Are Women’s Rights Protected in Georgia? Statistics and Reality

Abstract: Violence against women is relevant both in the world and in Georgia. Therefore, the aim of the work is Statistical analysis of violence against women in Georgia, according to the causes, forms, revealed forms and results of violence. The methods of statistical observation, grouping and analysis were used in the research process. The graphical expression method is widely used. Apart from them, the methods of induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis, and selective observation were also used. Relative indicators of structure, dynamics, and comparison were calculated. Violence against women is a taboo topic for Georgian society and rarely becomes disclosed. Violence against women and girls in Georgia includes sexual abuse, rape, sexual harassment, early marriages, or forced marriage. The cases of violence against women are much more common in residents of Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. It is relatively low in Adjara, Guria, Samegrelo and Imereti regions. Besides physical violence, there is frequent psychological violence, such as constant control of the wife, threatening, intimidation, etc. Violence indicators are different for age groups and nationalities. The survey is intended for a wide segment. In the future, it is possible to further expand the area by considering sources of financing. The results of this research will help increase public awareness and the need for women's rights. Since 2009, research about women's violence in Georgia has not been conducted. Therefore, the statistical data presented here is completely most recent.

Keywords: gender, violence, family, research, analysis.

JEL Classification: C1

1 Introduction

Violence against women in its many forms and manifestations, and across all settings, is a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Violence against women impacts women across the world, regardless of age, class, race and ethnicity. According to recent estimates, 30 per cent of women aged 15 years or older globally have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence during their lifetime (Abesadze, 2018). It is the leading cause of homicide death in women globally (Abesadze, 1992) and has many other major health consequences (Abesadze, Paresashvili, 2018). The economic and social costs associated with violence against women are significant, and global evidence shows that violence consistently undermines development efforts at various levels, driving the depreciation of physical, human...
and social capital (Gender Discrimination in Labor Relations, 2014). In Georgia, current research points to widespread experiences of violence against women across the country (WHO, 2013). Intimate partner violence, as well as early and forced marriage, are among the most prevalent forms of violence against women in Georgia. These types of violence cut across all divisions of income, culture and class. Despite its scale and socioeconomic impact, violence against women remains largely underreported and under-researched in key areas. With the last prevalence study conducted in 2009 by UNFPA (Claire et al., 2015), there is an absence of comprehensive and reliable data on the extent and nature of violence against women in Georgia. Moreover, existing administrative data such as police and criminal justice statistics paint only a partial picture of the problem.

1. BACKGROUND

In order to fill the vacuum of nationally representative data on violence against women and to inform the development of evidence-based policy and action on the ground, UN Women in partnership with the National Statistics Office – GEOSTAT, and with the generous support of the European Union, conducted the National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia. The nationwide study was conducted using a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative components. The study drew on international best-practice research methodologies that complemented each other to provide a holistic picture of violence against women – the WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women formed the basis of the women’s quantitative questionnaire; sexual harassment and stalking questions were drawn from the European Union Fundamental Rights’ Agency (FRA) survey; and questions on gender attitudes and childhood trauma were adapted from the United Nations Study on Men and Violence. It is also important to note that relevant SDG indicators10 and frameworks put forward by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 57th session, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 have been incorporated in the study (National Study on Violence against Women, 2017).

Violence against women is not a new phenomenon, nor is its consequences to women’s physical, mental and reproductive health. What is new is the growing recognition that acts of violence against women are not isolated events but rather form a pattern of behavior that violates the rights of women and girls, limits their participation in society, and damages their health and well-being. When studied systematically, as was done with this report, it becomes clear that violence against women is a global public health problem that affects approximately one-third of women globally (Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, 2013).

What are the statistics of violence against women in the world? It is estimated that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner (not including sexual harassment) at some point in their lives. However, some national studies show that up to 70 percent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime. Evidence shows that women who have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence report higher rates of depression, having an abortion and acquiring HIV, compared to women who have not. Similar to data from other regions, in all four countries of a multi-country study from the Middle East and North Africa, men who witnessed their fathers using violence against their mothers, and men who experienced some form of violence at home as children, were significantly more likely to report perpetrating intimate partner violence in their adult relationships. For example, in Lebanon, the likelihood of perpetrating physical violence was more than three times higher among men who had witnessed their fathers beating their mothers during childhood than those who did not (Promundo and UN Women, 2017). It is estimated that of the 87,000 women who were intentionally killed in 2017 globally, more than half (50,000- 58 percent) were killed by intimate partners or family members, meaning that 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day. More than a third (30,000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by their current or former intimate partner (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). Adult women account for 51 percent of all human trafficking victims detected globally. Women and girls together account for 71 percent, with girls representing nearly three out of every four child trafficking victims. Nearly three out of every four trafficked women and girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It is estimated that there are 650 million women and girls in the world today who were married before age 18. During the past decade, the global rate of child marriage
has declined—from one in four young women (aged 20-24) being married as children, to almost one in five. Still, in West and Central Africa—where this harmful practice is most common—over four out of 10 young women were married before their 18th child marriage often results in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupts schooling, limits the girl’s opportunities and increases her risk of experiencing domestic violence. At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation in the 30 countries with representative data on prevalence. In most of these countries, the majority of girls were cut before age five. With population movement, female genital mutilation is becoming a practice with global dimensions, in particular among migrant and refugee women and girls. Approximately 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) worldwide have experienced forced sex (forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts) at some point in their life. Out of these, 9 million adolescent girls were victimized within the past year. In the vast majority of countries, adolescent girls are most at risk of forced sex by a current/former husband, partner or boyfriend. Based on data from 30 countries, only one percent ever sought professional help (UNICEF, 2017). Globally, one out of three students (aged 11 and 13 to 15 years) have been bullied by their peers at school at least on one day in the past month, with girls and boys equally likely to experience bullying. However, boys are more likely to experience physical bullying than girls, and girls are more likely to experience psychological bullying, particularly being ignored or left out or subject to nasty rumours. Girls also report being made fun of because of how their face or body looks more frequently than boys. School-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls. Twenty-three percent of female undergraduate university students reported having experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct in a survey across 27 universities in the United States in 2015. Rates of reporting to campus officials, law enforcement or others ranged from five to 28 percent, depending on the specific type of behavior. One in 10 women in the European Union report having experienced cyberharassment since the age of 15 (including having received unwanted, offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, or offensive, inappropriate advances on social networking sites). The risk is highest among young women between 18 and 29 years of age (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). In a multi-country study from the Middle East and North Africa, between 40 and 60 percent of women said they had ever experienced street-based sexual harassment (mainly sexual comments, stalking/following, or staring/ogling), and 31 percent to 64 percent of men said they had ever carried out such acts. Younger men, men with more education, and men who experienced violence as children were more likely to engage in street sexual harassment (Promundo and UN Women, 2017). Results from a national Australian survey show that almost two out of five women (39 percent) aged 15 and older who have been in the workforce in the last five years have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace during that period, compared to one out of four (26 percent) of their male counterparts. Regarding most common perpetrators, in almost 4 out of 5 cases (79 percent) one or more of the perpetrators were male. In the majority of countries with available data, less than 40 percent of the women who experience violence seek help of any sort. Among women who do, most look to family and friends and very few looks to formal institutions and mechanisms, such as police and health services. Less than 10 percent of those women seeking help for experience of violence sought help by appealing to the police (United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, 2015).

Generally, in most cases, violence experienced by women is intimate partner violence. Throughout the world 30% of females, who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced forms of sexual or/and physical violence by their intimate partner. Worldwide, 38% of murders of women are committed by men (intimate partner). In general, violence is a crime in most of the states but even though some women still cannot protect themselves legally against violence, abusers when it takes place in the houses. There is statistical information that 1.4 billion women experience lack of legal protection versus domestic economic violence.

Throughout the world, up to 1/2 of sexual attack are committed contra girls, who are under sixteenseventeen years old. Four years ago, the Military Services got 6083 reports about sexual violence, which involves service members. In the same year 4736 service members reported about the fact that they have been raped/sexually assaulted during being in the military. Proportionally 6 out of 10 countries experience sexual harassment in education, 1 out of 5 countries even do not have proper laws against harassment in employment and 6 out of 10 countries experience sexual violence in public spaces.
Based on Equality Now’s The World’s Shame Report, 2016: worldwide, sexual abuse, rape are daily violent circumstances – affecting up to one billion female. In spite of the pervasiveness of the crimes, laws are inconsistent and insufficient, furthermore, sometimes they even promote harassment. If we take into consideration the results of the findings, it illustrates that governments need a lot of work to transform policies, laws and practices into instruments in order to effectively punish sexual violence, provide better access to justice for victims and prevent sexual violence.

As it is known, female have always been most impacted ones in war and nowadays they are still facing armed-conflict and crisis zones on every continent besides Antarctica: gang, multiple rapes, torture, death, sexual slavery, mutilation. Furthermore, female in wars are frequently forced to prostitute to feed their children. In addition, in 2003 in Liberia, 74% of interviewees, 388 men refugees reported that they had faced sexual violence. That violence had been intended to drive them out of their homes. 55% said that they had experienced sexual violence at the time of their displacement. Moreover, it is reported that the thousands of children being kidnapped by regular forces for armed combat, gangs, the girls are often abused.

Psychological abuse involves trauma to the victim caused by verbal abuse, acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics. Perpetrators use psychological abuse to control, terrorize, and denigrate their victims. It frequently occurs prior to or concurrently with physical or sexual abuse. In the United States, 48.4% of women have experienced at least one psychologically aggressive behavior by an intimate partner. Four in ten women have experienced at least one form of coercive control by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Women who earn 65% or more of their households’ income are more likely to be psychologically abused than women who earn less than 65% of their households’ income. Most people are aware of the psychological torture is used in war situations, “brainwashing.” But emotional abuse is also a large component in domestic violence. “... in the 60 percent of the cases ... I believe the pattern of violence is complemented by this extended pattern of intimidation, isolation and control.” Dr. Evan Stark, author of Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life, in which he explains that “In millions of abusive relationships, men use a largely unidentified form of subjugation that more closely resembles kidnapping or indentured servitude than assault.” Dr. Stark calls this “coercive control.” Although Dr. Stark’s book focuses on emotional abuse in the home, it also occurs in the workplace by bosses and co-workers (mobbing), in nursing homes, in jails – any place where there is a power imbalance (End Violence Against Women Toolkit, 2018). While physical abuse is mostly visible, mental abuse does not produce the bruises, broken bones, and otherwise mutilated bodies. Still, it can be an extreme method of control and is usually described with the many forms it takes: verbal abuse (blaming, shaming, name-calling, insults), constant criticism, intimidation, manipulation. It emerges as a pattern of aggressing, denying (a refusal to listing, communicate, emotionally withdrawing as punishment, and literally denying that any kind of abuse occurred. The third component, minimizing. A particularly insidious form of abuse, which develops in a gradual, often subtle way that has very serious consequences, is “gaslighting.” The word which means an abuser’s (person or entity) attempt to psychologically manipulate someone or a target group into doubting their own sanity and questioning their reality in order to gain power. The effects of gaslighting chip away at a person’s confidence, self-esteem, and sanity: anxiety, depression, symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, and the inability to trust anyone.

As with all research and statistics of violence, they are estimations based on those who will admit or are even aware of psychological and emotional abuse. Fear, fear of retaliation, lack of support, ignorance of available help agencies, et cetera, keeps people from coming forward. In addition, police and even medical personnel may minimize and not recognize this form of abuse, or they themselves find it difficult to handle such a situation. In 1996, the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, for Health Canada, reported 1. 39% of married women or common-law wives suffered emotional abuse by husbands/partners; 2. 1995 survey of women 15 and over 36-43% reported emotional abuse during childhood or adolescence. 3. 39% experienced emotional abuse in marriage/dating. Men are not the only perpetrators of emotional abuse against women. “Numerous studies done between the 1980 and 1994 report that lesbian relationships have higher overall rates of interpersonal aggression (including psychological aggression/emotional abuse) than heterosexual or gay male relationships. Furthermore, women who have been involved with both men and women reported higher rates of abuse from their female partners.” Only the U.K (2015) and France (2010) have laws that protect victims of psychological abuse, however proving such abuse in court has been
difficult. These are two “advanced” countries. We can only imagine how widespread this form of violence is across the world and that most victims are left with no recourse and little help even for the effects of such abuse where aid focuses on physical violence (End Violence Against Women Toolkit, 2018).

We can say that violence against women is one of the most important and global problems of our societies. Violence limits the involvement of women in social life and creates gender-based barriers in almost every type of activity. Women’s unemployment rate is high in Georgia. Generally, unemployment amplifies social stress and political instability in the country (Abesadze, Paresashvili, 2018). The studies conducted upon the mentioned matter prove that the problem, having a negative effect not only on the victims’ physical and mental well-being, but also on the children, the family, and the society, is complex in nature and can be caused by a few reasons. According to the gender stereotypes formed in our societies, women are more calm, gentle, lenient, and agreeable, always expected by the society and the family to be altruistic, whereas the more sympathetic characteristics of men tend to be the strive towards their goals, being tough and able, being someone to be reckoned with. The creation of such stereotypes is already a violation of women’s rights, providing the society with strictly set frames in which both men and women should fit, and any deviation from the traditional views are not as tolerated by the society as one might hope.

It must be mentioned, that due to the structural gender inequality in society, women are often discriminated against with no grounds and are the victims of violence. In societies, such as the ones we live in, a standard of “double morale” can be found, meaning that women are more likely than men to be judged strictly. Because of this, it is of utter importance to analyze the statistics of violence against women, especially the quantitative study of domestic violence, it being one of the problems still being relative regardless of people not discussing it publicly. The cult of family is the basis of the problem with publicity of domestic violence, family being a social institute in which trust and harmony between the members of it play a huge role, making it so that what is connected to domestic conflicts, including domestic violence, is to be considered as something not to be interfered with, sometimes so-called “the family cases”, so the victims of domestic violence tend not to talk about it.

1.1 Purpose of the article

The aim of the work is Statistical analysis of violence against women in Georgia, according to the causes, forms, revealed forms and results of violence, promotion of the research results for the women to become more informed about the matter.

1.2 Research methodology

The methods of statistical observation, grouping and analysis were used in the research process. The graphical expression method is widely used. Apart from them, the methods of induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis, and selective observation were also used. Relative indicators of structure, dynamics, and comparison were calculated.

1.3 More on the methodology of research

Study population The 2017 National Survey on Violence against Women was designed to produce reliable indicators of violence, representative at the national, urban-rural and, to the extent possible, regional level. The survey covered the area of the country controlled by the central government. The target population of the survey included women and men between 15 and 64 years of age living in private households. Questionnaire development The questionnaires used in the survey were designed in line with the best international practices, international ethics and safety guidelines for research on violence against women.
Major areas covered by the survey are prevalence of intimate partner violence; prevalence of non-partner sexual violence; prevalence of sexual harassment; child abuse; health consequences of violence; awareness and use of services; and gender attitudes and awareness (men and women). Sample design and study population The 2014 general population census database was used as the sampling frame for the survey. Two-stage cluster sampling was applied, where the primary sampling unit (PSU) is the enumeration area, and the secondary sampling unit (SSU) is the address. METHODOLOGY of a household. Stratification was made using two variables: region and settlement type (urban or rural). The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews. The number of field personnel selected across Georgia amounted to 181 persons, including 22 regional supervisors and 159 interviewers. Fieldwork began on 14 August 2017 and concluded on 29 September 2017. In total, 6,006 women aged 15-64 and 1,601 men aged 15-64 completed the questionnaire. The data presented has been weighted at the household and individual level (National Study on Violence against Women, 2017). Qualitative research The qualitative research was conducted to complement the quantitative survey, include the voices of men and women to support the statistics, understand the unique experiences of minority and marginalized populations, and enable the triangulation of data. Qualitative fieldwork was carried out during August and September 2017. Data was collected in two urban and three rural sites. Service providers, community members (women, men and youth), survivors of violence and members of marginalized groups were covered through 15 key informant interviews, 12 in-depth interviews and 20 focus group discussions.

2 Findings

Violence and violence-based relationships were present in the primitive societies in the times when humans used to live in the caves and were learning how to start the fire (Abesadze, 2018). The roles between the weak and the strong were mainly divided based on their physical abilities. After some time, patriarchal society attached the label of “weak” to the women and the label of “strong” to the men. Because of this, only the man was considered the righteous representative of the human race for centuries, while the differences between the social roles of the men and the women were considered to be permanent and unchangeable, developing the environment for a creation of the hierarchical state for women to exist in (Abesadze, 2018). The attitude towards men established itself over time, resulting in the “development of different psychological behavior” and nature in women. Social-psychological peculiarities express themselves in behavioral peculiarities, interests, perception of events and processes, nature of reasoning, and so on (Abesadze, 2018). Because of all of these facts, women are more often the victims of oppression and physical or verbal abuse.

Generally, there are several of the following different types of violence against women in Georgia: physical abuse, verbal abuse, trafficking, rape, involuntary prostitution, involuntary marriage, isolation, confinement, and so on. Violence against women is mostly detected in families, between the husband and the wife, when the husband abuses the wife physically, psychologically, or sexually. Domestic violence is under something of a taboo in our society, a problem that is picked up it is intensity and actuality in the last few years. The Parliament of Georgia issued the law for “The prohibition of domestic violence, the protection and assistance for the victims of domestic violence” in the Spring of 2006, an act of admitting the existence of the problem in the country, but the relevant accurate statistics have not been available since 2009 up to this day. There has been some research done, undoubtedly, but they were only local of nature and did not produce the full image of domestic violence in Georgia and did not determine its causes.

The existing statistics are the following: one if every four women in the world is a victim of domestic violence, 1.5 million individuals are a victim of sexual harassment every year, circa 520 000 individuals die every year because of abuse, and millions suffer of the consequences following the violence. According to the research conducted by the World Health Organization in 10 countries with 24 000 female participants, 20% of Japanese, 70% of Ethiopian, more than 50% of Bangladeshi, Peruvian and Tanzanian women are victims of violence from their intimate partners. 14-32% of women in low-income countries, and 4-11% of women in higher-income countries admit of being abused during pregnancy. 19-48% of teenage girls from different countries admit being sexually harassed.
It is interesting, what is the statistics of violence against women in the world?

The lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among ever-partnered women by WHO region. As data shows, high rates of violence are in Africa, America, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean countries (WHO, 2013). High rates of violence are especially high for women aged 35-44.

What is the mood of women towards these events?

Some experts on battered women have reported evidence which supports this alternative characterization of the motives of women who remain. Gayford (1975) reports that half of his sample of battered women claimed to be satisfied with their relationships, and Dobash (1979) notes that, apart from the violence, battered women often express positive feelings toward their mates. Moreover, Ferraro and Jonson (1983) report that battered women typically believe that their mates are the only person they could love and Walker (1979) reports that battered women often describe their mates as playful, attentive, exiting, sensitive and affectionate. (Loseke, & Cabill, 1984).

The results of violence can be as heterogeneous as its causes. Violence against women is a direct or an indirect cause of their mortality, worsening the health conditions and increasing the morbidity, having severe results on the physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health (Chitashvili, et. al., 2010).

The region of Adjara comes second to Tbilisi in the number of reported cases of domestic violence over the last four years, per The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Specialists consider the given numbers to be a poor reflection of the situation and the actual number of cases of domestic violence to be far bigger. In fact, one in every four calls to the police are to report domestic violence (Chitashvili, et. al., 2010).

In order to eliminate the information vacuum concerning the issues of violence against women, UN Women, with the support of the European Union and the National Statistics Office of Georgia, conducted a study on a national scale. It was, in fact, the first time for the nationwide data to have been collected about the violence against women, including the data about the spread and results of domestic violence and sexual harassment, and about the attitude of the society towards the mentioned topics.

The national study of the violence against women, conducted in 2017, is the first research in Georgia that measured the scale of the violence and determined its impact on women’s health. The study was based on the internationally acclaimed practice for the studies on violence against women and is in full compliance with the international manual of ethics and safety.

The study design implied a quantitative survey in women aged 15-64 to research the spread, the causes and the results, and the level of awareness of, and the attitudes and the tendencies towards, the violence against women. 10 800 households for women and 3 630 households for men were elected to take part in the study. Accordingly, 6 006 women and 1 601 men were surveyed.

The violence against women is under a taboo in Georgian society and its cases are rarely reported. The violence against women and girls includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape, molesting, early marriage, forced marriage, and so on, increasing the importance of the study because the national study of violence against women was conducted to evaluate the rates of abuse by an intimate or non-intimate partner, sexual harassment, violence as a child, health-affecting violence, the risk factors of violence against women, the level of information available regarding the relevant services. The results of this study made clear, that the women in Georgia are victims of violence, and the biggest risk of violence comes from their intimate partners.

As it can be seen on Diagram 1, 13.6% of respondents have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence. During the 12 months of the last year, women were the most often the victims of emotional abuse and the least often the victims of sexual abuse.

Approximately 14 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15-64 reported having experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Six per cent reported experiencing physical abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime, and 2 per cent reported sexual partner abuse. Almost 10 per cent of women had experienced some form of economic violence in their lifetime. “He turned off the electricity, gas and water as he paid for all of these. He was telling me that he could stop paying for them whenever he wanted, saying, ‘You are dependent on me. I earn money. You are nothing without me.’” (Respondent, IPV in-depth interview). Violence during pregnancy Overall, 2 per cent of women who had ever been pregnant reported being physically abused during at least one pregnancy. In Georgia, this
could account for approximately 15,000 women in the country. Among those women, 37 per cent reported being punched or kicked in the abdomen while pregnant. Of the women who reported being beaten during pregnancy, 64 per cent said that they had been beaten by the same person before the pregnancy as part of an ongoing pattern of abuse. Moreover, 6 per cent of women reported that the violence became worse during pregnancy.

According to the study results, 2% of women, that is circa 15.6 thousand individuals, have experienced physical violence during at least one term of pregnancy. It is an unfortunate fact, that 37% of these women have been hit on their bellies. 64% of the respondents were victims of the same kind of violence and have experienced the same behavior from their partners before pregnancy.

If we look at the regional statistics, the prevalence of the violence against women is larger among the citizens of Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, and Shida Kartli, while being relatively smaller in the regions of Adjara, Guria, Samegrelo, and Imereti.

Apart from physical violence, psychological violence, such as permanent control of wife, threatening, intimidating, verbal abuse, blackmail, humiliation, and so on, also often occurs. 3.5% of the surveyed women have stated, that during their course of lifetime, they had experienced different types of stalking,
as for 3.3% of the surveyed, offensive or threatening text messages or e-mails (2%), extraneous loitering or pursuit (1%) and offensive, threatening or muted phone calls (1%) had been the most prevalent forms of stalking in the last 12 month they had encountered. About 1 out of 4 women (27%) have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by the intimate partner, or sexual violence or sexual abuse by a non-partner, or sexual abuse as a child at some point in their lives (Abesadze, 2018).

Overall, 26 per cent of women reported having experienced sexual violence and/or sexual harassment by a non-partner, including sexual abuse as a child. The study found that 2.7 per cent of women aged 15-64 reported experiencing sexual violence by someone other than a husband or partner in their lifetime. Male colleagues and friends/acquaintances, as well as strangers, were identified as the most common known perpetrators of non-partner sexual violence. Sexual harassment was the most common form of non-partner sexual abuse reported. Overall, one in five women (20 per cent) reported having experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in their lifetime.

Quite interesting statistics were revealed when evaluating the attitudes between the husband and the wife. 33% of women think, that violence between the wife and the husband is their own personal matter and no other should interrupt. 12% of women think that they should endure being abused in order to maintain family unity. 14% of them think that if a woman becomes a rape victim, it was because of her careless actions that reaped these consequences.

The study confirms that violence by non-partners is also a concern in Georgia. Non-partner physical and emotional violence was also identified as relatively common among women in the qualitative interviews. In particular, women reported experiencing physical and emotional abuse from family members, including parents-in-law, brothers, stepchildren and sisters-in-law. This was the first comprehensive study in Georgia to explore sexual harassment. While there was a relatively low level of awareness of this issue at the time of the study, sexual harassment and stalking were identified as serious forms of abuse in Georgia. In the Georgian context, according to the qualitative research, sexual harassment is largely normalized; reporting on experiences of harassment is frowned upon. It is often identified as “friendly harassment” or a compliment. Sexual harassment in the workplace was frequently mentioned by women in qualitative interviews. Women reported that they were requested to engage in sexual relationships with their bosses, while others were hired not because of their skills and qualifications but based on their physical appearance. “I had an experience when I went to a job interview, with some guy. I tried my best to be dressed modestly, with black trousers and a black t-shirt, low-heeled shoes, no make-up. I entered the room, and he said I understood [why I was harassed] and added that I am the kind of woman who should be harassed [...]. In his mind this was a compliment. I started to cry, because I couldn’t do or say anything.” (Woman, urban FGD participant)

According to the study, the majority of men and women believe that violence against women is either very common or fairly common. Women are more likely than men to believe that violence against women
is very common.

**Figure 4**: Percentage of men and women who reported knowing a woman who has been a victim of domestic violence. Source: National Office of Statistics

The study found that 19 per cent of women and 9.6 per cent of men knew of someone who had experienced domestic violence in their family or circle of friends, and 9.8 per cent of women and 4 per cent of men reported knowing a victim where they worked or studied. These rates are higher than women’s direct reports of violence, which is to be expected, but this could also suggest that actual rates of violence are higher than those directly reported by women themselves.

**Table 1**: Percentage of men and women who reported knowing a woman who has been a victim of domestic violence

|                                  | Women (%) | Men (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Believes that, according to the law, a husband who forces his wife to have sex against her will is committing a criminal act | 43.9      | 38.0    |
| Knows that there are laws in Georgia about violence/domestic violence against women | 67.4      | 73.5    |
| Has recently seen or heard of advertising addressing campaigns against violence against women | 78.3      | 72.6    |
| Is aware of hotlines               | 76.8      | 71.0    |
| Is aware of shelters               | 61.7      | 48.8    |
| Is aware of crisis centres         | 38.0      | 31.6    |
| Would find it acceptable if doctors routinely ask women who have certain injuries, whether they have been caused by violence | 90.5      | 85.8    |

The study found that most people (67 per cent of women and 74 per cent of men) know that there are laws in Georgia addressing violence against women. However, less than half of men (38 per cent) and women (44 per cent) believe that marital rape is a crime. Encouragingly, however, almost all men and women felt that it would be acceptable for doctors to do routine screening for violence-related injuries.

The study’s findings on attitudes reveal that inequitable gender norms are common. For example, a high proportion of respondents believed that a woman’s most important role is to care for her family and that if a woman does not physically fight back, then it is not rape. Most women and men agreed that intimate partner violence is a private matter and that outsiders should not intervene. Moreover, almost one-third of women and men agreed with at least one of the justifications for a husband to hit his wife,
showing a high level of acceptance and condoning of violence in Georgia. Compared to international data, gender attitudes in Georgia appear to be more conservative than in many other parts of Europe. However, it is positive to note that since the 2009 study in Georgia, attitudes have improved. Furthermore, men and women in the younger generation tended to have more non-discriminatory gender attitudes than people of the older generation. This is a very positive sign, suggesting that progress is being made by the concerted efforts to raise awareness and promote women’s empowerment and rights over the past decade.

There seems to be a difference between the citizenries of the city and of the town in this matter. While 25% of women in the city think that domestic violence is only their personal issue and no one should interfere, the results are almost double (43%) in the villages. 7% of the city population think that women should endure being abused in order to maintain family unity. The results are traditionally double in the village population. Almost the same amount of people in the city and in the villages agree that if a woman becomes a rape victim, it was because of her carelessness.

![Figure 5](image_url)

**Figure 5.** The data representing women, who justify the violence against women, in percentage points in terms of locations. **Source:** National Office of Statistics

The majority of men (78%) and women (66%) agree to the notion, that the most important role for a woman is to look after the family. Almost a quarter of women (23%) and almost a half of men (42%) think that the wife should obey the husband. A quarter of women (22%) and one-third of men (31%) think that beating your wife is justified in the cases of cheating or being ignorant to children.

The analysis of the age structure of the respondents shows there’s an age difference in what the attitudes are towards the violence against women. For example, while 27.3% of the respondents aged 15-24 think that domestic violence is the business of the family itself and no one should interfere, 35.7% of the respondents aged 45-54 share the same idea. Only 6.5% of the population aged 15-24 think that a woman should endure being abused, while the number is at 16.9% in the population aged 55-64.

67.4% of women know of the law for domestic violence/violence against women, 78.3% women have heard of or been a part of a campaign against the gender-based violence, 76.8% of female respondents have the information for the case of emergency, 38% know of the crisis center. Despite the high level of awareness, only 26% of women contacted the relevant services when under the physical or sexual abuse from the partner, 18% of whom contacted the police, 8% - a hospital, and 5% - a court. The major reasons, for why the victims do not report the acts of violence, are that the family might be dishonored (19%), are afraid of even more violence/are threatened (13%), are afraid or ashamed that no one will believe them/the blame will be placed upon them (10%). The ones who contacted the relevant services, did so because of the unbearable situation they were in (80%) or because they received heavy injuries (20%).
After analyzing the expression of the violence against women based on their nationality, it turned out, that the Azerbaijanian women have experienced different sorts of violence, especially: physical violence; compulsory early marriage; economic dependence, that later contributes to being abused either psychologically or physically.

In comparison to the international results, the number of women who report the acts of violence is lower than that of the whole Europe. However, the attitudes towards gender equality are more conservative in Georgia than in most of the countries in Europe.

The main reasons contributing to domestic violence are jealousy; unemployment and poverty; women being economically dependent on men; husband disrespecting the wife; the right of the husband, as the head of the family, to physically abuse his wife; alcohol addiction; the stereotype of the man of the family being the dominant, and so on.

It is impossible to overlook the fact, that the tendency for the number of female victims in Georgia is to grow, which is a perilous state to be in for such a small nation that Georgia is.

Just in 2017 we saw the rise in the number of abusive men by 35% and the number of female victims by 38%.

If we look at the dynamics of the processed cases, we can see that the number of acquittal verdicts in the processed cases, including the cases about violence, was on the rise until 2016, then dropping by 14% in 2017.
What is the age structure of abusers and victims?

The life of every human being is important to a country. Unfortunately, our society is faced with the fact of increasing numbers of abusers and victims. The facts of ex-husbands killing or sexually or physically abusing their ex-wives are more prevalent. It is hard with no doubt for a country to prevent violence in a forced tempo. The more self-conscious and the more reasonable youth play a huge role in the decision-making process regarding gender equality, gender-based violence, children violence, elder violence, and so on.

It is interesting to identify the factors that are responsible for the fact that women hide the facts of violence or vice versa.

| Table 2 Reasons for seeking help (among women who sought help) and for not seeking help (among women who had not sought help) Source: National Office of Statistics. National Study on Violence against Women. Summary Report. |
|---|---|
| Reasons for seeking help | Reasons for not seeking help |
| Could not endure more violence | Bring bad name to their family |
| Badly injured, Encouraged by friends/family, Threatened or tried to kill her | Fear of threats/consequences/more violence |
| Afraid he would hit her/more violence, Afraid he would kill her | Embarrassed/ashamed/afraid she would not be believed or she would be blamed |
| Saw that the children were suffering | Did not know her options |
| He threatened or hit children | Violence normal/not serious |
| Thrown out of the home | Afraid she would lose children |
| Afraid she would kill him | Afraid he would end relationship |
| | Believed it would not help/knew other women were not helped |
| | Threatened that he would commit suicide |
46% of all the females, who had faced sexual and/or physical partner violence, left their houses for at least 1 day due to the violence. Women, in abusive relationships who chose to stay, 38% did in this way because of the sanctity of marriage. 16% of women did not want to bring shame upon their family and 17% did not want to leave their children. According to the analysis in most cases, women did not share their experiences of intimate partner violence with anyone else, also they did not ask for any help to agencies. This clearly highlights the complications that women suffering IPV face in seeking and obtaining help in many countries, as in the case of Georgia. The study has shown important shifts in reasoning towards staying in abusive relationships. For instance, since the 2009 study, there have been ten percent decrease in the rate of female who stayed with violent husbands due to their belief that violent behavior is just a normal thing. This can be seen as a women’s behavior willing to tolerate violence as a normalized circumstance. Generally, it is considered that there is a possibility to increase confidence in the willingness and effectiveness of police in women, who intervene in cases of intimate partner violence. However, it seems that women get little help, support or encouragement from the social groups. The qualitative interviews showed that female lack social connections and social support even from the closest people, such as employers, family members and co-workers. In the case of Georgia, social networks and social capital are more significant than formal institutions. Problems are frequently solved with the help of personal connections rather than official support. Hence, victims of violence are frequently left alone in dealing with their problems, they have the lack of social encouragement. The qualitative interviews analyzed immigrant women, women with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBT women. The results show that discrimination based on ethnicity, identity and physical as well as mental ability aggravate the violence experienced by women. The most usual types of violence mentioned by interviewees were physical and emotional. Specifically, in the case of LGBT women and disable women they were treated abusively by their family members. Their aim was to isolate these women, control and punish physically for not confirming to societal standards and norms. The study found that most women did not tell anyone about their experiences of intimate partner violence nor did they seek help from any agencies. This highlights the extreme difficulties that women suffering IPV face in seeking and obtaining help in Georgia, as is the case in many other countries. “I was thinking I should keep the family together. My first marriage collapsed, now the second one... I thought that if I divorce for the second time, people will think that I am an indecent woman. I also tried because of the children. They need a father as well as a mother.” (Respondent, IPV in-depth interview) The study has demonstrated some considerable shifts in reasoning towards staying in abusive relationships. For example, since the 2009 study, there has been a 10 per cent decrease in the rate of women who stayed with violent husbands because they believed the violence to be normal (United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). This can be interpreted as a positive development and an indication that fewer women are willing to tolerate violence as a normalized occurrence. There have also been some positive shifts in women’s help-seeking behaviour. This study found that 18 per cent of women who experienced violence sought help from the police, compared to only 2 per cent in the 2009 study (UNICEF, 2017). This indicates a possible increase in women’s confidence in the willingness and effectiveness of police to intervene in cases of intimate partner violence. Overall, however, it seems that women receive very little support or encouragement from society. The qualitative interviews indicated that women lack social connections and social support even from the closest people, such as family members and co-workers/employers. In the Georgian context, social networks and social capital are much more important than formal institutions. Problems of all sorts are usually solved with the support of personal connections rather than official support. Thus, the lack of social encouragement leaves victims of violence alone in coping with the problem (National Study on Violence against Women, 2017).

In the Azeri women’s case, they have experienced many different forms of violence. This frequently happens in their families and in their society. Marriages, which are forced and early is a common thing in this particular ethnic groups, which causes physical and emotional violence due to women economic dependency on their husbands. The qualitative research, which involved immigrant women from Iraq and Egypt found that experiences of non-partner violence and IPV in Georgia were minimal. These women have a positive attitude toward their transition to Georgian people and their effort to adapt and have relief about safety of their children. In addition, emigrant women reported that they have issues related to employment and language. In the case of the traditional division of labor, it is meant that woman is expected to stay at the household and not to find work.
3 Conclusions

Violence against women remains a taboo in Georgian society and its cases are rarely reported. Acts of violence against women occur most frequently in the families, where the husband abuses his wife physically, psychologically or sexually. The severity of the problem isn’t the same in the whole country. While the prevalence of the violence against women is larger among the citizens of Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, and Shida Kartli, it is relatively smaller in the regions of Adjara, Guria, Samegrelo, and Imereti. However, the region of Adjara comes second to Tbilisi in the number of reported cases of domestic violence.

As mentioned before, the acts of violence are not limited to the physical one but include psychological violence as well. In most cases, women are the victims of violence in Georgia. The biggest risk for them comes from their intimate partners. Younger women perceive acts of violence differently than the older ones. Mostly the Azerbaijani women have experienced different sorts of violence, especially: physical violence; compulsory early marriage; economic dependence, that later contributes to being abused either psychologically or physically. The attitudes towards gender-based violence are more conservative in Georgia than they are in most parts of Europe.

Since 2009, research about women’s violence in Georgia has not been conducted. Therefore, the statistical data presented here is completely new. The results of this research will help increase public awareness and the need for women’s rights. However, there are some limitations to the study. The survey is intended for a wide segment. In the future, it is possible to further expand the area by considering sources of financing.

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