or not because some societies consider it as a part of culture though it depends on the situation, particularly in a society that belongs to traditional patriarchal values. In contrast, first-world countries consider such kinds of behavior as violence (Chapell and Martino 2006).

1.1 Background of the Study

World Health Organization surveyed 161 countries throughout the world from 2000-to 2018 and presented that about 1 in 3 or 30% of women across the world are subjected to violence by intimate and non-intimate partners both physical and sexual violence (WHO, 2021). Estimated data shows violence in a lifetime of about 20% in the western Pacific, 25% in Europe, 33% in America, 3% in Africa, and 33% in South East Asia all are the regional part of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021).

OCHA, United Nations Office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2019) conducted a conference with the UN and partners about gender-based violence: A closer look at the numbers, and identified that one in every five internally displaced or refugee women living in humanitarian crisis and armed conflict have experienced sexual violence. Moreover, 35 million women and girls of reproductive age need humanitarian assistance in 2019. One in three women experienced abuse and men and boys are also targeted.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a Bangladeshi human rights organization, 907 women or girls were raped in just the first nine months of 2020. Besides, 554 women faced domestic violence and 367 were killed while 90 others died by suicide, and 423 faced domestic violence in 2019. (Cited in BNWLA, 2020, pp-18).

Action Aid Bangladesh collaborates with the National Women's Violence and Prevention Forum, formed with the Stop Violence against Women Network (SVAW), which works across 25 districts in Bangladesh. The forum has documented a shocking tenfold increase in reports of GBV, including domestic violence and rape during the pandemic, with 1495 cases reported in March-April this year, compared to 138 last year. The number of rape cases in April 2020 is four times higher than in April last year.

The networks saw a 345% increase in cases of physical violence against women this April. However, network representatives are worried that some cases are still not being reported due to lockdown tensions. The shocking surge in violence is also affecting the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. Action Aid's service to support women in the camps reported a 28% increase in cases of GBV. (Cited in BNWLA, 2020, pp-19).

A study conducted on Bangladeshi men presented that 62% of males perceived that women should be beaten in some cases or times and 45% acknowledge that they commit such kind of behavior with their intimate partner (Naved, 2015).

It is well known that women are more vulnerable to gender-based violence and most of the violence occurs due to personal and familial issues. It led the insecurity in life and damage the

productivity of both physical and psychological individual (chhabra. 2016) consequences of domestic violence negatively influence the life of upbringing children and youngsters (Ibid).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to present the analysis of gender-based violence in Dhaka city. But more specifically, the study will be conducted to accomplish the following objectives:

- To explore the nature of gender-based violence among the urban dwellers in Dhaka city;
- To assess the influence of gender-based violence in Dhaka city;

1.3 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Definition

Reviewing the following relevant theory, the ecological model has been used as a guideline tool for the present study as it is more befitting to the study.

1.3.1 Muted Group Theory

Muted group theory is the critical presentation of the powerless group compared to others. The idea was presented by British Anthropologist Edwin Ardener. This theory highlights a gender point of view and clarifies the responsible factors for the muteness of a specific group, particularly women in the society who adjust to the circumstances because of their supposition position. Whereas the male belongs to the prevailing class and is more predominant as the women depend on them. The well-established cultural norms are divided among them in society.

1.3.2 Habitus

In 1984, Pierre Bourdieu first introduced this idea which is a part of the practice theory. According to his opinion, this idea is socialized values and norms that govern our ways of thinking. The idea provides us the information on how to behave, act and abide by the cultural norms and expected social rules that long-lasting disposition in society. Habitus is a way of life that represents our test, social class, and status. It implies the idea of socialization, which develops within the cultural environment through our subconscious and unconscious mind. This idea of practice theory would be useful to determine the male violent behavior as part of their learned behavior and socially determined gender roles as well.

1.3.3 Ecological Model

According to this model, gender-based violence occurs due to the cooperation of different elements at the various stages of the social condition. The ecological system explains that not a single issue can clarify why an individual becomes relational violent. The model represents the four interrelated domains for causing gender violence.

The most concentric circle represents the basic and individual level that influences the person's attitude. The next important circle is a relationship that promotes the GBV causes in various ways. The third circle illustrates the organization and social structure in which formal and informal connections of communities, work environment, and others are associated. The fourth and last circle highlights the social conditions including cultural norms (Population Report, 1999).

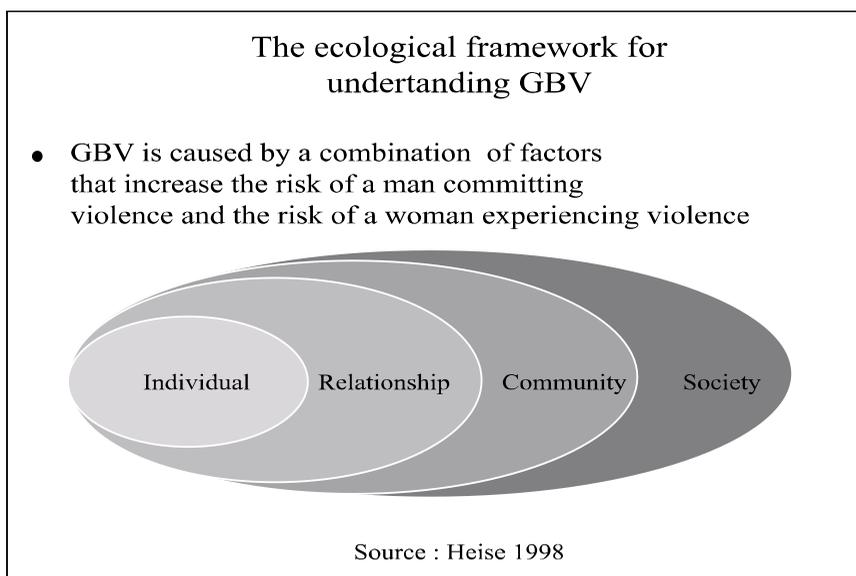


Figure 1. Ecological Model

1.3.4 Gender-based Violence

According to United Nations (violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018) “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” (UN, 1993)

According to European Institute for Gender Equality, the term gender-based violence is closely connected with gender inequality and is the most common violation acts of human rights which exist in all societies. On the basis of gender, any person can be directed by such kind of violence though most of the victims are women and girls.

UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency noted that gender-based violence can include sexual, physical, mental, and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. Moreover, threats of violent coercion and manipulation also indicate such kind of violence.

1.3.5 Intimate Partner Violence (WHO)

“refers to behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behavior.” (WHO: Geneva, 2021).

2. Literature Review

“The subjection of women “was written by John Stuart Mill in 1869. He is considered one of the famous philosophers of the 19th century who influenced most social and political theories. The book is split into four parts and the overall argument is that subordination of women is wrong, because, if we can’t provide equal opportunities no one can improve themselves. He also claims if we cling to

outdated and harmful gender ideals we would never progress morally as well as economically. The subjection of women explores where the false assumption comes from that general people made about women. They believe that women are feeble and not capable of intellectual discourse.

Mill argues the Logic of the prevailing social norms where men control and limit the lives of women. He also criticizes the institution of marriage because it does not protect women from psychological and physical harm and financial ruin as well as he also argues in favor of greater professional opportunities for women. The author opines that greater freedom and opportunities for women would enrich all aspects of society including men.

Women and Violence: a comparative study of rural and urban violence against women in Bangladesh. This study conducted by Akanda L & Shamin I. (1986) stated that half of the country and urban killing were encouraged by family feuds. In an urban area, women experienced another harmful violence that is corrosive tossing conjugal status often cause suicidal case or murder. The rising level of violence against women calls for activity from both government and non-governmental associations. Though the study draws a comparative study in the rural-urban area it is not clearly present the dimension and nature of violence between both areas.

Gender, Violence, and Security: Discourse as Practice The book is written by Laura J. Shepherd (2008). In this book, the author has tried to establish the connection between sexual violence security and global education arrangement and practice. She also has explored UN Security Council Resolution to address sex issues aiming for the development of a security approach that considers sexual violence as an important issue. Doing a hypothetical work on sex violence and global security, sexualized violence in was, sex and peace forms through an experimental examination the author made an extensive influence on both scholarly and arrangement situations.

Transnationalism Reversed: Women Organizing Against Gendered Violence in Bangladesh. The book consists of five parts, written by E.H. Chowdhury (2011). Part one represents the feminist negotiations: Campaign against Acid Violence in Bangladesh, tracing the challenged connection of the organization that works for social change. Part two highlights the realities of Acid violence in Bangladesh and the inability of the state to provide support to the victims. Part three illustrates from Dhaka to Cincinnati: real facts about trauma, victimization, and survival of Acid victims. Part four depicts Feminism and its others: The rise of new womanhood result in neoliberalism and globalization human rights promotion and social change. Part five – presents Transnational Challenges: Efforts of Religion, development and women's organizing in Bangladesh. The book successfully draws global motives of violence but likely failed to explore the historical continuity of violence. However, Socio-cultural and economic insights into gender-based violence are the strength of this book.

Gender-based violence: perspectives from Africa, The Middle East, and India. In this book, the authors Djamba and Kimuna, and Spirnger, 2015 represent a new dimension of gender-based violence focused on the taboos of daily life which derive from the patriarchal norms. The book provides rare insights into domestic violence as well as the attitudes of men about wife-beating, and health problems of women related to sexual and physical abuse. This book also emphasizes the key understanding of gender-based violence from a global perspective: Section one highlights the attitude of men about domestic violence and the link between violence and HIV in Africa. Section

two, covering the Middle East area highlighted the influence of consanguinity on domestic violence and reproductive health. Section three, studied the region of India revealed that women are at greater risk of reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases, and wife abuse due to gender norms.

Gender-based violence: Causes and remedies by John Simister, (2012) author of this book discussed domestic violence against women which is inflicted by their husbands. The major dimensions of domestic violence such as: physical, sexual, and emotional are discussed in this book. According to Simister over a billion women have experienced domestic violence from their intimate partners. This book also emphasized the attitude of men and women to such violence that they consider, acceptable and applicable in certain situations. However, he did not mention clearly why such kind of attitude is acceptable for some situations.

(UNICEF, 2020) that works across the world to support gender-based violence in emergencies. The organization emphasized the empowerment of women and girls including their economic initiatives, literacy skills, earning activities, cash transfer programs and savings, etc. It also focused on addressing the underlying social and environmental factors that promote the incidence of gender-based violence in emergencies. According to pallishomaj that works in most of the districts in Bangladesh against violence and helps women to understand their rights, 24% increase the violence case against women in 2020 than in 2019. This organization also revealed that child marriage grew by 68% compared to the previous year. Globally, it is estimated that child marriage led to 50% more experience with gender-based violence (BRAC, 2020)

BNWLA (2020) published a report on Bangladesh Overview 2020, violence against women and children focused on the impoverishment of women and girls chances their risk of violence. Those who live in poverty are 2.5 times more likely to marry underage and are vulnerable to sexual exploitation as well as trafficking. Others who experience domestic or intimate partner violence have no other means to avoid violent relationships because of having no income or resources. Gender statistics of Bangladesh, 2018 (BBS). Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics published a statistical report according to their violence against women survey 2015 that 49.6% of women experienced physical violence in their lifetime and 27.3% experienced sexual violence. It also highlighted that the prevalence of gender-based violence is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. (BBS,2015) with UNFPA jointly conducted a survey throughout Bangladesh. In this report, BBS showed five forms of violence that include physical, sexual, economic, emotional, and controlling behavior. It represented two-thirds of ever-married women who experienced one or more types of violence by their husbands in their lifetime.

Table 1. The following table presents the comparative analysis of violence against women in 2017, 2018, and 2019

Nature of violence	2017	2018	2019
Sexual harassment	233	290	295
Fatwa	12	10	
Rape	842	1127	1667
Acid Attack	37	18	15
Trafficking	14	17	38

Abduction	175	174	191
Missing	52	63	101
Rescue	259	248	162
Domestic Violence	530	412	278
Dowry	175	171	184
Domestic worker violence	55	60	184
Total	2384	2590	3115

Source: BNWLA, 2020

Table 1 illustrates a comparative scenario of violence against women in 2017, 2018 and 2019 which has happened in various forms in Bangladesh. Based on this data, it is clear that sexual harassment, Rape, Trafficking, Missing, and Domestic worker violence have increased year on year. As a result of different measures Fatwa, Acid attack, and Domestic violence have decreased slightly though decreasing rescue cases are not a good sign. Moreover, Abduction and dowry cases have fluctuated during the whole time.

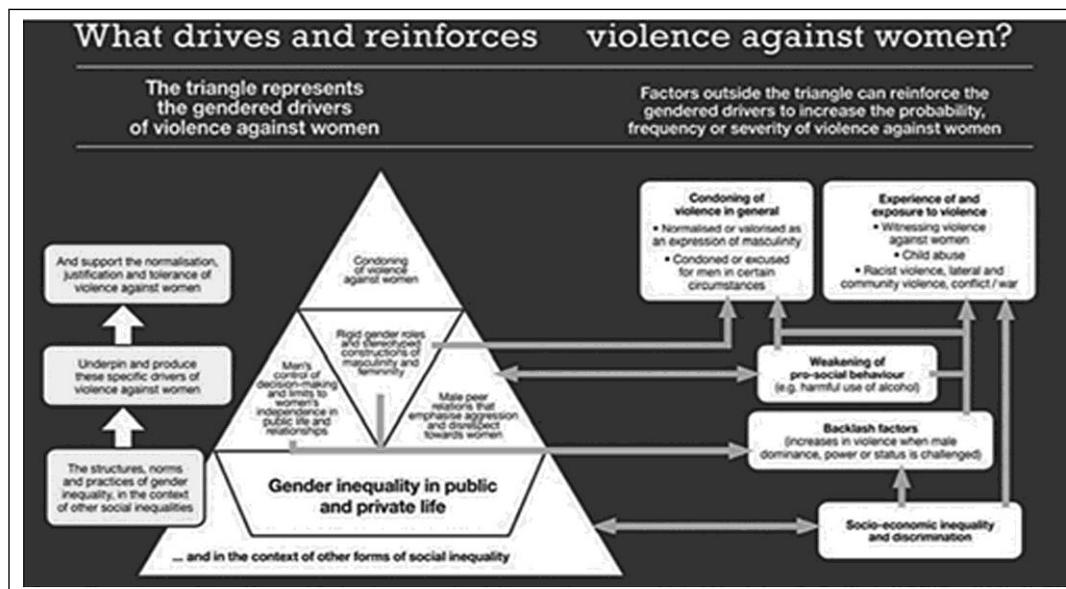


Figure 2. Driving force of gender-based violence against women

(Source: Adopted from Our Watch, 2015)

Figure 2. Illustrates the important factors which drive and reinforce gender-based violence. The figure represents the driven issues within a triangle shape that drives by gender inequality in public and private life. In addition, it represents the outside factors of the triangle which encourage violence against women, driven by socio-economic inequality and discrimination.

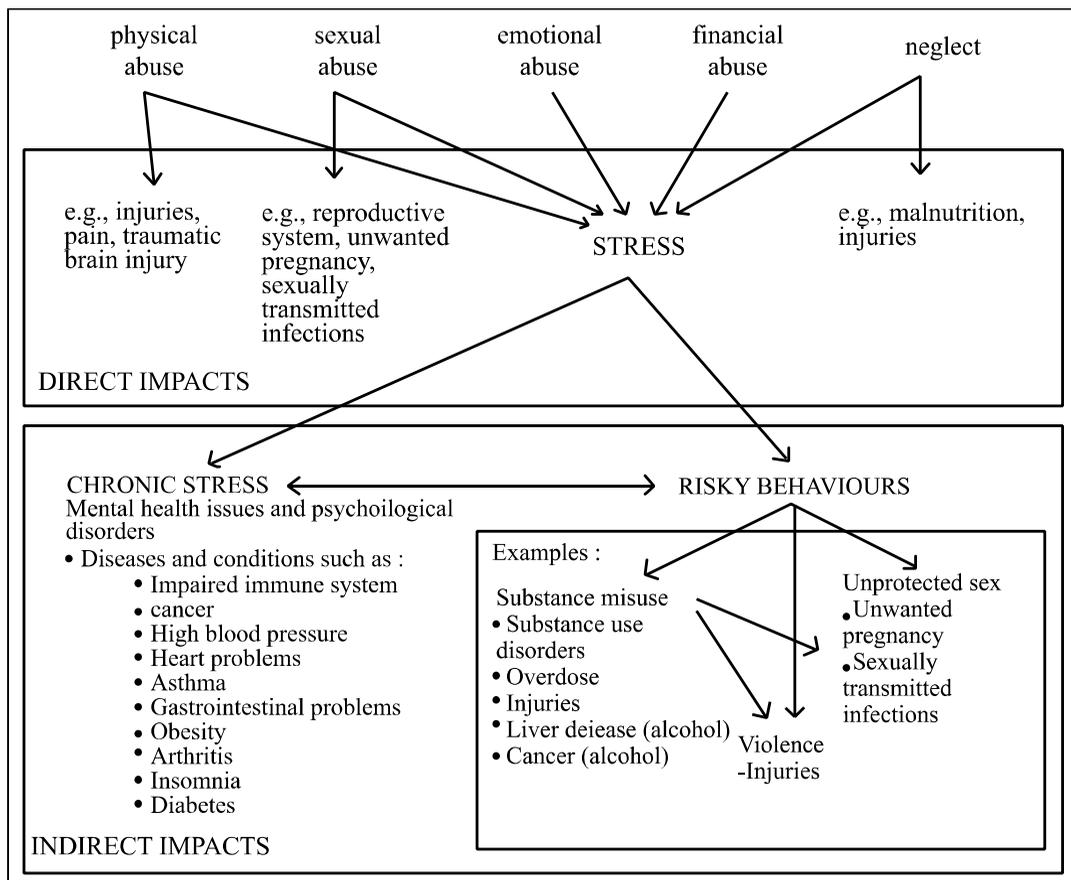


Figure 3. Consequences of Gender Violence

Source: (Adopted from the Government of Canada and restructured in the context of the present study)

The chart clearly states the effects of all types of gender-based violence which is common in Bangladesh and contextual to the present study. Moreover, it represents direct and indirect impacts and long-term chronic stress as well as risky behaviors.

3. Methods and Data Collections

Considering the nature of the topic, this study focused on content analysis through an intensive review of the available related research topics. Moreover, to fulfill the objectives of the study, it emphasized the existing literature as well as national and international document. Relevant authentic data in the terms of quantitative and qualitative have been collected for a large study and as a part of this, some selected data are presented in this study. Though gender-based violence is inflicted on any person irrespective of their gender, this study has focused on only female respondents of different occupations to get more insights into the incidents.

In connection with the study objectives and sampling procedure, Mohammadpur Thana of Dhaka city has been selected considering its population size, occupation, and residence pattern were all sorts of features of Dhaka city exists.

Respondents were selected on the basis of the snowball non-probability technique. Causalities of gender-based violence were targeted and a total of 80 respondents were finalized. As the research issue is sensitive the researcher has employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to get root ideologies that promote gender-based violence. Data collection methods were structured questionnaires and surveys, semi-structured questionnaires, case studies (FGD) Focused Grouped Discussion and Kill. Different tools and techniques were used during the data collection process like as Notebook interviewing through questionnaires, social media, etc.

The triangulation approach of data analysis has been followed in the present study. Descriptive statistics using SPSS have been used to analyze quantitative data and ethnographic qualitative techniques of data analysis examined in-depth similarities and differences between groups. It also tried to consider how responses varied from person to person in the context of their socioeconomic conditions so that the study could get a comparing aspect of findings.

Table 2. Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percent
20-25	19	23.75
25-30	29	33.75
30-35	11	13.75
35-40	16	20.0
40 and above years	05	6.25
Total	80	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2018

Table 2, represents the age distributions of the respondents. The highest number of respondents 33.75% belongs to the 25 to 30 years of age group and the second-highest groups are in 20 to 25 years. 13.75% and 20.0% of respondents fall into 30 to 35 and 35 to 40 years respectively. Only 6.25% of respondents are 40 and above 40 years.

Table 3. Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Govt. and Non-govt. employee	20	25.0
Petty business	10	12.5
Housewife	12	15.0
Housekeeping in other's household	14	17.5
Garments worker	8	10.0
Married female students	16	20.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2018

Table 3 illustrates the occupations of the respondents. Among the total respondents, one-fourth are government and non-government employees. One-fifth are married female students and the third-highest percent are housekeeping in other’s households. The rest of the respondents, petty business, Housewife, and garments workers are 12.5%, 15.0%, and 10.0% respectively.

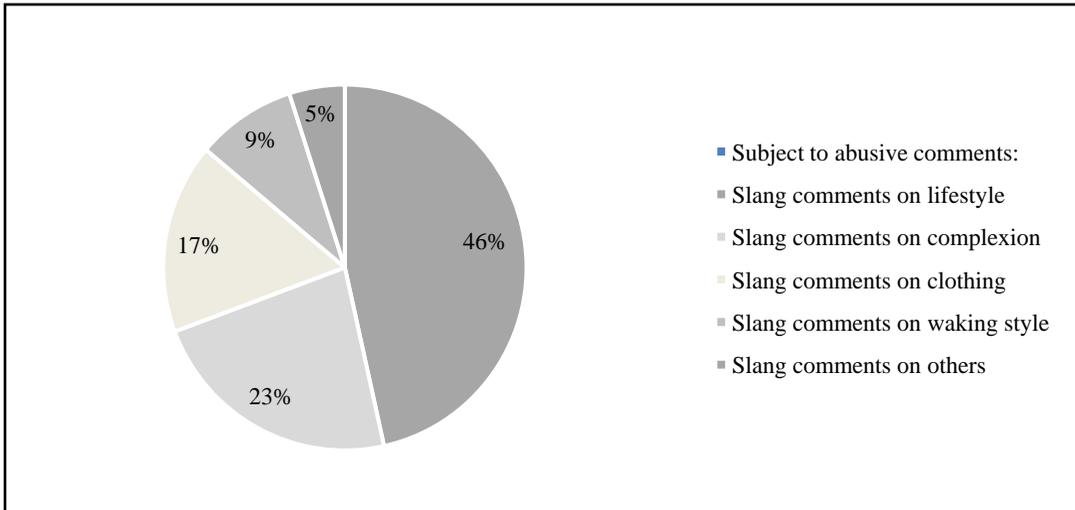


Figure 4. Subject to Abusive Comments. Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Figure 4. represents some common slang comments that a woman faces in various situations or environments. According to this study, 46 percent of women face slang comments on their lifestyle. Among all the respondents, 23 percent face negative comments on their complexion, and 17% & 9% regarding clothing and waking style respectively. Another 5 percent face different comments on other issues.

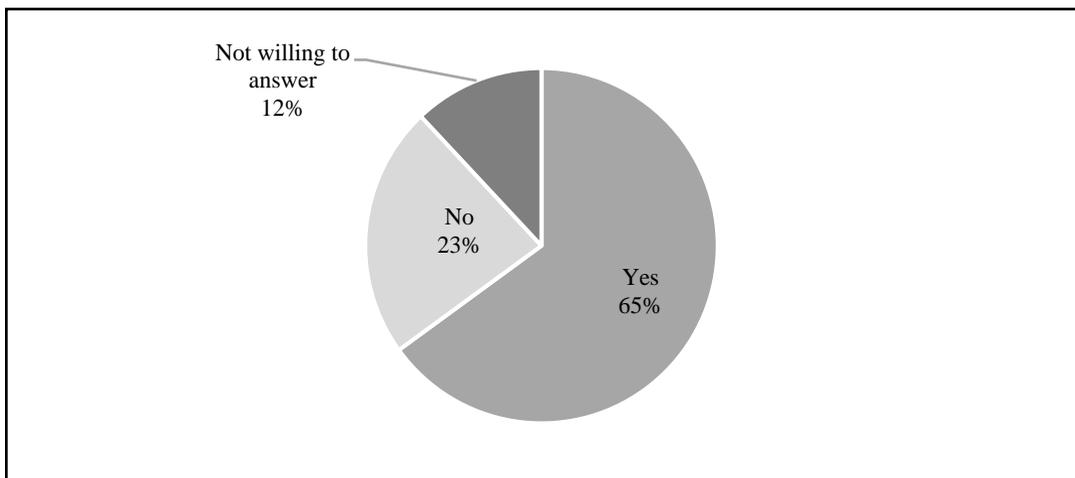


Figure 5. Facing violence for not contributing to household expenditure.

Source: Field work, 2018

Figure 5 shows among all the respondents, 65 percent face violence either physical or mental for not contributing to household expenditure. 23 percent of respondents said they do not face such kind of behavior for not contributing to the household. However, 12% of respondents did not answer this question.

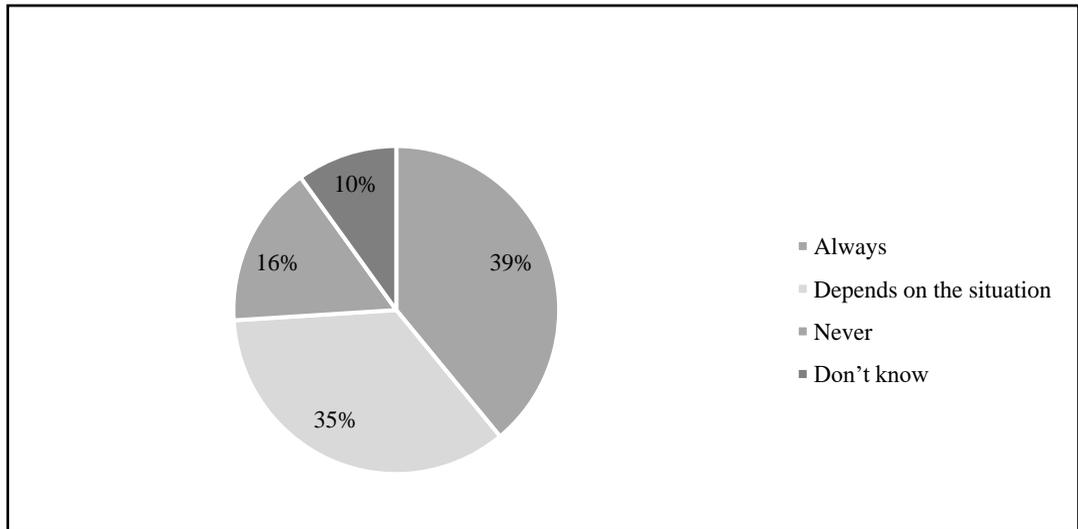


Figure 6. Do you think a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees?

Source: Field work, 2018

Figure 6 illustrates that 39% of respondents thought they should always obey their husbands if they disagreed with the point. 35 percent said it depends on the situation but 16% of respondents answered that they should never agree if they do not consent. Only 10% of respondents said they did not have any clear idea about this matter.

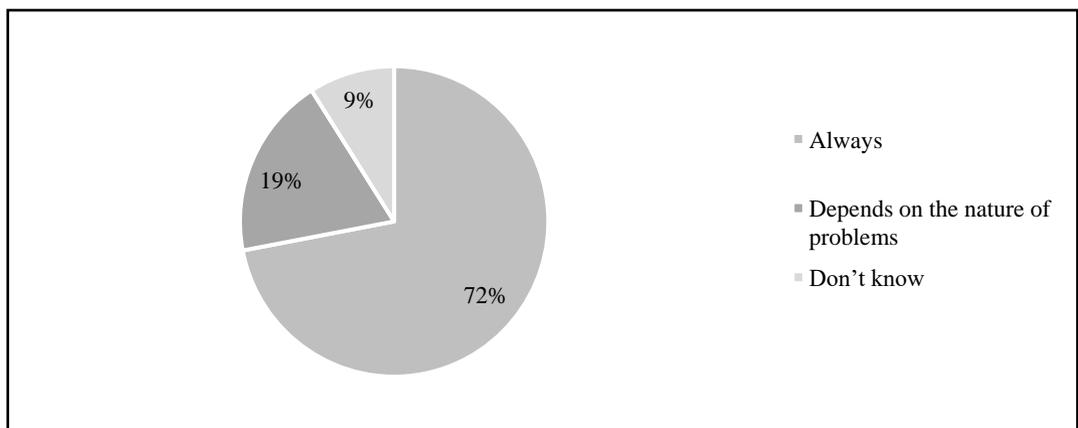


Figure 7. Do you think family problems should only be discussed with people in the family?

Source: Field work, 2018

Figure 7 presents that 72 percent of respondents thought family matters only should be discussed with family members and 9% said they do not know. However, 19% of respondents answered discussion matters depending on the nature of the problems.

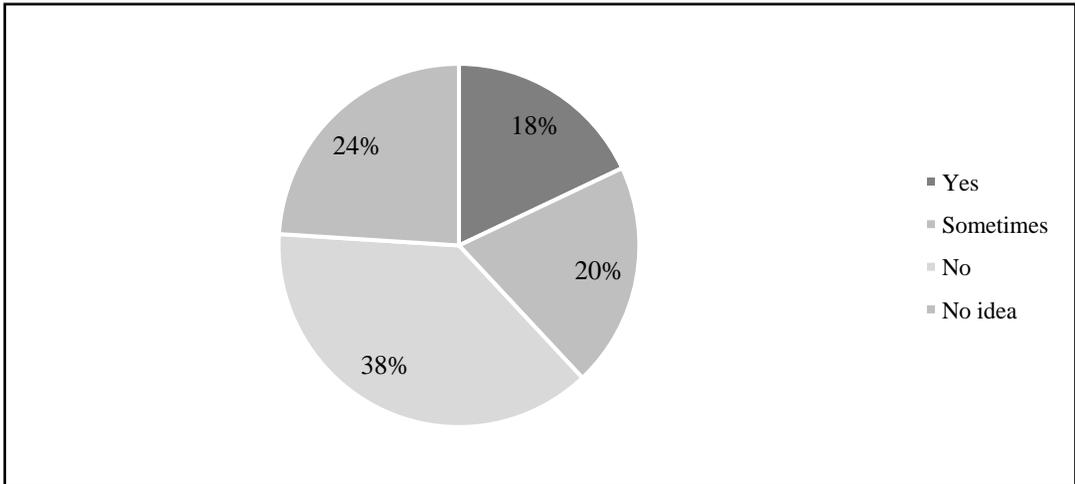


Figure 8. Do you think a man must show his wife/partner who is the boss?

Source: Field work, 2018

Figure 8 shows that 38% of respondents thought it is not necessary to show their partner who is the boss but 20% answered it depends on some situations. On the other hand, 18% of respondents said it is necessary because it is a part of our culture. Among them, 24% said they did not have a clear idea of what they should do.

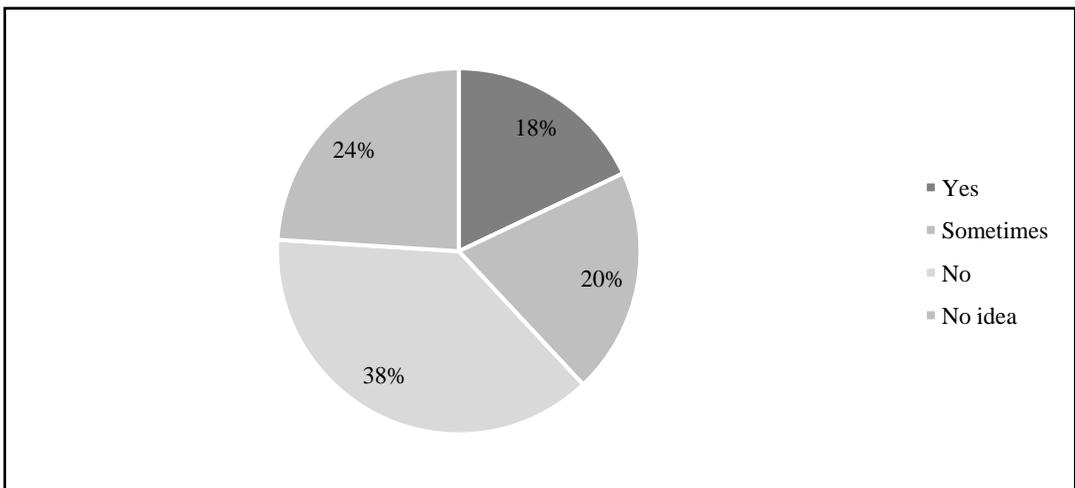


Figure 9. Your current husband/partner forbid you to see friends or family?

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Figure 9 illustrate that 28% of respondents said their husband always forbid seeing their family member and 45% answered that sometimes they are forbidden about this matter. However, 21% of respondents said they are never forbidden by their husbands to see their family members and only 6% did not answer.

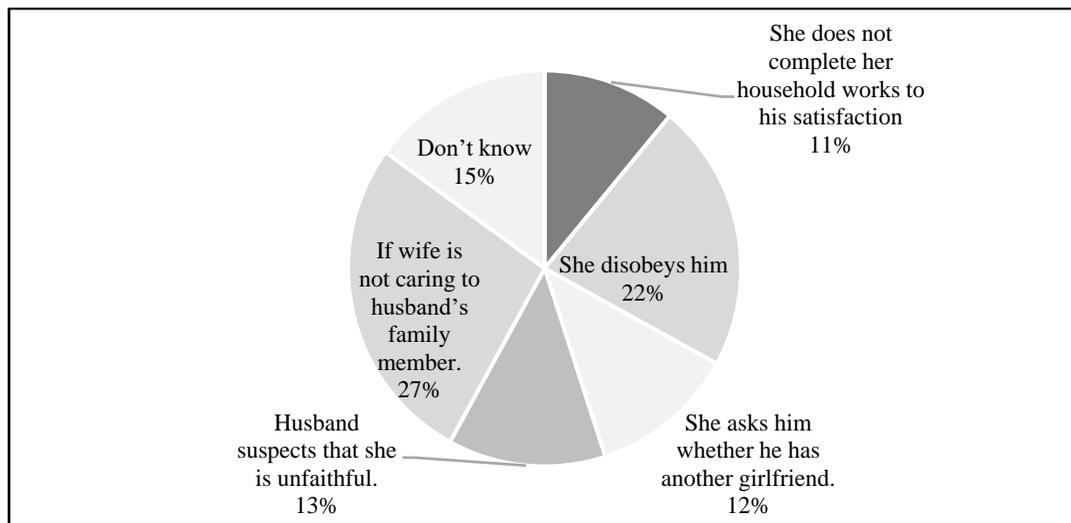


Figure 10. In your opinion, does a man have a good reason to hit his wife if:

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Figure 10 represents that a man has good reason to hit his wife if she is not caring for his family members, 27% of respondents thought so as well as 13% and 12% of respondents answered if she is unfaithful and asked, whether he has another girlfriend, respectively. Moreover, 22% of respondents said if the wife disobeyed him and others, and 11% said if she is not complete her household activities.

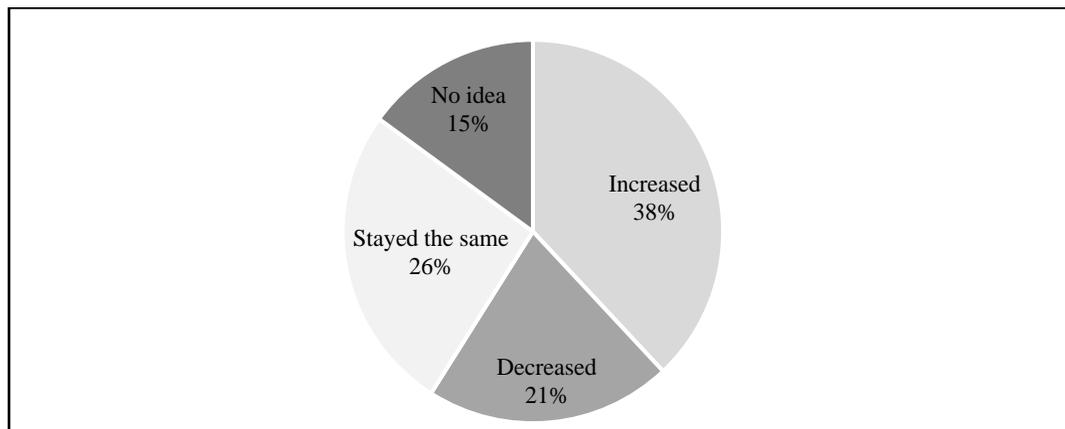


Figure 11. Do you think modernization and urbanization have affected the frequency of violence between husband and wife in your community?

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Figure 11 illustrates that 38% of respondents thought the effects of modernization and urbanization increased the frequency of violent behavior but 21% of respondents answered to decrease such kind of behavior due to urbanization. Among them, 26% said violent behavior remains unchanged and 15% of respondents did not answer properly to this question.

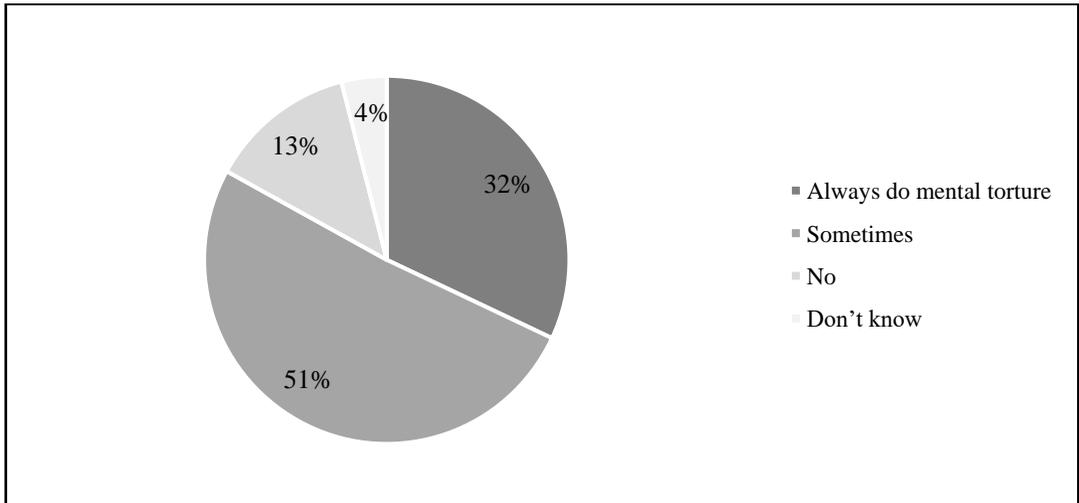


Figure 12. Your husband/ Partner ever did mental torture against you?

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Figure 12 represents that 32% of women always face mental torture from their husbands and 51% sometimes face such kind of behavior. On the other hand, 13% of women said they never face any kind of mental torture and only 4% did not give any answer.

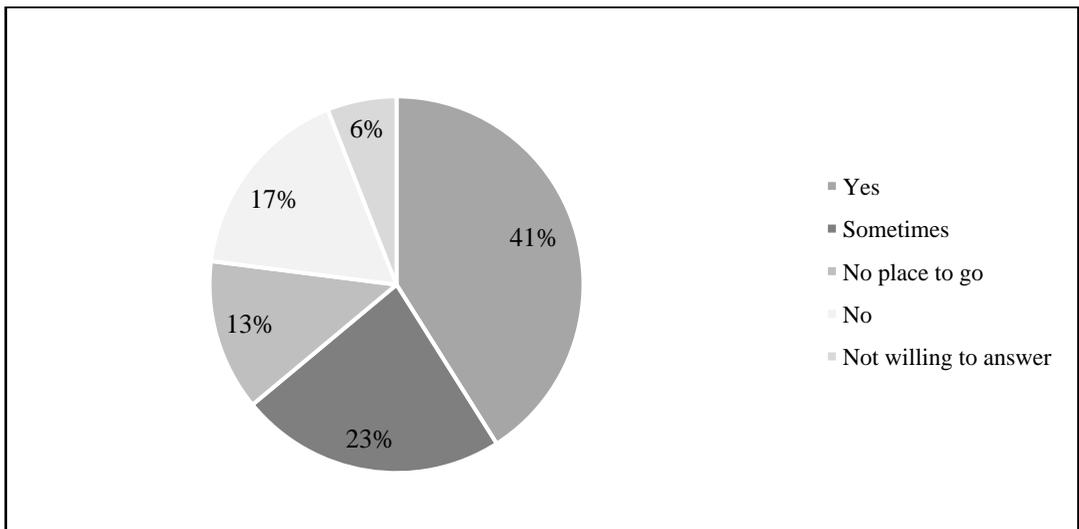


Figure 13. Ever leave your home, even for a night due to violence?

Source: Field work, 2018

Figure 13 shows that 41% of women of total respondents said they left their house at least once in their lifetime and 23% identified they did so sometimes. Among the respondents, 13% said they don't have any place to go as well as 17% answered they never left their house and 6% did not willing to answer this question.

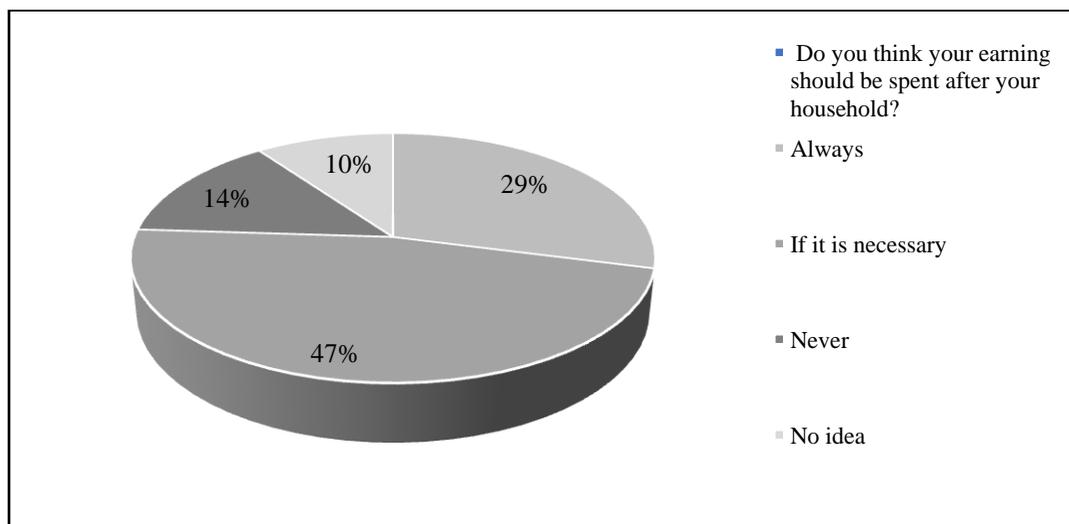


Figure 14. Do you think your earnings should be spent after your household?

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Figure 14 illustrates that 47% of respondents said they should spend their money after their household if it is necessary and 29% seem they always should spend their money if it is necessary or not. On the other hand, 14% of respondents thought they never should spend money because it is their husband's duty. Only 10% said they have no clear idea.

4. Findings and Discussion

The factors which induce gender-based violence can be discussed according to four distinct phases that represent the elements of the social-ecological model. At first, at the individual level of a man, in this stage attitude or beliefs pattern encourages the scope of becoming a perpetrator or victim of violence. Second, relationship factors, in this level, the relationship with the nearest one is so much important here, this study found that most of the incidents are happened due to family members of the perpetrator. it is a common scenario in our culture that family members or closest ones strongly influence the culprit in support of such behavior. In addition, at the community level, friends in the workplace or neighborhoods and finally, social and cultural norms create an environment that induces an individual to such behavior.

It is evident from the study most women face abusive or slang comments in different situations in their lifetime in terms of their lifestyle, walking or clothing, etc. More importantly, it is noted that around 65% of respondents of different age-group and occupations said they faced physical as well

as mental torture for not contributing to household expenditure though 12% of respondents were not willing to answer about this matter.

A large number of respondents nearly three-fourths opine that family problems should only be discussed with the family member. But the regrets that over one-third of respondents identified their husbands or partners forbid them to see their family members. Moreover, nearly half of the women said they face sometime such kind of prohibition.

It is a matter of concern how much dangerous the negative impact of gender-based violence which has clearly been depicted in figure:3. Stress is a result of all sorts of violence consequently affecting women's health and reproductive health system. Besides this, chronic stress and risky behavior are deriving from stress which causes different chronic diseases as well as mental health issues and psychological disorders. Not only that, study shows that gender-based violence seriously affects women's well-being and their children as well as their families. Although it is a chronic social problem in Bangladesh, the Covid-19 pandemic increases the chances of incidents by many folds.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Marriage and marital relationships have great importance in our society. This study has made an effort to understand gender relationships through different types of violent behavior. It is too difficult to identify the actual causes of gender-based violence as we consider it a social problem. In a patriarchal society like Bangladesh, most women suffer physical as well as psychological torture irrespective of their education and occupation, or social status. In order to eliminate this heinous issue from society as well as our life, we must address the underlying facts and take necessary measures. It is acknowledged by the All, particularly civil society as well as development partners to eliminate gender-based violence by any means as it is necessary for women's well-being and to ensure sustainable development of the country. The ecological model provides a way for understanding some important factors that contribute to the chance of gender-based violence. The model is organized into four different levels: individual, relationship, community, and society and it highlights the importance of understanding the complex interplay of psychological, social, cultural, economic, and political factors that increase violence experience.

Policymakers can use the ecological model not only to understand the influencing factors of violence but also to consider what strategy they should undertake to address and reduce violence in society. They will have to consider all of the factors from individual to social through board-based prevention programming and it requires change from the individual level to all aspects of society.

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