

## Effects of Molestation and Violence Against Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### Introduction

Molestation and violence affect women of all ages and social groups, as well as women of all races, beliefs, and ethnicities, and it is almost entirely committed by men (Rose 2018). Gender-based violence or molestation is currently the world's most widespread violation of human rights. Both subtle and overt, it takes many forms and significantly affects human development (Joshi 2002). It is so firmly established in cultures throughout the world that it's nearly unnoticeable. Sexual activities with young women below the age of eighteen are categorized as molestation. These acts consist of rape, exposing private parts, taking adult photographs, and touching private areas. At the same time, violence refers to the concepts of constraint and imposing physical dominance on another (Morrison and Millwood 2007). Violence is changed, impacted by a wide range of periods, locations, situations, and reality (Morrison and Millwood 2007). Violence or molestation is either accepted and condemned, as it has been on Earth since the dawn of civilization, in many increasingly complicated, and at the same time, more fragmented and articulated forms (Rose 2018). Violence or molestation against women results in sexual, psychological, or physical harm or suffering, with threats of such intimidation or arbitrary deprivations of freedom (Joint United Nations Programme 2012).

The COVID-19 pandemic has escalated violence against women in every nation and society, harming masses of women and their relatives (Chandra 2020). Molestation and violence among women could reduce if individuals, communities, and governments work together to eliminate the bad attitudes of those victimizing or pressuring girls and women and create a robust venue for interactions (Peterman et al. 2020). A World Health Organization report (2020) shows the disturbingly extreme rates of violence against girls and women during the pandemic. The pandemic has increased women's exposure to

violence and molestation. It is profoundly alarming that men's violence against women continues unabated, and it is the worst for women of a young age, especially during the pandemic (Nair and Banerjee 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a spike in violence and molestation against women of all kinds. Molestation and violence against women, including psychological, sexual, and physical violence or molestation by the state, community, or family, existed before the pandemic (Joint United Nations Programme 2012). The violence or molestation could be in the form of sexual abuse, marital rape, human trafficking, and sexual harassment.

## **Statistic review of violence and molestation**

Molestation and violence, which endangers women's rights, self-respect, and well-being, has only lately surfaced as a worldwide obstacle that cuts beyond regional, social, cultural, and economic lines (Tappis et al. 2016). According to Parkes et al. (2016), millions of women remain assaulted by their partners in the United States every year. Similarly, in Sweden, of the 18 650 recorded domestic and gender-related assault occurrences against women, 66 per cent were through molestation and violence commit by their partner (Parkes et al. 1996). In addition, 45 per cent of the 681 homicides registered in England in 1996 were women murdered by their partners (Tappis et al. 2016). Information from developing countries such as Barbuda, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Columbia, and Mali shows that physical and sexual abuse of women is widespread (Parkes et al. 1996). The Department of Health Social Services Inspectorate (1992) conducted a study of 796 Japanese women in which 60 per cent of them were sexually abused, 66 per cent were emotionally abused, and 59 per cent were physically abused. According to the research carried out in some developing countries like Tanzania, Ghana, and Uganda, 42 per cent of women in their families are subjected to physical violence (Women's Aid Federation England 1995). In China, 57 per cent of women have reported conclusive evidence of wife battering (Lundgren and Amin 2015). Surprisingly, Lundgren and Amin (2015) stated in their study that only 27 countries have anti-sexual harassment laws, 44 countries have domestic abuse laws, and seventeen countries have made marital rape a crime.

## **Effects of gender-based violence**

Molestation and violence against women can have devastating and long-term consequences. They endanger a woman's reproductive health and leave survivors with cognitive, interpersonal, and psychological scars (Kumar, Chaudhary and Sharma 2014). A woman who is molested or violently assaulted by her spouse or lives in an abusive relationship may become pregnant or have an abortion against her choice, or her partner may deliberately expose her to a sexually transmitted infection (Kumar et al. 2014). Kumar et al. (2014) reported that 'violence influences girls' and they may become withdrawn, worried, or sad, as well as violent.

## Possible solutions

The essence of fighting violence and molestation during a pandemic is to acknowledge previously-overlooked problems, such as the Ebola and the cholera epidemic, especially in developing countries (Campbell 2020). Campbell (2020) highlights that intensifying community relationships and creating understanding about the significance of reporting incidents of violence and molestation are essential to decreasing the number of such incidents. Gerster (2020) states that neighbours of violent families can likewise assist in reducing violence and molestation by discussing it with them. The World Health Organisation (2014) stresses the importance of training healthcare staff to spot violence indicators so as to combat gender-based violence and molestation. Media sensitization on violence and molestation against women during this pandemic is also essential (Van Gelder et al. 2020). Promoting safety rules through advertisements, offering supportive words and advice, and getting help on behalf of the victim after they have given their consent can also help the victim (Van Gelder et al. 2020).

## Conclusion

Globally, the spread of COVID-19 has impacted several issues within our society. Women especially experience more violence and molestation during the pandemic – a phenomenon linked to social demographics such as class, race, and age. The economic uncertainty, isolation, unfitness, and social separation issues brought on by the pandemic have further compounded this issue. As such, women must be mobilised and sensitised to violence and molestation in all countries with the goal of eradicating inequalities.

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