



A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON

**GBV AMONG THE
INTERNAL GARO
MIGRANTS IN
DHAKA**

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GBV AMONG THE INTERNAL GARO MIGRANTS OF DHAKA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study explores the perception of Gender-based violence (hereafter GBV) among Mandi women. It tries to find out the main sources of GBV-related information and their utilities among Mandi women. It also looks for suitable ways to make GBV-related information easily accessible for Mandi women. The approach of the study is multi-sited and discursive, grounded in a qualitative methodology. Data has been collected from 43 selected respondents selected both purposively. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews have been used in the study to gather data and gain insights into the perceptions of the interviewees. The total number of respondents to this study is 43 people. Among them, 20 people have been interviewed. Moreover, 23 respondents participated in three focus group discussions (FGDs). The research team decided to conduct the research among Mandi women living in the Kalachandpur area near Baridhara in Dhaka.

About 12% of the respondents are below 20 years of age. About 21% are between the ages of 20-29. 32% were 30-39. 25% of them are 40-49 years old. 7% are over 50. 73 percent of the respondents of this study are married. 21% are single and 5% are married but separated because their husbands have remarried. 2% are widows. Among the participants of this study, 16% of them are involved in hygiene in various occupations. Here housework is called 'house'. In fact, these are jobs in foreigners' homes. About 12% are doing small business. These small businesses include tea-biscuit shops, traditional cloth shops, and vegetable and dry goods shops. About 19% are working as beauty parlours. 5% are working in offices and houses. 2% are doctors. 16% of respondents are working in the nursing profession. 7% are working as security guards. Another 7% are working as tailors, salespersons and caregivers.

16% of women in the study said they are ethnically Mandi and 16% were victims of racist and sexist comments at work and in public spaces. 14% were abused and 7% were subjected to various forms of oppression including physical abuse, sexual abuse, withholding of wages, misconduct, and reduction of wages. 9% have been subjected to various threats. The remaining 9% are under forced house locks. About 14% of Mandi women in this study reported experiencing physical violence. Recently a woman under 20 was raped. Besides, 33% percent of women were beaten and 50% of women were slapped.

Among 42 respondents, 44% of the total respondents of this study have experienced sexual harassment at some point in time. Among them, 26% of women said they had been subjected to nasty comments at some point. 21% have received indecent proposals (such as offering sex) at various times. About 16% said their body had been touched inappropriately. 21% said they had been told something offensive. About 16% said that they had been harassed by various people calling them and saying bad things at various times.

14% are harassed in buses, streets, and shops by calling them Rohingya. The same percentage of respondents said they were perceived as less talented. Another 14% say their language is looked down upon and laughed at. 9% say they have been threatened with murder, kidnapping or other harm if they protest something. 27% said they were victims of various forms of emotional abuse.

Financial violence is not always discussed in discussions of gender-based violence. But the respondents in this study told stories of how the Mandi women were victims of economic intimidation by their employers. In most of the establishments where the respondents work, no appointment letter has been issued. Due to where they cannot realize the rights of the workers, they are subjected to harassment.

Seven women in this study said that they were victims of domestic violence. But they don't talk much about them. They also identified polygamy as domestic violence. A woman says her husband married her sister and they are living separately. The respondents understand oppression and have learned about it through the ILO and Caritas' SAFE programme. But they dare not seek justice. Because they are afraid of being degraded socially, they are always afraid of losing their jobs. They are discouraged when they go to the police station. They are said to be an ant and cannot quarrel with an elephant. In the meantime, they have made their move and rescued the victims. But they had (SAFE) by their side. Then they felt empowered. Then everyone from the police was on their side. But when they go to sue alone, they are humiliated. The following are the suggestions that emerged from the three FGDs and interviews on these issues:

1. Make available to the Mandi women a list of organizations that offer free legal services.
2. All of them translate into Garo language and are readily available to them.
3. Where there is a large population of Mandi communitarians (e.g Kalachandpur) provide information on gender-based violence and its countermeasures in various schools, colleges and churches.
4. It is also important to promote the government's free medical, legal and mental services and know where to get those services.
5. Non-Governmental Organizations can adopt projects like SAFE, through which gender-based violence and its subsequent criminal relations can be learned through discussion and increase their confidence.
6. National and international organizations on gender-based violence should undertake more programs and ensure the inclusion of indigenous women.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In Bangladesh, according to the 2011 census conducted by the government, 1,586,141 people are belonging to Indigenous communities living in different parts of the country, which is 1.8% of the country's total population. The Indigenous people, however, claim that their population is approximately 5 million, belonging to at least 54 different groups and speaking at least 45 different languages. These groups are known as 'tribal' or 'upajati' (the word 'tribal' is translated as 'upajati' in Bengali), small ethnic groups (according to the constitutional approval) or 'adivasi' /indigenous. The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet, Mymensingh and Northern districts are home to these diverse peoples.

Women workers belonging to indigenous communities encounter a lack of work opportunities in the remote places of their home areas, extensive livelihood insecurity, unsettled political issues, flared social injustice, and colossal problem of eviction from their inherent land. Therefore, many of them migrate to urban areas in search of livelihood options. Additionally, existing wage discrepancies between women and men in rural areas may also contribute towards the migration of indigenous women to urban areas working in formal and informal sectors such as the garments industry or beauty parlours where they are still not protected against labour rights violations. ILO surveys and studies conducted with one-fourth of the indigenous workers in urban formal and informal sectors have found that they experience discrimination and come across various forms of violence and harassment. While they have uncovered embarrassment at work, their definition of harassment, including sexual harassment, has been limited to the workplace.

Nasreen (2001) explains that indigenous women are being marginalised at triple layers based of their identities of gender, ethnic origin and religion, while Halim (2005) states that Indigenous women are even more marginalised than their non-indigenous counterparts on account of their multiple situations of disadvantage, including 'gender, ethnicity and class'.

Guhathakurta et al. (2012) show that double disadvantages are associated with these workers in that they face discrimination as indigenous as workers in the informal sector, and they do not have access to work-related rights that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and several ILO Conventions (C 29, C87, C98, C100, C105, C111, C138, C182, C189), and ITP-related conventions (C107 and C169).

Amin et al. (2016) find discrimination based on ethnicity, indigenous and tribal identity, social origin, disability or other related grounds in formal and informal sectors.

Siddiqi (2003) argues that studies of industrial workers are silent on the topic of sexual harassment. At one level, this silence can be understood concerning workers' priorities, which revolve understandably around 'bread-and-butter' issues. However, cultural taboos associated with sexuality are also responsible for discouraging research on the subject.

Here, the research aims to focus only on the Mandi Community (as they identify themselves as Mandi, this study is labelled Mandi) women living in Dhaka city. The research is aiming to collect experiences from women migrants who are living and working in Dhaka city for livelihood and will be the expected respondent for the research.

Hence, Share-net Bangladesh formulated research questions within the scope focusing on gender-based violence for the indigenous Mandi women living in Dhaka, who have migrated from their own native areas for livelihood. Share-net is

intended to find evidence so that programs and policymakers can thoroughly revisit their policies and programs accordingly.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:

Keeping this context in cons, 1,586,141 people are belonging arch study would be

1. To explore the perception of Gender-based violence (hereafter GBV) among the Mandi women.
2. To find out the main sources of GBV-related information and their utilities among the Mandi women.
3. To find suitable ways to make the information about their rights in the workplace easily accessible for the Mandi women.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The approach of the study is multi-sited and discursive, grounded in a qualitative methodology

1.3.1. SECONDARY DATA

The primary sources of secondary data are the current national policies and legal instruments of immediate relevance to the study as well as available materials and resources on Indigenous women workers in formal and informal sectors, including studies on socio-economic and political situations and working conditions. Therefore, the study depends on other secondary materials such as organisational documents, research reports, press releases, programme statements, national population census data, newsletters, leaflets, pamphlets, posters, flyers, memorandums, and newspaper and magazine reports.

1.3.2. PRIMARY DATA

Data has been collected from the respondents selected both purposively. While selecting informants for the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) the study has tried to ensure equitable representation of occupations and representation from various age groups.

The study has used the following data collection methods:

1.3.2.1. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS (IDIS)

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews have been used in the study to gather data and to gain insights of the perceptions of the interviewees. A total of 20 in-depth interviews have been conducted for the study. Each interview took 30 minutes.

1.3.2.2. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

A total of 3 FGDs have been conducted with focus groups of migrated indigenous Mandi Women. Although normally there are 10-12 people in a FGD. But due to following covid-19 protocol there were 7-8 participants in each FGD. It took 45 minutes to one hour to complete the FGDs.

1.4. DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

The research has been carried out by researchers. The researchers have accompanied a reminder for data collection and supervision. The researcher has ensured quality control and the Research associate has been guided with necessary adjustments and corrective measures according to the demands of the situation. Under the supervision of the researcher, triangulation of different methods and sources have been carried out to maximize the validity and reliability of data and to reduce the risk of biased assessment. The researcher has maintained constant contact with the research

associate to collaborate on data collection and data analysis. Data and information collected through different methods have been cross-checked and substantiated with different sources.

1.5. RESEARCH ETHICS

The study ensures ethical standards of consent, confidentiality, anonymity and securing well-being of the informants. Adhering to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has been obtained from all indigenous participants.

The indigenous participants have been informed of the research by associates or focal persons in the area and in the sector, or by the members of the research team. Verbal consent has been obtained when initial contact has been made over the phone or in person. After explaining all relevant information, written consent has been obtained before commencing discussions and interviews. In the events' where written consents have not been able to be obtained physically, i.e., by phone interview, or due to the low level of literacy in some settings where the fieldwork has been conducted, the researcher has recorded that the consent procedure has been administered. The participants have been provided with information regarding the purpose of the research, the procedures for conducting the interview/workshop/discussion, the confidentiality of the information provided by the participants and their right to withdraw from the discussion without having to provide any reason.

The researcher has taken adequate precautions, in addition to the above-mentioned procedures, while collecting information on issues of sexual harassment and violence. The researcher has taken a 'not harm' approach, where the research does not cause any participant to experience further harm, including not causing the participant further trauma. All questions

have been asked sensitively, and in a supportive and non-judgmental manner. In some cases where some participants have feared recording their names, the interviewer has obtained verbal consent and has recorded that the consent procedure has been administered. Furthermore, it is ensured that the information presented in this report is sufficiently aggregated to prevent the identification of individual/s or her/their workplace.

To ensure effective communication with indigenous participants and informants, the service of interpreters has been arranged in 4 locations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The research assistants have handed over all documents of the fieldwork by the end of each day of conducting interviews/discussions, and all data collected from the field work has been kept securely by the researchers.

1.6. SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES DEFINING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The High Court Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court on May 13, 2009, issued a set of guidelines defining sexual felony to stop any kind of physical, mental or sexual harassment of women, girls and children at their workplaces, educational institutions, and other public places. The high court directed the government to develop a law based on the guidelines and ruled that the guidelines would be considered the law until the law was enacted.

The court directed the authorities to form a five-member harassment complaint committee headed by a woman at every workplace and institution to investigate allegations of harassment of women. According to the high court rule, the majority of the committee members must be women, and the committee would examine complaints from girls or women if they were subjected to any mental, physical or

sexual harassment, and recommend to the authorities to take action against the accused persons. It includes disturbing women and children through letters, emails, SMS, posters, and writings on walls, benches, chairs, tables, and notice boards and threatening or pressing them to make sexual relations as sexual harassment and torture. Sexual provocation, envious or intentional propaganda against women and children, and showing such films, digital images, paintings, cartoons, leaflets, posters and still photographs are also considered as indirect sexual harassment and torture. According to the guidelines, nobody can touch or hurt with any bad intention any part of the body of a girl or woman. Any indecent word or comment cannot be used about them. The high court prohibits the authorities concerned from disclosing the names and addresses of the complainants and accused persons until the allegations are proven. None of the industrial sectors (formal and informal), however, has established any cell to deal with allegations of sexual harassment at workplaces.

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE FIELD AND PARTICIPANTS

A change package for the Share-Net collaborative is a concise and practical document that includes ideas and inspiration for country hubs who are seeking to apply the improvement model to increase knowledge use related to a certain topic.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The limited scope of income generation for Mandi people in their own localities and loathe of their land property to government-run forestry and development projects resulted in their migration to urban and sub-urban areas. Many Mandi women were then recruited by the emerging beauty businesses, house service, sales girl etc. The dramatic increase

in women's participation in urban wage labour markets yielded feminisation of the labour force. But this process of feminisation of labour not only delivered low payment and poor working conditions for the indigenous women but also favoured women of a certain age to be inserted into the system. In addition, the whole process brought an extra amount of work for women (Kamal 2008).

Researchers have examined different types of discriminatory situations experienced by indigenous women working in various informal sectors of Bangladesh over the past several decades (Mohiuddin 2004, Halim 2001, Nasreen 2001, 2003). It has been found in existing research that Mandi women working in beauty parlours of Dhaka face discrimination and oppression by their employers (Mohsin 2002).

However, for this research, talking to Mandi women over time was very challenging. The first reason for this was to fix the appointment according to their time. Since everyone works during the day, it was not possible to conduct an interview except at night. They did not want to talk about divine violence and oppression. Thirdly, they wanted to be sure that if they said this, there would be no more problems later. Considering those aspects, the research team decided to conduct the research with the Mandi women living in Kalachandpur area near Baridhara in Dhaka.

2.2. JOURNEYS TO KALACHANDAPUR:

In Dhaka city, Mandis often live together in neighbourhoods, for economic reasons, like cheap rents. Kalandchandpur, with a relatively large absorption of Mandis, is one such neighbourhood which I chose as a field area. The increasing presence of Mandis in the area has transformed this space into a place where Mandi women feel safe to wear their traditional dress, dokmanda, out in the streets. This they would not do so easily in many other parts of the city



Map 1: Kalachandpur

The neighbourhood is just behind Baridhara diplomatic zone where most of the foreign embassies are located. Expensive private schools, hotels, banks, multinational companies, shopping malls, and beauty parlours are located in Baridhara and its neighbouring Banani and Gulshan areas. Kalachandpur Mandi community was founded after Baridhara was established in the early 1980s out of the rising needs of workers in those residential and business communities (Kamal 2008). Some Mandi women living in the community started working as cooks, maidservants, and housekeepers in the embassy offices and homes of foreign ambassadors, while the majority of Mandi women were recruited as beauty workers since the three biggest and top-ranked beauty parlours were situated in the area (Kamal 2008). Now the unmarried Mandi beauty workers live mostly in three hostels run by beauty parlours, while the married ones live with their families in rented houses in the neighbourhood.

They are in lack of relatives in Dhaka, have economic problems, etc. Women who come to work in Dhaka have to endure many oppressions and torture. Among them, cases of financial oppression such as making extra work, not having fixed working hours, not paying according to the work, and being held responsible if something in the house is lost, destroyed or stolen, etc. happen to the working women of Dhaka.

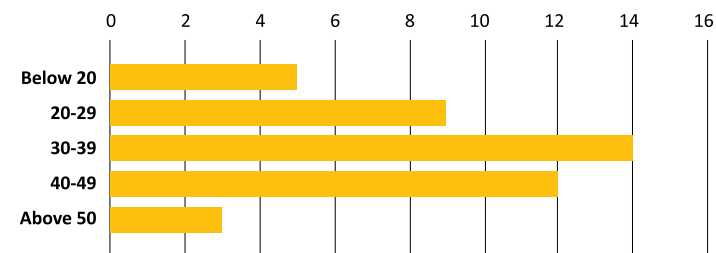
It needs to be said here that all Mandi women are not a homogenous category. So, everyone will be seen the same. This study had respondents of different ages. For those who spoke about family and workplace violence and harassment, not all workplaces were the same. There is also a difference in the history of their immigration to Dhaka city.

2.3. WHOM WE TALKED TO:

The total respondents of this study are 43 people. Among them, 20 people have been interviewed. And 23 respondents participated in three FGDs. The respondents in the focus group discussion were 8, 5 and 7 respectively due to compliance with Covid-19 hygiene rules.

2.4. AGE

About 12% of the respondents are below 20 years of age. About 21% are between the ages of 20-29. 32% were 30-39. 25% of were 40-49 years old. 7% are over 50.

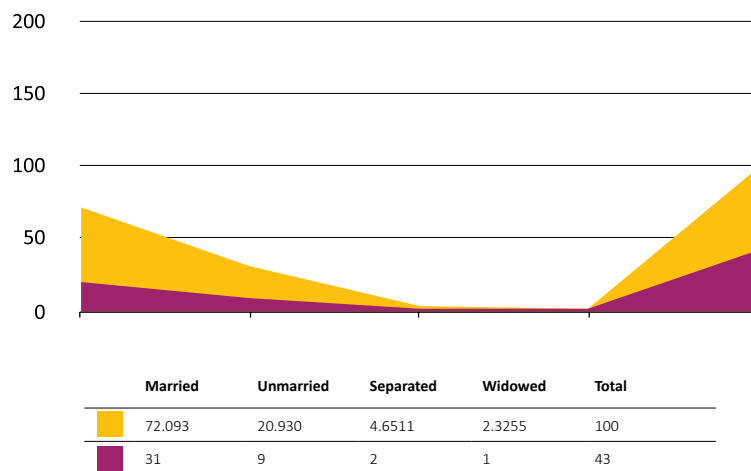


Graph 1: Age composition of the respondents

2.5. MARITAL STATUS

Since the focus of this research is on gender-based violence and harassment, it is necessary to look at the situation of a woman in the force. Because women are subjected to oppression and harassment in the public and private sectors. In the private sphere, women are subjected to this kind of oppression mostly through their intimate partners and family members.

73% of the respondents of this study are married. 21% are single and 5% are married but separated because their husbands have remarried. 2% were widows.



Graph 2: Marital Status

2.6. OCCUPATION

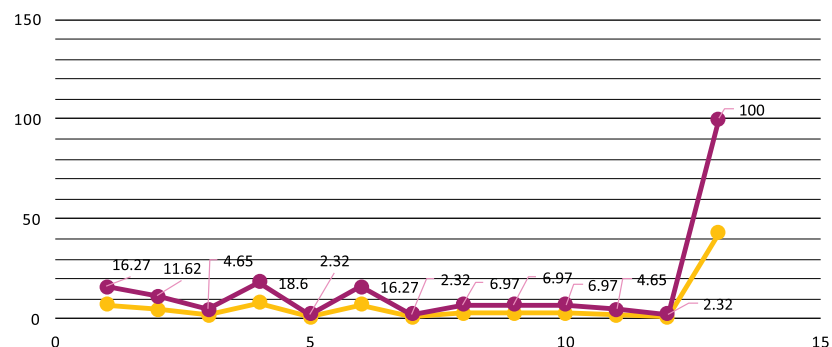
| Occupation | Number | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Housekeeper | 7 | 16.27 |
| Small business | 5 | 11.62 |
| Office and housekeeper | 2 | 4.65 |
| Parlour worker | 8 | 18.60 |
| Doctors | 1 | 2.32 |
| Nurse | 7 | 16.27 |
| HR | 1 | 2.32 |
| Security person | 3 | 6.97 |
| Office assistant | 3 | 6.97 |
| Sales girl | 3 | 6.97 |
| Caregiver | 2 | 4.65 |
| Tailor | 1 | 2.32 |
| Total | 43 | 100 |

Table 1: Occupational status of the respondents

Among the participants of this study, 16% of them were involved in hygiene in various occupations. Here housework is called 'house'. In fact, these are jobs in foreigners' homes. About 12% are doing small business. These small businesses include tea-biscuit shops, traditional cloth shops, and vegetable and dry goods shops. About 19% are working as beauty parlour workers. 5% are working in offices and houses. 2% are doctors. 16% of respondents are working in the nursing profession. 7% are working as security guards. Another 7% are working as tailors, salespersons and caregivers. However, after Covid-19, many of them lost their jobs and went home.

They were fired especially from the beauty parlour and hygiene-keeping jobs. Many people went back to the village

and did agriculture, some did small business. Many of them said that they changed jobs after coming back to Dhaka after the first corona.



Graph 3: Occupational status

3. PERCEPTIONS OF GBVS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Most people think of violence as a physical assault or attack. However, gender-based violence and harassment placed either in public or private places (homes) are a much wider problem.

However, ILO convention Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) declares,

- a. ‘the term “violence and harassment” in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment;
- b. the term “gender-based violence and harassment” means

violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment’.

It needs to be said here that the marginalization of indigenous women is of several types. They are racially marginalized; they are religiously marginalized and vulnerable due to their women’s identities. Besides, since most of them belong to low income, violence against them is easy. And it is also assumed that indigenous women will not protest and will accept.

Before discussing what, they observe and what they do about gender-based violence, we will discuss the type of violence they have been experiencing in their lives.

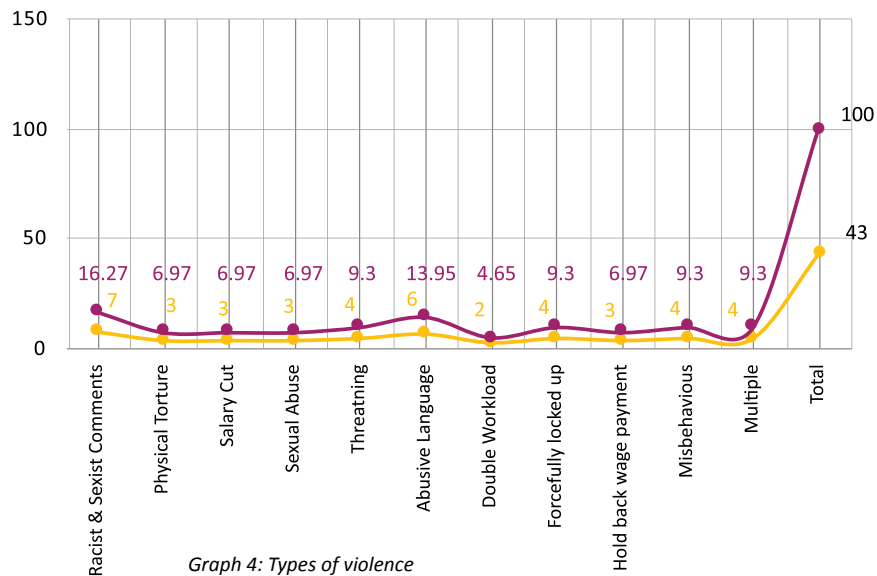
3.2. TYPES OF VIOLENCE

The women in this study reported several types of violence and harassment against them. However, this violence and harassment is not only in the public field, women are also subjected to torture in their homes.

Many people in Bangladesh think that since Mandi society is matriarchal, there may be less oppression of women. But in our study women were also told about their domestic violence.

Below is a list of types of violence women face in the public sphere and workplace:

16% of women in the study said they were ethnically Mandi and 16% were victims of racist and sexist comments at work and in public spaces. 14% were abused, 7% were subjected to various forms of oppression including physical abuse, sexual abuse, withholding of wages, misconduct, reduction of wages. 9% have been subjected to various threats. The remaining 9% are under forced house locked.



Graph 4: Types of violence

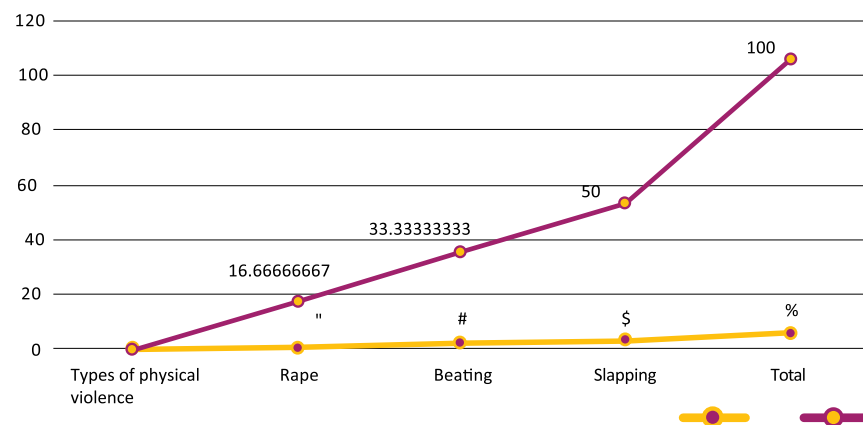
| Types of Violence | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Racist and sexist comment | 7 | 16.27 |
| Physical torture | 3 | 6.97 |
| Salary cut | 3 | 6.97 |
| Sexual abuse | 3 | 6.97 |
| Threatening | 4 | 9.30 |
| Abusive language | 6 | 13.95 |
| Doble workload | 2 | 4.65 |
| Forcefully locked up | 4 | 9.30 |
| Hold back wage payment | 3 | 6.97 |
| Misbehavior | 4 | 9.30 |
| Multiple | 4 | 9.30 |
| Total | 43 | 100 |

Table 2: Types of violence that the respondents encountered in the public sphere

Tanya Nakrek (40) says she has had all the experiences, i. e: looking at her like a greedy person, making bad comments, wanting to marry her, making bad proposals, calling her and threatening to take her away. From pedestrians to neighbourhood shopkeepers, rickshaw pullers, house owners, parlour owners, no one was left out.

3.3. PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

The respondents who participated in the study said that they have been subjected to physical harassment at various times in the workplace. Some have been multiple times. They don't talk much about these things. The respondents who participated in the study said that they have been subjected to physical harassment at various times in the workplace. Some have been multiple times. They don't talk much about these things. About 14% of Mandi women in this study reported experiencing physical violence. Recently a woman under 20 was raped. Besides, 33% of women were beaten and 50% of women were slapped.



Graph 5: Physical violence

One of the respondents Bithika Rema (37) described the experience of physical abuse in this way:

“I used to provide medical services to various houses through a service providing company. Then I went to a house in Bashundhara to provide medical care to the owner’s wife. One day when the AC in the house broke down, the owner of the house cursed me and abused me in abusive language. Later, the owner called his United Hospital doctor’s daughter and she slapped me. The torture does not end here. The others in the house are also informed to come. Everyone started abusing me. They forced me to confess. I didn’t say a word. I just kept my head down and quiet. If I had answered, everyone would have beaten me that day. I told them “‘My God knows I have done nothing. We always pray to God. We don’t lie.” They rebuke me more loudly. Saying, ‘We do not obey your God. Admit that you are the one who destroyed the AC.’”

Another respondent Mahima Azim (35) used to work as a housekeeping under a foreign owner. In the beginning, while working in the house, Mahima was subjected to various unjust tortures. On the one hand, Mahima has to bear the torture of being beaten on the one hand, but the salary is low.

Mahima said, “I worked in an Indian house. The wife is Bangladeshi and the husband is Mservice-providing the work but the salary was not that much. One day I went to work at that house. As soon as you go, madam says to wash the clothes. I started washing the clothes. But sir gets very angry when he sees that the house is not cleaned. He started beating me. Then I didn’t go anymore.’

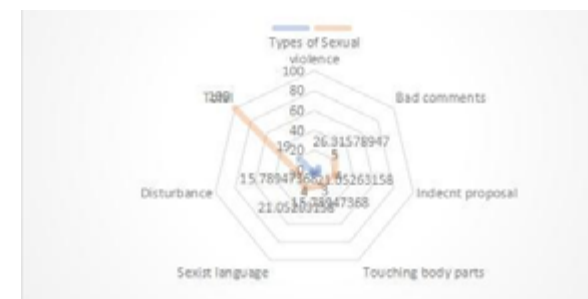
Mandi women are not only subjected to physical abuse, they are also threatened to rape. Kalpana Drong (42), mother of two young daughters. Her husband died. She was struggling with her two daughters. She runs a vegetable shop. At the time of Covid-19 she had no work and could not open the shop.

She had no income and could not pay the rent of his very small house. Her landlord’s son came one night with the other boys and took her daughters out. She asked the commissioner of the area, Babul, to investigate the incident and sought justice. However, after finding out, the son of the owner of the house scolded Kalpana by saying that if she would not pay the rent soon, they would dishonor her daughters along with others like Babul.

3.4. SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Apart from physical abuse, Mandi women are subjected to various forms of sexual violence. Due to the ethnic simplicity of less educated Mandi girls from villages, they face various risks and challenges in the workplace. There is sexual abuse and various forms of harassment.

44% of the total respondents of this study have experienced sexual harassment at some point in time. Among them, 26% of women said they had been subjected to nasty comments at some point. 21% have received indecent proposals at various times. About 16% said their body had been touched inappropriately. 21% said they had been told something sexually suggestive. About 16% said that they had been harassed by various people calling them and saying bad things at various times.



Graph 6: Sexual violence

Archana Ritchi (40), shared her experience in her way:

‘In the early days one used to hear a lot of abuse while walking on the streets. She once beat a rickshaw puller with an umbrella for making bad comments on the street. Rickshaw puller said after looking at me “, she is going home, after having sex’(Dekho, kam koira basai jaitache)’

Promila Ashakra (50) used to work in a house, once her Korean boss tried to take a chance. She said,

“At that time, I used to cook for 20 staff in a Korean office and I used to cook for the boss in a guest house in the office. While cooking in the kitchen, my boss touched my knee in the kitchen intentionally for three days. One day I also kicked back and he said ‘ sorry’.”

Pramila said, ‘It’s not that foreigners don’t have a desire too. But once you protest, they don’t have the courage. If you are strong yourself, they can’t force you. They are afraid of losing their jobs.’

Many Mandi girls work in insecurity not only with the staff but also with the owner himself in many houses. Especially Bengali, Pakistani, Sri Lankan bosses are especially like this. Beena Ritchil shared the story several years ago. It was an attempt to molest a Mandi girl in the house of a Sri Lankan boss. He said that the girl defended herself with a bottle of liquor which was near her. To save herself, she hit the man with a broken piece of glass.

Beena added, when a new girl starts working in the house, the other staff (driver, cook, guard) make false complaints to the boss and madam. If the girl doesn’t follow their rhythm, they cause a lot of problems to her.

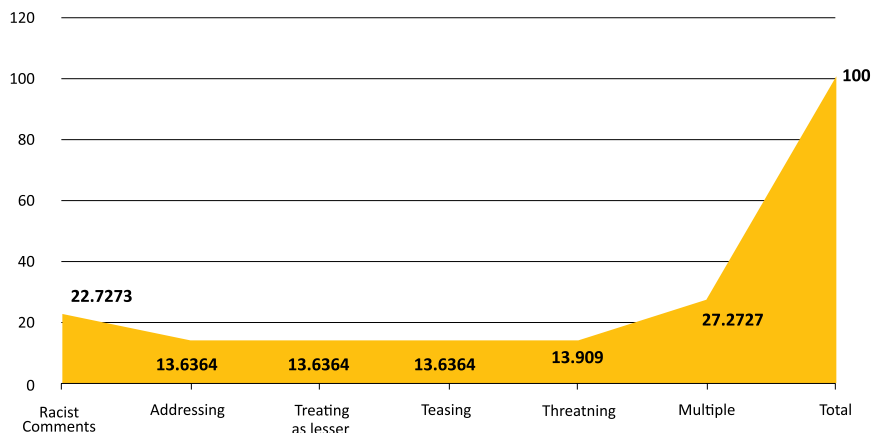
Ananya Nafak (43) gets a low-paid job in a small parlour near her home in Mohammadpur. The owner of the small parlour was a woman. Ananya worked in the parlour for four months.

One day at work the owner’s girlfriend told the others about a man. He likes Mandi girls very much. He wants to marry a Mandi girl. “Even if money is given, he wants to marry a Mandi girl,” the owner’s girlfriend proposed to Ananya. Ananya gets angry after hearing this. She replied to the owner’s friend’ ‘I came to work in the parlour. I did not come to marry. What do you think? Mandi girls are so cheap that I will marry you! “

Ananya also shared her another experience. The flexi shopkeeper in the neighborhood used to disturb her a lot. After doing Flexi, he used to call the number from there often. She told her brother-in-law about it. After her brother-in-law scolded the shopkeeper, the shopkeeper started threatening Ananya. He does not do this to anyone else.

3.5. PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

Smita Nokrek (42) worked in a corporate organization for nine years. But she said he did not get any of the respect and honour she deserved. As an indigenous woman, she was subjected to harassment and deprivation in the office. Smita said that the Human resource general manager (HRGM) of her office made bad comments about her appearance in front of everyone in the office. An office workshop was going on. The workshop facilitator HR GM asks the participants if everyone has understood the topic discussed. He looked at Smita and said, your eyes are small, your nose is crooked, and your face shows that you have not understood anything. How does it feel to say this in front of everyone? I feel very uncomfortable, very humiliated. Smita said their deputy director was also in that workshop. He later reported the matter to the director. When the Director informs the Vice Chairman, HR scolds the GM and asks Smita to file a written complaint. Smita said, “If I had written, he would have lost his job, so I did not write from the place of humanity and that was my mistake.” After that, I was under severe stress for a year and a half until I quit my job. I was forced to quit my job.”



Graph 7: Psychological violence

It was one of Smita’s many experiences. Many have had such experiences. But not everyone wants to talk. This is because everyone lives in fear. 51% of the total respondents said they have been victims of emotional abuse at various times. About 23% said they faced unpleasant comments because of their ethnic identity, appearance and religious identity. 14% say they are harassed in buses, streets, shops wearing Rohingya. The same percentage of respondents said they were perceived as less talented. Another 14% say their own language is looked down upon and laughed at. 9% say they have been threatened with murder, kidnapping or other harm if they protest something. 27% said they were victims of various forms of emotional abuse.

Mandi women are also harassed while using public places or public transport. Sengmi Azim is a student of A New Model University. She shared her story. She said ‘

I take a bus to go to the university. I feel very uncomfortable after getting on the bus. Everyone stares like I’m the only

person worth watching. All eyes on the bus are on me. Wouldn’t it be nice if everyone on the bus was looking at someone strangely?’

Sengmi again said, ‘One day I went to Nilkheet with my father to buy books. When we saw the people standing near the bookstore, they kept telling us with a smile that Rohingyas can also find books there. I quickly took my father to another shop. ‘When they see us now, they call Rohingya, Rohingya.’

Most people think that indigenous people understand less, they are less intelligent. And indigenous women understand even less. Priyanka Rangsha (25) a nurse working in a hospital said, ‘the attitude of these rich patients is often very negative. They think we are indigenous and therefore less intelligent. The less I can, the less I understand.’

Apart from this, many kinds of suspicions about them have created mental pressure on the indigenous women by locking them inside the house. Pramila said that they have to be victims of unwarranted suspicion. Promila used to work in a Sri Lankan house. Promila said that when the house’s sir and madam went to the office in the morning, they would leave Promila locked in the room. She said, ‘Sir madam used to go to the office around eight in the morning and came back at six to seven. I used to be locked up.

Emotional abuse is experienced in different sectors in different ways as Tanya Nakrek (37) said that the girls have to work in the parlour after enduring the rude behaviour of the manager and the owner, not recognizing the work, being called a Mandi etc. Tanya said that the heroine Nipun herself mockingly called us ‘Ae Mandi’. From what we hear, foreigners are very efficient. Bangladeshi girls are very lazy. They treat us very harshly especially when it comes time to pay.’

Tanya Nakre also added ‘not only that. We don’t have the right to speak in our own language in the parlour. They get bored

when we speak in their language. Suspecting that something bad is being said about them. You have to speak Bangla in the parlour. Tanya s 'Bangla must be spoken in front of customers. Talking in Mandi language is annoying as we seem to be swearing. If you speak our language, they suspect you.

Tanya also said, "They think of us as thieves. We do not protest. If you protest, you are called rude. Again, when the anger rises, the job can also be lost," said Tanya Nakrek.

3.6. FINANCIAL VIOLENCE

Financial violence is not always discussed in discussions of gender-based violence. But the respondents in this study told stories of how the Mandi women were victims of their economic intimidation. In most of the establishments where the respondents work, no appointment letter has been issued. Due to this they cannot realize the rights of the workers, rather they are subjected to harassment.

Simmata said,

'I had problems related to ectopic pregnancy. I fainted in the office bathroom. He took me to the hospital in the office car. I was sick and stayed in the hospital for 12 days. They did not give money. On the contrary, the 12 days appear absent. They didn't give her money because they didn't know about her illness. On the one hand due to physical illness and on the other hand, due to their non-cooperation the mental stress increased, I decided to resign, they prepared my resignation letter in two minutes and brought it for my signature. I understand that my resignation letter has already been prepared. My, re-sign date was calculated from the number of days I was in the hospital. Not only that my gratuity would have been doubled if I had another six

months. According to the rules of the organization, if an officer works for ten years, the amount of gratuity is doubled. I had six months left. He arranged to chase me before that. And put me under so much mental pressure that I am forced to leave the job. I was crying a lot while sitting in the CNG. I was very frustrated for the last year and a half. The organization in which I worked very dedicatedly for nine and a half years did not evaluate me.'

Tanya Nakrek (40) said that there is not much vacation in Palar. All that exists is in name only. Employers get very upset when workers ask for leave. Don't want to leave. He said, 'If you are sick, take some medicine and stay in the parlour. There are only 22 days of annual leave. But what will happen if they ask for leave, they get angry

Another woman, Selina Chiran (52) said that while working in the house, many times the Mandi girls were subjected to various tortures by the owners. Especially Bengali house owners do not clear the due money properly. They were framed on various false charges including theft. Subhati Chiran (50) said that she rescued some Mandi girls from such situations with the help of Caritas Bangladesh.

Apart from these four types of oppression, Mandi women are also subjected to various types of oppression within the home. This is discussed below.

3.7. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Seven women in this study said that they were victims of domestic violence. But they don't talk much about them. They also identified polygamy as domestic violence. A woman says her husband married her injured sister and they are living separately.

Beena said that her husband had remarried and was living with his second wife next door. Beena thinks that her husband is living with his second wife next door to harass her.

Besides, three said that their husbands used to beat them. The main reason was that husbands did not earn a single penny. Instead, they asked for money from their wives. If the wives did not pay, they would beat them.

Two complained that their husbands do not go to the market regularly. Stay in other houses drinking alcohol and beating them if they talk about these things.

The women in the FGD said that they wanted to talk to the Mandi leaders several times about polygamy in their society. They say their traditional leaders also want money now. If not, the court does not want to do the ritual properly. And because of these reasons, violence against women in the family is also increasing.

4. SOURCES OF GBV-RELATED INFORMATION AND THEIR UTILITIES AMONG MANDI WOMEN

4.1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The respondents stated that they understand the injustice and oppression that they face. Many of them have participated in various ILO workshops on violence against women. Besides, there was a project of CARITAS, which was called SAFE. That project was going on for four years. That project was going on for four years. The project included meetings and various programs. Through this, they got information about women's oppression, labour laws, labour exploitation etc. That project is currently closed. Besides, some respondents mentioned television as a source of information. Most of them also know where to go to get justice and other solutions in this matter.

4.2. JUSTICE SEEKING BEHAVIOR

Even if the Mandi women have knowledge of the remedy, they rarely seek the remedy. They remain silent most of the time against oppression in the public and private spheres.

Beena Ritchil said that there is no chance of protest if the judgment is far away. "Girls are mostly silent. We have to think, what will you eat when you are laid off from a job? How will it be? Moreover, if there is a problem in the house, it can be difficult to go to the street, and it can harm others in the family, because of this, most of the girls remain silent.

Mandi women generally do not go to court cases. They don't have the courage, time or financial ability to file a lawsuit. They have nothing to do but sleep in silence and leave work if too much. We live in fear in the land of Bengalis, they get information from the television, workshops organized by ILO and SAFE projects run by CARITAS.

4.3. BARRIERS

Besides, women face various kinds of adversaries in order to fight against harassment in the workplace. Even many women do not want to tell others because of fear. Some of the women interviewed for this research said that this was the first time they had told anyone about the incident. Because they are frightened. They said if the owner is very rich and powerful there is almost no chance of getting any kind of justice. No one will stand by the women. Administration police will not stand for helpless like them. That is why most of the Mandi women are suppressed by various incidents of torture that happen to them,

But those who know about the remedy cannot use it. Even when Bithika wanted to sue, others stopped him saying that her owner was too powerful. He will take everything for

himself with money. On the other hand, when they went to the police station, the police also discouraged her to file the case as her boss was a foreigner. The police said that there is more trouble if a case is filed against foreigners. Even Bithika didn't get anyone in her palm then.

Beena informed that Polygamy is now very common among the Mandis. She blames the boys for consuming too much chu (liquor). There are many such incidents in Dhaka. The husband spends months with another family. He has a relationship with the woman of that house, spends money, and gets married. He does not keep track of his family. The former wife abandoned her husband and leads a lonely life. Beena's husband also married secondly.

The respondents said that even in Mandi society there are traditional laws on this matter, but now their social leaders do not bother about them. Mandi society is now very patriarchal. And women also do not want to talk about them out of shame. 'Swami has left him and it is a shame if others know it's- there is such a feeling. Moreover, some respondents said that they did not tell their parents in the village what they do when they come to Dhaka. So, they cannot report the oppression on them.

But in addition to this, they have also reported many successes through collective efforts. When the SAFE project was there, they had weekly meetings. There were several committees. Women's leadership was developed. They also rescued several girls who were oppressed in different places. Especially when the girls were kept locked in many houses, even during Christmas, several women got together and rescued the girls from those houses.

Even when a Mandi girl was molested at a reputed beauty parlour, Caritas' SAFE project helped her. They report that when they have someone in their palm, they are empowered

in many ways and feel empowered. Then the police station also gave importance to them. But when they go alone, no one cares.

Since most of them have little education, they think that they get the most information on GBV through discussion and can get more information in future. Besides, they believe that if there is a space to share their experiences, it can also play a role in information exchange.

5. SUITABLE WAYS TO MAKE THE INFORMATION EASILY ACCESSIBLE FOR THE MANDI WOMEN

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this study we got two types of respondents. One group knows less about gender-based violence relations and more about where to go to find justice. But they don't go because of various fears. And another group in Aceh Dhaka city whose history of migration is not very long, they do not know much. They may report problems to senior women.

It was found that they did not know much about any organization other than Caritas Safe Project. And they don't even know where to go and whose help they can get. They don't even know about the government's free legal aid. As the reason for not knowing, they said that they have not heard from anyone. Another is their financial ignorance. It costs a lot of money to travel to different destinations. They don't want to go because of this fear.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the suggestions that emerged from the three FGDs and interviews on these issues:

1. Make available to the Mandi women a list of organizations that offer free legal services.
2. All information should be translated into Mandi language and are readily available to the Mandi women.
3. Where there is a large population of Mandi communitarians (e.g Kalachandpur) government and non-government organizations provide information on gender-based violence and its countermeasures in various schools, colleges and churches.
4. It is also important to promote the government's free legal services and know where to get those services.
5. Non-Governmental Organizations can adopt projects like SAFE, through which gender-based violence and its subsequent criminal relations can be learned through discussion and increase their confidence.
6. National and international organizations on gender-based violence should undertake more programs and ensure the inclusion of indigenous women.

6. CONCLUSION

The study explored the perception of Gender-based violence (hereafter GBV) among the Mandi women. It also tried to find out the main sources of GBV-related information and their utilities among the Mandi women. It also looked for suitable ways to make the information easily accessible for Mandi women. They get the information from the workshops arranged by ILO and the program called SAFE run by CARITAS.

This study shows that women are subjected to various forms of violence because of their multiple identities. They mention four types of oppression in this study. It includes physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence. As victims of this violence, they are always down mentally, and their morale decreases, which affects their work. They also talked about their domestic violence. They reported how the Mandi men used violence against the Mandi women. They knew that they are victims of various forms of gender discrimination because they are women, racially, religiously, economically and linguistically marginalized.

They understand oppression and have learned about it through the ILO and Caritas' SAFE programme. But they dare not seek justice. Because they are afraid of being degraded socially, they are always afraid of losing their jobs in the workplace. They are discouraged when they go to the police station. In the meantime, they have made their move and rescued the victims. But they had SAFE by their side. Then they felt empowered. Then everyone from the police was on their side. But when they go to sue alone, they are intimidated.

They made several recommendations for greater awareness and treatment of these issues

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