

Gisela Woelki, Pharmacist.

2010.

Sociocultural Determinants for “Violence against Women and Girls” in the context of Natural Disasters with special emphasis on Bangladesh.

Key words: gender and disaster, gender based violence, Bangladesh, climate change, displacement.

Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin. Sybille Rothkegel, supervisor.

## **Abstract**

### **Problem statement**

Violence against women (VAW) has been recognized to be an emerging public health problem worldwide. Particularly in many developing countries where women have a subordinated status throughout their life. This is noticeable by the pressure women and girls face from the society. They have to conform to typical gender norms/roles and adjust to cultural practices which are enforced by a functioning patriarchal system within the country. This has an adverse influence on their physical, social and psychological health outcome, often with severe mental health implications. The societies are paying a high price, since women are substantial to all aspects of society. Thus, it leads to social and economical consequences for families, communities and the general public. The conditions are worsening when catastrophic events happen. Social upheaval, political weakness and high population displacement are resulting in higher vulnerability and to an increase of violence.

### **Objectives**

This paper investigates on how gender differentiations are affecting women and girls health outcomes in general and especially in natural disasters with regard to sociocultural aspects. A view will be focused on Bangladesh, where catastrophic events are becoming a regular phenomenon. These calamities are perceived as a consequence of climate change (CC), which is a major issue discussed by the media worldwide with scientific verification.

## Methods

A literature review was conducted by analyzing secondary data. Those are used and evaluated from studies done by indigenous NGOs, who are working with the poorest and most unprivileged people to improve their health and social status in disaster situations.

## Findings

Available data suggest that the prevalence rate of VAW is very high in Bangladesh. Studies approve that domestic violence (DV) is one of the most common type of violence. Background information in regard to cultural and socio-economic aspects demonstrate some reliable causes for the high occurrence of VAW.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In the discussion part a socio-ecological framework will be introduced which conceptualize an approach to gender-based violence (GBV) responses.

The aim of this paper is to create awareness and respond according to the needs of women and men in disaster situations. GBV are not yet seen as the cross cutting issue that it forms and therefore any interventions are still limited to sectors rather than based on multisectoral collaboration. Lack of reliable data has revealed as a priority gap in the planning and programming of effective interventions. Recommendations suggest a comprehensive research, disaggregated data collection, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, mainstreaming, preventive education, transparency and coordination among stakeholders. In addition, improving the quality of management, the need for follow-up studies to monitor the health outcomes has been emphasized.