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## GENDER VIOLENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE

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### Abstract

Gender violence creates a major problem in our day today lives. The gender violence is used for both masculine or feminine which can be social or cultural; however, the term 'gender violence' is usually exercised against female gender. Gender violence in the Middle East, is incredibly focused towards females. Violence against females is a significant concern in the Asian countries. The exercise of gender violence appears as sexual harassment and abusive behaviour at home and other places are subjected to gender violence. Women, who are married, some of them also face the threat of domestic violence within family, and are therefore attributed to primordial socioeconomic conditions that shape social norms about marriage patterns, living arrangements and the only productive role of women. In many countries, laws have been passed that restrict and punish groups those support work on sexual orientation and gender identity issues. This paper provides a general idea of the research in the ground of gender and violence with more explicitly what is known as gender violence. The multidisciplinary study of the nature of the gender violence is highlighted through different thinkers across the academic fields of law, criminology, social sciences media and others. The diversity of perspectives highlights that gender violence existed in the primitive societies and is a continuing social problem. In this regard, gender violence has created a major problem in today's society that I am going to discuss and critically examine in this paper.

**Keywords:** Gender Violence, Gender Identity, Feminist Philosophers, Masculinity, Female.

### Introduction

Gender is represented as a social construction that is created through various social institutions that created roles, activities, responsibilities and expectations that are attributed to men and women, differentiating how they are to behave and act. According to the United Nations Population Fund,

The term gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female...Men and women face different expectations about how they should dress, behave or work. Relations between men and women, whether in the family, the workplace or the public sphere, also reflect the understandings of the talents, characteristics and behaviour appropriate to women and to men...the fact that gender attributes are socially constructed means that they are also amenable to change in ways that make a society more just and equitable. (Lombard, 2018, p. 1)

Gender indicates not only to be 'a man' or 'a woman' but to the relationship of them. Connell argues that the "state of play in gender relations in a given institution is its gender regime". In doing similar way, she looks past the crossroads between the personal relations of men with women, and with the society all in all, featuring rather the layers of social association where gender relations are played out and gender systems made and continued; for instance, work, education, the family. It is the upkeep of these gender orientation systems - what Connell terms "the configuration of gender practice," which "guarantees...the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Lombard, 2018, pp. 1-2).

This sex or gender order gives opportunity to certain masculinities but not all masculinities are one and the same at the same time – they cross with other social characters. To keep up this advantaged position and the current gender order, the hegemonic masculinity must epitomize stereotypical masculine attributes of power, dominance, strength and authority. Feminineness and non-authoritative masculinities are characterised as powerless and savagery and hostility are standardised and organised as key components of hegemonic masculinity. Along these lines the support of the gender order is exceptionally applicable when taking a gender at sexual orientation and violence with the critical ideas here being force and control (Lombard, 2018, p. 2). According to Kenway and Fitzclarence, "Violence is one of the major social problems of our time...It is increasingly understood that violence occurs along a continuum and involves physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuses of power at individual, group and social structural levels" (Lombard, 2018, p. 2). This paper looks at the specific problem of gender-based violence or gender violence that creates worldwide problem excessively upon female and female children.



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## Gender violence

‘Gender violence’ is also called ‘Gender-based Violence’ or ‘Sex based Violence’ is the term used to mean harm caused upon individuals and groups depending on their gender identity. This violence can be termed as cultural and social understandings of gender, and the essential supremacy that hold violence subject on the basis of gender orientation and social effects that shape violent events along gender orientation circumstance. While the term is consistently exercised simultaneously with the ‘violence against female,’ though it is also exercised for all genders, like- males, females, and female children and gender assorted persons. Gender violence is originated in the social structural disparities between males and females. It is both a reason and effect of gender inequality. It has features of crimes and practices including enthusiastic, sexual, mental and economic misuse, individual and sexual infringement or material deprivations (Lombard, 2018, pp. 3-4). According to the World Health Organization,

Differences in gender roles and behaviours often create inequalities, whereby one gender becomes empowered to the disadvantage of the other. Thus, in many societies, women are viewed as subordinate to men and have a lower social status, allowing men control over, and greater decision-making power than, women. Gender inequalities have a large and wide-ranging impact on society. For example, they can contribute to gender inequities in health and access to health care, opportunities for employment and promotion, levels of income, political participation and representation and education. (Lombard, 2018, p. 10)

Gender violence is perceived as an endemic problem across the world. However, even this idea of violence against females as ‘hidden’ is challenged. Stanko argues that violence against females is denied rather than hidden. However, as a result of lack of reporting, or absence of legislative law which condemns and criminalises the problem and produces reports, it is complicated to exactly evaluate the problem. International organizations, for example, the UN determine that one of every three females have faced physical or sexual violence; 66% % of all nations have prohibited domestic violence; 37 nations excused rape performers from prosecution if they are married to, or subsequently marry the victim; in the EU, 45–55 per cent of females have experienced sexual violence or harassment since the age of 15; at least 200 million young girls alive today have gone through Female Genital Mutilation; 700 million females were married before the age of 18 today and 1/3 percent were married before the age of 15. These figures show the daily experiences of women violence across the world and their continuous oppression or suppression (Lombard, 2018, p. 3).

International deals exercise the term ‘Gender-based Violence’ to represent that violence against females is formed by the gendered plan of power structure in the society and that violence is the expression and preservation of unequal power relations. The Council of Europe Convention describes it as a “manifestation of historically unequal power relations between females and males, which have led to domination over, and discrimination against, females by males and to the prevention of the full advancement of women” (Council of Europe, 2011, p. 1). The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against females was the first international human rights statement that defined violence against females within a gender-based framework. In doing so it recognised the family, the community and the state as significant locales of gender-based violence, characterising the precise worldwide discrimination or prejudice against females and girls. Females are more likely to be injured, killed or physically harassed in their own home and become most dangerous place for females, by their known persons or family members, than any other social circumstance (Lombard, 2018, p. 2). The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines,

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. (Terry & Hoare, 2007, p. xiv)

The above quotation signifies that female are more likely to be attacked, raped, mutilated, killed and harassed by men. Females’ violent experiences are interconnected by numerous issues; like-, sexuality, ethnicity, class and age, which all effect upon females and experiencing what is befalling to them otherwise the option is available to them to escape or ask for help. Thus, females are unreasonably faced by the male violence that is both a reason and effect of gender biasness or inequality. Various types of violence create different reactions depending upon existing law, its exercise in gendered related discourses and its public visibility (Lombard, 2018, p. 9). Manjoo argues,

Even though all women are at risk of experiencing violence, not all women are equally susceptible to acts of violence. Individual women’s productive and reproductive activities are impacted by forms of interpersonal and structural violence which intersect with various factors such as immigration, trade and economic policy, social and economic development, civil and political development, legal protection, conflict and security concerns. Discrimination based on



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race, ethnicity, national origin, ability, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, culture, tradition and other realities often intensifies acts of violence against women. (Lombard, 2018, p. 7)

### Gender Violence across the World

Gender-based violence happens at all stages of a woman’s life in all countries. For example, it can happen even before born a girl, as sex-selective abortion in some countries and keep on threatening females in old age; while in other countries, some other forms of violence, like- dowry system and murdering for dowry are specific; however, some forms are changed or no more in use in course of time. Gender-based violence, like- sexual or domestic violence is more common in some societies and happens in all cultures and are also discriminated by the extent to which societies give punishment or excuse them. Inside the same place, location and time-period, females may experience different ways of gender-based violence, depending on their occupation, social status, religion, ethnicity and sexuality (Terry & Hoare, 2007, p. xv).

Most of the females, in the Middle East, are economically dependent on their male partner and need permission to entrance to education or financial matter. Moreover, females require consent from a male guardian if they wish to get marry, travel, or work with someone. Females those who are married too face the possibility of domestic violence and are also subject to required early marriage that can lawfully happen before the age of eighteen. Thus, in the Middle East, Gender violence against female children and females is normalised and sustained by the existing social patriarchal beliefs and values that survive both in a political and religious context. Gender violence continues being a continuous problem in the European countries with high rates of partner abusive conduct at home and conflict. Surrounded by the European Union, researchers find that one third of every female has faced physical or sexual violence. The incidence of violence against female is very serious in African countries where around 33% of women report to have experienced both physical and sexual domestic violence. Domestic violence within the family, particularly experienced by females is an element of ancient socio-politico-economic conditions that shape normal practices about marriage and living arrangements as well as the productive role of females. Female Genital Mutilation is believed as a form of gender-based violation that affects females and girls’ bodies. Female Genital Mutilation is not only an issue of discrimination against females and girls, but it violates their rights to health, security and the right to life that brings results into death.

### Humanitarian Preventive Measures against Gender Violence

In African and many other countries, laws have been passed that restrict and punish people those who work on sexual orientation and gender identity issues. In France, as somewhere else, developing feminist interest to prevent the male violence towards females has brought up issues about masculinity. The quietness has been broken, and it is inappropriate to prevent the impacts from getting 20 years of feminist campaigns against male violence. Feminist philosophers create pressure that influenced people and forced to change institutional and legal systems, but while the success is perceived, the struggle against male domination or violence is not over. Feminist philosophers keep on campaigning against the violence that experienced by the females and try to give legitimate exhortation and administrations. The feminist philosophers consider that there is a absence of contact between the females experienced violence and feminist academician which is restricting the effect of their work. The feminist philosophers argue that preventive measures can be taken to lessen the impacts of male violence and that can be reduced. Holding this objective, all the feminist philosophers are effectively working in the area to understand the relationship between gender and violence (Allwood, 1998, p. 119). The feminist philosophers have taken many creative ways to challenge gender violence in humanitarian contexts. Terry & Hoare forward the following preventive measures against gender violence that practitioners and policy makers should take in several ways:

First, they situate anti-gender-based violence interventions in a broad analytical framework, which understands gender-based violence as a phenomenon that both arises from and perpetuates gender inequalities.

Secondly, they provide examples of successful strategies and activities which, while not completely transferable, can be adapted and tested elsewhere.

Thirdly, they alert mainstream development and humanitarian practitioners whose objectives do not focus on gender-based violence to the ways it may be impacting on the women and girls they are assisting, so that they can take this into account in their planning and implementation and

Finally, they present a valuable suggestion of reports, publications, and organisational websites that can be drawn on to promote enhanced understanding of gender-based violence, and the sharing of experiences. (Terry & Hoare, 2007, p. xxiii)



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The developing feminist enthusiasms are looking for clarifications of why men are violent, as opposed to why females become the survivors of violence. Collin argues that this is the main element in male violence; it may therefore create feminist interest (Allwood, 1998, p. 120). Welzer-Lang has shown that violence against females is exercised to achieve a determined purpose. The men those who are violent define their violence activities, like- psychological, physical, verbal or sexual violence to achieve their determined purpose. Welzer-Lang argues that violence is merely a symptom and the root cause of violence towards women is the inequality of gender relations (Allwood, 1998, p. 121). Therefore, Lombard argues,

[I]t is, for the most part, women who suffer from torture and ill-treatment within the home. In some states this intimate violence is not a criminal act; rather, it is perceived as an acceptable form of social control within the family...The overall picture is, at best neglect, and at worst complicity on the part of the state and the international community for approaching intimate violence not as a political and a human rights issue, but as a private matter - a social or a cultural practice, sporadic and individualistic in nature. (Lombard, 2018, p. 5)

Violence against females is one of the numerous ways in which females are denied full citizenship rights. Females lead progressively movement on a European and global level to stop male violence. Marie-Victoire Louis argues that the idea of human rights needs reconsidering in a manner which will stop females' subordination in their private circle, while proceeding to ensure the assurance of the person against the maltreatment of power by the state (Allwood, 1998, pp. 132-133). This work expands on early feminist investigations of violence as a type of the social control of females. These hypotheses deciphered violence as a fundamental apparatus of the male-controlled society. Domestic violence or sexual harassment of females are seen supposedly controlled females conduct, behaviour and some males were seen to profit by this, regardless of whether they actually use violence themselves. Marie Victoire Louis, for instance, asserts that while male centric society overall advantages from the social control forced on females by the threat of violence and, this doesn't imply that all men are attackers or even that all men profit by the circumstance (Allwood, 1998, p. 146).

### Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that all the feminist philosophers reveal in several ways that men are responsible for the violence towards females. This speaks to a huge move, since early work in this field focused on females as the survivors of male violence. This mirrored the generally held view that the female casualties of rape and abusive behaviour at home were often themselves responsible for the assault. This disposition played a significant part in the reaction of the police and the criminal justice to these assaults and clarified in enormous part why female victims of male violence generally suffered. It similarly mirrored the pressing need for the feminist to react to the necessities of survivors. Their work consequently focused on giving help lines to the survivors of sexual assault and later, asylums for women getting away from abusive behaviour at home. Simultaneously, they looked to raise public consciousness of violence towards females, showing the level of the problem that females faced. This leads by some feminist philosophers to the argument that if the exercise of violence is to be restricted then it is required to work with men rather than focusing exclusively on the female that victimised through their attacked. The argument whether feminist should dedicate their energy to this sort of activity reflects that separates feminist philosophers involved in the speculation of sexual orientation.

We have progressed significantly in specific area where a few instances of gender violence against certain females are in some cases seen as distasteful, despicable and punished. Yet, we actually face the naturalization of masculinities, which are weaved with the advancement of violence, the standardization of men's violence against female and legitimizations of such violence dependent on gendered suppositions about how female ought to and ought to not act or behave. All the explanations about gender violence seem to follow a similar cycle by the way we figure out how to sort out them. This rambling account of gender violence initially recognises the violence as a private or social matter in which we ought not to interfere. At that point it is featured that merely certain kinds of females experience such violence on account of their behaviour, conduct or personality; and thus, censuring females for their experiences. At that point the responsibility is upon the females to either leave or carry on with a particular way to demonstrate the violence is genuine. The cycle of gender violence - when recognised as a cultural issue - is outlined regarding the culprit and afterward the more extensive structures of men's capability. For most part, action is taken as far as lawful, challenge, general awareness raising or punitive action. As we should be obvious in this assortment, a few types of gender violence are further down the desultory description than others. Many claim that this is necessary to understand the masculinity and male violence that should be undertaken be the men and others argue that preventive measures necessitate to the sexual orientation relations at an early age. Giving education to the children in a manner which motivates the improvement of respect and understanding among males and females would, they assert, do a lot to eliminate the cause of gender violence.



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