



What is Gender Based Violence?

Gender-based violence (GBV) is any act that is perpetrated against a person's will; and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to anyone (including threats of such acts), coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Globally, it is estimated that one out of three women will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime.

While women and girls are the primary victims of GBV because of their 'subordinate' status, GBV reflects a broader conceptualization of violence as anyone may be victims of violence that is based on socially determined roles, expectations and behaviors linked to ideas on masculinity – including Sexual Harassment. At AWAM, our primary focus is on **SEXUAL HARASSMENT, CYBERBULLYING, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE and RAPE.**

What causes GBV?

One of the leading causes of GBV is **TOXIC MASCULINITY.**

Over the years, it has also been observed that a root cause of GBV also lies in a combination of **POWER, PRIVILEGE AND PERMISSION.**

TOXIC MASCULINITY

Today we understand that there exists a spectrum of masculinities, and the understanding of what is masculine is subjective. Toxic masculinity does not refer to any one masculinity but rather types of masculinities that perpetuate strict ideas of gender roles that are harmful to everyone.

POWER

The ability or capacity to exert force over another person/group. While individuals exercise varying degrees of power across different contexts (including the capacity to make decisions), there are instances where they are unable to do so due to an external force (power).

Power can take many forms including the power to dictate/create/narrate history, create and amend laws, to spread or control ideas and to wield political or economic power. Abuse of power can have extremely negative effects, to the point of being lethal.

PRIVILEGE

Social privilege refers to the benefit of belonging to a certain class/group whereby the benefits are not given out based on consideration of rights or need, but rather on the sole basis of belonging to that social class/group

PERMISSION

Permission here refers to social permission whereby dominant social narratives and sentiment dictates the moral approach towards an issue. A common example is that of victim-blaming, where instead of holding perpetrators accountable, the victim (or survivors) are criticized instead.

Based on the definitions, we know that:

Who

GBV can occur to anyone – regardless of gender, biological sex, social background, region or nationality. Although GBV can happen to anyone, a majority of GBV survivors or victims are women, especially those from marginalized communities. Perpetrators (s) are often people known to survivors such as an intimate partner, family members, friend, co-workers, community leaders and teachers. According to statistics, approximately one in four women and girls over the age of 15 may experience sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives, and rates of sexual abuse by non-partners range from one to 12 percent over the course of a woman's lifetime.

Why

The root causes of GBV are unequalled power relations and gender social norms; both men and women are expected to perform socially determined roles. For example, traditional roles dictate that women should be humble, passive, emotional and powerless while men are aggressive, unemotional, and powerful. Additionally, other concepts like toxic masculinity, power, privilege, and permission all play a fundamental role in contributing towards GBV.

Where

GBV can occur anywhere – not only in private settings but also at public places like offices, schools, and even religious places of worship. As the main root cause of GBV stems from unequalled power relations, some environments that consist of authority figures, such as boss/employee relations at work, often experience instances of GBV.