



9. Other Forms of Violence

There are other forms of violence against women that occur around the world. The following is taken from a recent UNIFEM publication for “Not A Minute More,” a campaign to end violence against women.

There seems to be a perception that sexual Harmful Traditional Practices

Harmful traditional practices refer to types of violence that have been committed against women in certain communities and societies for so long that they are considered to be a part of accepted cultural practice.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM refers to several types of traditional cutting operations performed on women and girls. Often part of fertility or coming-of-age rituals, FGM is sometimes justified as a way to ensure chastity and genital ‘purity’.

FGM occurs primarily in over 25 African countries, among some minorities in Asia and immigrant communities in Europe, Australia, Canada and the US. An estimated 130 million women today have undergone FGM, and an additional 2 million girls and women are being subjected to it each year.

Dowry Murder

Dowry murder is when a woman is killed by her husband or in-laws because her family is unable to meet their demands for her dowry - a payment made to a woman’s in-laws upon her engagement or marriage as a gift to her new family. It is not uncommon for dowries to exceed a family’s annual income.

Honour Killings

In many societies, rape victims, women suspected of engaging in premarital sex, and women accused of adultery have been murdered by their male relatives because the violation of a woman’s chastity is viewed as an affront to the family’s honour.

Early / Forced Marriage

The practice of early marriage is prevalent throughout the world, especially in Africa and South Asia. This is a form of sexual violence, since young girls are often forced into the marriage and into sexual relations.

Parents and families often justify child marriages to ensure a better future for their daughters. Parents and families marry off their younger daughters as a means to gain economic security and status for them as well as for their daughters.

Trafficking in Women & Girls

Trafficking involves recruiting or transporting another person in order to place them in a situation of abuse or exploitation such as forced prostitution, slavery-like practices, battering and extreme cruelty, sweatshop labour, or exploitative domestic servitude.

Each year, roughly two million girls between the ages of 5 and 15 are trafficked, sold, or coerced into prostitution.

HIV/AIDS & Violence

Women’s inability to negotiate safe sex and refuse unwanted sex is closely linked to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Unwanted sex - from being unable to say “no!” to a partner and be heard, to sexual assault such as rape - results in a higher risk of abrasion and bleeding, providing a ready avenue for transmission of the virus. Both realities obliterate women’s ability to protect themselves from infection.