Examining Forms and Socio-cultural Influences of Violence Against Women and Girls: A Survey on Awareness in Thai Society

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Abstract

This article investigates violence against women and girls (VAWG) by classifying and examining various forms of VAWG. The analysis is informed by two secondary sources of data: existing literature and survey results conducted by NIDA Poll in 2022. The article delves into the influence of socio-cultural dimensions, with a specific focus on gender norms, on the various forms and characteristics of VAWG. These encompass a spectrum of forms, including intimate partner violence; sexual harassment; cyber violence; modern slavery; harmful traditional practices such as honor killing and female genital mutilation; and violence from community or society. The survey results on VAWG awareness within Thai society are presented in this study to enhance the comprehension of the subject matter. The survey findings revealed a notable level of awareness concerning sexual harassment, modern slavery, and harmful traditional practices. However, the perspectives diverged on certain issues such as such as romance scams and

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intimate partner violence. These insights provide a foundation for the formulation of enhanced strategies to combat and prevent violence against women and girls.

การศึกษารูปแบบและอิทธิพลทางสังคมวัฒนธรรม
ที่มีต่อของความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง
และผลสำรวจทัศนคติในสังคมไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้ศึกษาความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง โดยการรวบรวมและจำแนกรูปแบบของความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิงออกเป็นลักษณะต่าง ๆ โดยการศึกษาใช้ข้อมูลจากวรรณกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องและข้อมูลทุติยภูมิจากการสำรวจของนิด้าโพลในปี 2022 บทความยังศึกษาอิทธิพลของมิติทางสังคมวัฒนธรรมรวมทั้งบรรทัดฐานทางเพศที่ส่งผลต่อความรุนแรงแต่ละรูปแบบ ซึ่งรวมถึงความรุนแรงจากคู่ครองและคู่รัก การคุกคามทางเพศ ความรุนแรงในโลกออนไลน์ ทาสยุคใหม่ มรดกตกทอดทางประเพณีดั้งเดิมซึ่งไม่เป็นธรรมต่อสตรีและเด็กหญิง เช่น การฆ่าเพื่อปกป้องศักดิ์ศรี การตัดขลิบอวัยวะเพศหญิง และความรุนแรงจากสังคมและชุมชน นอกจากนี้ เพื่อเป็นการขยายความเข้าใจในประเด็นนี้ บทความยังนำผลการสำรวจความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิงในสังคมไทยมาประกอบการวิเคราะห์ ซึ่งจากการสำรวจบ่งชี้ว่าโดยรวมแล้วความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการคุกคามทางเพศ ทาสยุคใหม่ และมรดกตกทอดทางประเพณีดั้งเดิมซึ่งไม่เป็นธรรมต่อสตรีและเด็กหญิงนั้นอยู่ในระดับสูง อย่างไรก็ตาม ยังมีความเข้าใจแตกต่างกันในบางประเด็น เช่น การหลอกลวงให้หลงรัก และความรุนแรงจากคู่ครองและคู่รัก ความเข้าใจในฐานรากและทัศนะของสังคมไทยของปรากฏการณ์เหล่านี้มีความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งในการนำไปสู่การแก้ไขและป้องกันปัญหาความรุนแรงที่เกิดขึ้นต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง

คำสำคัญ: ความรุนแรงต่อผู้หญิงและเด็กหญิง บรรทัดฐานทางเพศ ความรุนแรงจากคู่ครอง การคุกคามทางเพศ ความรุนแรงในโลกออนไลน์ ทาสยุคใหม่ ประเพณีปฏิบัติที่เป็นภัยต่อผู้หญิง ความรุนแรงต่อสตรีและเด็กอันมีที่มาจากชุมชนและสังคม

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Introduction

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a widespread problem that can have serious and lasting consequences for victims. It can take many forms, such as physical abuse, sexual assault, and property damage, and can have negative impacts on women's health, mental health, and overall well-being.

According to UNFPA (2016), violence against women and girls is defined as '*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 deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".* There are four main characteristics of violence against women and girls: (i) *physical violence,* which includes acts of physical harm or damage, such as beating, weapon use, acid attacks, burning, and imprisonment; (ii) *sexual violence,* which includes any sexual acts committed against a woman without her consent, including sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and rape; (iii) *emotional and psychological abuse,* which involves actions that cause psychological trauma, such as bullying, insults, hatred, disdain, dishonesty, infidelity, humiliation, neglect, and other forms of emotional manipulation; and (iv) *economic violence,* which refers to the unfair deprivation of a woman's economic opportunities, including financial discrimination, refusal of financial assistance, property fraud, refusal to work for income, and extortion of property.

Research Scope and Methodology

This article conducts a conceptual exploration of the phenomenon of violence against women and girls (VAWG) to examine its multifaceted manifestations deeply rooted in global cultural and traditional contexts. It is aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the various forms and distinctive characteristics of VAWG.

The research methodology adopted for this study utilizes secondary data sources, with a primary focus on quantitative insights derived from the NIDA Poll[1] survey conducted in 2022. The NIDA Poll survey captures contemporary perspectives and attitudes concerning VAWG within Thai society, offering a quantitative lens for systematically

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[1] The NIDA Poll was conducted in collaboration with the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society.

assessing awareness and perceptions regarding various forms of violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, cyber violence, modern slavery, and harmful traditional practices. By synthesizing the empirical findings from this survey with the conceptual analysis, the article seeks to present a more comprehensive and well-grounded perspective on the VAWG awareness and perception within Thai society, and contributing to the development of enhanced strategies for addressing and preventing violence against women and girls.

Literature Review: Forms and Characteristics of Violence Against Women and Girls

From the literature review on violence against women and girls, there are several common types and patterns of violence that have been observed globally. This section discusses selected common types of VAWG, including intimate partner violence; sexual harassment; cyber violence, modern slavery; harmful traditional practices, and violence from community or society.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. This can include acts of physical violence, sexual violence, emotional and psychological abuse, and controlling behavior. (WHO, 2012). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) indicated that approximately 27% of women worldwide have experienced some form of intimate partner abuse, including physical and sexual violence. The incidence of violence against women and girls varies by region, ranging from 16% in Southern Europe to 51% in the Pacific Island area. WHO estimates that 38% of female murders are committed by male partners. A UN multi-country study (Fulu, Emma et al., 2013) also found that, on average, nearly 50% of men in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Papua New Guinea admitted to physically and sexually abusing partner in the past.

Cheumchit et al. (2018) found that in Thailand, approximately 15% of women have experienced physical, sexual, and psychological violence, or one in six Thai women have been exposed to domestic violence. This violence can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and economic abuse. Physical abuse often involves

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the use of weapons or other objects to cause injury, as well as physical confinement. Psychological abuse can include verbal insults and emotional manipulation, as well as infidelity, which can cause immense emotional pain for the victim. Some women even attempt suicide to escape the cycle of abuse. (Suntornpitak, Papitchaya, 2019)

Jealousy-fueled violence has led to physical harm and death in many cases. Examples of headlines are such as:

"The man, jealous of his wife, killed their entire family in a fit of rage."

"A 16-year-old girl was attacked by her boyfriend, causing brain swelling and ultimately leading to her death. The boyfriend claimed that he was jealous at the time of the attack."

"A man, motivated by jealousy, broke into a woman's house, and killed her by stomping on her. The violence was brutal."

The above headlines illustrate the extent of domestic violence against women and girls, including the tragic case of a 3-year-old girl who was hanged, believed to be caused by her mother's jealousy[2].

According to the study by Cheumchit et al. in 2018, the root cause of domestic violence found in Thailand is often the desire of men to control women, which can manifest in various behaviors such as demanding to know a woman's whereabouts at all times, becoming angry when a woman talks to another man, and suspecting infidelity. Other controlling behaviors may include cold indifference, restricting a woman's social connections and contact with family, and expecting women to ask for permission before leaving the home. In a study by Oxfam (2018), both female and male adolescents reported that it is normal for male adolescents to monitor and control their partner's phone use.

Marriage can also involve violence that harms a woman's mental well-being, even if it does not cause physical injury. According to a study by Cheumchit et al. (2018), women who have experienced violence often report the highest levels of mental violence perpetrated by their spouses, including acts of humiliation, threats, and

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[2] News headlines from Thai Post, October 2021; PPTV Online, 22 August 2021; and Daily News, 8 November 2021.

intimidation. These behaviors can cause psychological trauma and fear, and may involve threatening to harm or hurt loved ones.

Infidelity and adultery

Male infidelity in marriage is another major cause of violence that can cause trauma for women. The phenomenon of having a mistress has long existed in society, but has not been thoroughly studied. Infidelity is one factor that has been identified as contributing to unstable marital relationships and an increased risk of intimate partner violence (WHO, 2019).

However, society often does not view male infidelity as a serious offense and may even accept it as normal due to patriarchal cultural attitudes that allow men to engage in unfaithful behavior. Studies have found that sexist attitudes can influence the acceptance of infidelity and non-committal casual relationships (Davoudian, Teni, 2014) and may be considered a private family matter that should not be disclosed to outsiders. Despite this, infidelity can have significant negative impacts on the quality of life and relationships of women, including feelings of bitterness, shame, loneliness, paranoia, and lack of happiness. It can also lead to a loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as health problems and stress for the family, including children. Economic violence, such as men failing to take responsibility for family finances or extorting money, can also be a form of violence that occurs within the context of infidelity. Physical and emotional violence, such as angry outbursts or verbal insults, may also occur as a result of infidelity and the resulting conflict.

Studies in Thailand have found that women may try to cope with the mental and emotional effects of infidelity by tolerating their partner's behavior, in order to keep the family together and ensure that their children grow up with both parents. They may also turn to stress-reducing practices such as meditation and seek inner peace, as well as seeking the advice of friends and relatives. However, it has been observed that women may only seek counseling from public health services when physical violence is also present (Apanantikul, Manee, 2010).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment and abuse are non-consensual sexual acts, including rape, touching without consent, and forced viewing of sexual material or activity. Verbal, visual, or other harassing behaviors also fall under this category (UN Women, 2018). Globally, an average of 6% of women reported experiencing sexual harassment from a non-partner or partner (WHO, 2021), and UNICEF (2022) found that in one-third of countries worldwide, at least 5% of women reported experiencing sexual abuse as children. A study in Asia-Pacific countries found that one in four men in a sample of 10,000 admitted to sexually harassing women and girls, with rates ranging from 10% in countries with the lowest rates to 63% in countries with the highest rates (Fulu, Emma et al., 2013). According to the Fundamental Rights Survey (2019) 39% of women reported experiencing sexual harassment in the past five years, with nearly half of the victims being women with physical or intellectual disabilities.

Girls and women may face risks of crime, harassment, and sexual harassment in various settings, including their homes, public areas, and while traveling (Prachatai, Nov. 11, 2019; UN Women UK, 2021). However, only a small number of women report such incidents, due to a variety of reasons. Many women did not believe that the incident was serious enough to report or did not think that reporting would lead to any change. They may also fear not being believed or being blamed for the incident, or worry about being stigmatized as a result. In Thailand, victims may choose not to speak out due to shame, fear of not being believed or helped, or fear of retaliation or bullying. These factors reflect the influence of gender norms on how society tolerates and accepts sexual harassment, and how women may feel the need to take precautions to avoid such incidents, such as covering up, avoiding certain behaviors or situations, and staying in safe places. (UN Women UK, 2021)

Sexual harassment and abuse are also prevalent in schools and educational institutions. A study in Thailand found that 72% of youth believe that there is a risk of sexual harassment in school or while traveling to school (Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, 2021). This is supported by news reports of sexual harassment incidents in Thai educational institutions from 2019-2021, which showed that most of the perpetrators were male teachers, followed by senior male students with more power and influence.

Most of the female students who experienced such incidents tended to keep them secret, fearing that they would not be believed or that they would be blamed. This can lead to stress, depression, and even thoughts of suicide (Thairath online, 2021).

A survey conducted by Insight (2021) in Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore found that one-third of respondents in Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, and over half of respondents in Singapore, reported experiencing sexual harassment at work. Telling sexual jokes was the most common form of harassment reported in all countries. The survey also found that victims were more likely to turn to friends for support rather than seeking help from colleagues or their company.

Date rape and corrective rape

There are also specific types of sexual harassment or rape that are driven by gender norms, such as the 'corrective rape' of LGBT women. This type of rape is motivated by a desire to correct or punish women who do not conform to traditional gender roles, or to "teach" them how to be "real" women (Doan-Minh, S., 2019). Date rape, which is often perpetrated by a man who is flirting with or is friends with a woman, is another example. This type of rape involves coercing the victim into having sex through the use of force, words, authority, or other forms of intimidation (Dude, A., 2022). According to a qualitative study by Elle (2021) in Thailand, female college students often do not perceive couple rape as a serious offense, both legally and morally, but rather as a less violent form of sexual abuse that is justified within a relationship between people who love each other. This perspective reflects the cultural acceptance of men's power and the belief that women must be careful to avoid causing such incidents.

Society's tolerance for sexual harassment and abuse, even when it is life-threatening, is also due to gender norms that discourage complaints and accountability for offenders. Studies of incidents of sexual harassment within male-dominated military and forestry institutions (Grubbström, A. and Powell, S., 2020; Alvinius, A. and Holmberg, A., 2019) found that other women and men in these organizations often remain silent about the abuse. This is especially true when the authority or leader of the group does not take any action, causing the rest of the members to do nothing as well, and assume that others will do the same to avoid conflicts and maintain social relationships. Victims may also fear being excluded or not being accepted by the group, or believe that their

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complaints will have no effect. This indicates that these organizations are more tolerant of sexual harassment and abuse than they are of standing up for victims and holding perpetrators accountable.

In addition, traditional and cultural practices, like marriage, ordination, and ceremonial events asking for forgiveness, are sometimes used in place of legal punishment for male offenders of sexual violence (Suchada Taweesit, 2019). These traditional and cultural practices may be seen as a way to resolve conflicts or restore balance in the community, but they do not adequately address the harm caused by sexual violence and may even serve to protect the offender and force the victim to accept the violence. Furthermore, by failing to hold offenders accountable through the legal system, these practices can allow sexual violence to go unchecked and may even encourage further incidents of abuse.

Cyber Violence

Online violence and abuse against women is a significant problem in the virtual world, where people around the world are connected by the internet. While this problem has existed for a while, there has been little in-depth study on it. In 2017, the European Union estimated that 10% of women aged 15 and over in Europe had experienced an incident of online harassment (EIGE, 2017), and a survey in England in 2022 found that 39% of women and 31% of respondents had experienced online violence, cyberstalking, and cyber flashing (Storey M. and Poppleton, S., 2022). A 2021 survey by the Pew Research Center found that women have also experienced incidents of online sexual harassment.

Online violence can take many forms, including sexual harassment, cyberstalking, and cyber flashing. Online violence can also include the use of sexually harassing messages on social media and public forums, unauthorized use of private photos, and the blackmailing of women and girls by threatening to release their nude photos if they do not meet certain demands, which can cause significant stress and even suicidal thoughts.

Romance scams

Online violence against women and girls can also take the form of romance scams or deception to fall in love. In many parts of the world, such as in the United States, it has been reported that over the past five years, citizens have reported over $1.3 billion in complaints related to love scams. In England, the majority of victims of love and property scams are women. In Thailand, from 2017 to 2018, 332 victims were reported, with damages amounting to 193 million baht, and more than 85% of the victims were women. The perpetrators often forge their personal information, get acquainted with the victim through the internet, and build a romantic relationship before committing property fraud, such as fraudulent solicitation for investments in the projects that do not exist or borrowing money on the pretext of needing help in an emergency situation. These behaviors can cause significant financial and psychological harm to the victims, who may also face issues of access to justice and the attitudes of justice officials.

The deception of falling in love can be a particularly insidious form of violence against women, as perpetrators often use tactics such as showing love and bonding, invoking sympathy, and creating a sense of urgency to convince their victims to act according to their will. These tactics exploit the sexual characteristics that perpetrators see as vulnerable in women, such as tenderness, compassion, and trust in true love. The perpetrator may pretend to want to establish a permanent relationship with the victim, even going so far as to propose marriage, while all along having ulterior motives. They may also tell stories about their own miserable lives, such as failures in marriage or the loss of a spouse or child, in order to invoke sympathy from their victim. In some cases, the perpetrator may create a sense of urgency or a deadline, threatening that if their demands are not met, there will be no future meetings or contact (Coluccia, A., 2020). It is important to recognize these manipulative tactics and the impact they can have on the psychological well-being of women.

Modern Slavery

According to the ILO (2022), modern slavery encompasses forced labor (including human trafficking for sexual exploitation, other forms of human trafficking, and debt slavery), as well as forced marriage. This definition applies when the victim is unable to refuse or withdraw due to threats, acts of violence, coercion, deceit, and abuse of

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power. The forms of modern slavery and include the followings:

Forced labor

The ILO (2022) estimates that up to 6 million women and girls are subjected to forced labor exploitation, with the majority of these individuals working in the service, manufacturing, and household sectors. This form of modern slavery is more likely to occur among migrant workers than among local workers.

Sex trafficking

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation involves coercing individuals, including children, into prostitution and engaging in activities such as child pornography. According to ILO estimate, in 2021, there were 6.3 million adult victims and 1.7 million child victims of sex trafficking crimes. Four out of every five victims of these crimes are women and girls.

Many women and girls are victims of forced labor and sex trafficking due to societal gender norms that assign responsibility for the family to women and girls. These norms often lead women and girls to seek employment, even in difficult or exploitative circumstances, in order to provide financial support for their families and pay off debts. In some societies, such as Thai society, women and girls may be lured or forced into the sex industry in exchange for the promise of a better life for their parents or siblings. In some cases, parents or relatives may even act as intermediaries in these situations. In other societies, such as those in Africa, there is a power structure in the family that views children as the property of their parents, with men holding the most power and daughters being seen as less valuable than sons. As a result, women and girls may be sold or given away by their fathers or husbands based on their preferences (Warria, A. and Chandamboka, C., 2019). These societal gender norms contribute to the exploitation of women and girls and must be challenged in order to combat forced labor and sex trafficking.

Forced marriage and child marriage

Forced marriage and child marriage are forms of modern slavery in which victims are forced to marry without consent or the right to refuse, often through the use of force, emotional coercion, financial pressure, threats of harm or exclusion from their family

or community, and other forms of pressure from parents, guardians, and relatives. In some cases, these marriages may also involve servile arrangements, such as performing contracts or offering property in exchange for the marriage. These practices are often rooted in societal traditions that view women as transferable family assets and may involve early marriage that binds children to the institution of marriage (Warria, A. and Chadamboka, C., 2019). It is estimated that by 2021, there will be 22 million people living in forced marriages, with more than 68% (14.9 million) being women and girls. Of these, 7.8 million are child marriages (under the age of 16) of girls (ILO, 2022).

In many traditional, patriarchal societies, forcing daughters into marriage is a common practice. The value placed on women and girls is often limited to their roles as mothers and wives, and families with fewer economic resources may prioritize the education and advancement of their sons over their daughters. In some cases, daughters may even be sold as brides to help the family financially. In some societies, having a daughter is viewed as a burden, and forcing them into marriage is seen as a way to reduce the risk of damage and shame to the family. This practice may be exacerbated by legal principles that do not grant daughters the right to inherit from their original family, and by religious rules that stigmatize premarital sex and restrict women›s sexual behavior. Forced marriage may also be used as a substitute for legal mechanisms to compensate victims of sexual abuse and violence (ILO, 2022; Suchada Taweesit, 2019; Warria, A. and Chandambaka, C., 2019)

Harmful Traditional Practices

CEDAW (1979) indicated that some traditional practices pose a danger to the lives of women and girls. These traditional practices may include:

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a traditional practice performed by some cultural groups that involves the cutting or injury of the female genitalia. This practice can cause physical harm, including infection, difficulty with urination and menstruation, and mental health and sexual/emotional problems for women. According to UNICEF (2022), it is estimated that globally, there are over 200 million women in 31 countries who have undergone FGM. In some societies, FGM is justified on the grounds of being morally

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correct, clean, and creating beauty, as well as regulating women's sexual desires and preserving sexual purity, preventing premarital sex, and enabling marriage. However, it is important to recognize that FGM is a harmful practice that poses risks to the physical and mental health of women and girls.

Honor killings

Honor killings are the murders of women and girls committed by male family members due to the belief that the women or girls have engaged in behaviors that bring shame or dishonor upon the family. These behaviors may include things like having sex outside of marriage, even if the woman or girl was raped, refusing an arranged marriage, engaging in cross-caste or cross-religious marriages, or seeking a divorce. In some societies with specific cultural values, it is believed that men within the family, including fathers, brothers, and husbands, have a duty to protect the family's reputation by ensuring that women and girls adhere to certain social norms. As a result, women and girls who are perceived to have violated these norms may be beaten, burned, shot, stabbed, or otherwise killed in order to restore the family's honor. It is estimated that approximately 5,000 honor killings occur annually worldwide, with particularly high rates in the Middle East and South Asia (Dailey, J. Douglas and Singh, Raghu N., 2016). These killings are a serious human rights violation and must be condemned and actively prevented.

Dowry related violence

Dowry death is a form of violence against women and girls in certain cultures. In this practice, a woman's family gives a dowry to the family of the man she is marrying, which may include cash, valuable items, and property such as houses or land. These dowries are considered a condition of the marriage and may be demanded by the man's family even after the marriage has taken place. The dowry tradition is a cultural tool used by male families to negotiate economic terms with female counterparts, and women and their families may be pressured to give more dowry in order to marry a qualified man. The social condition of dowry can lead to domestic violence, including physical and emotional abuse, and even suicide and murder (Bloch and Rao, 2000; ALMOSAED, N., 2004).

Bloch and Rao (2000) conducted a study of villages in rural India and found that the dowry tradition is a cultural tool used by male families to negotiate economic terms with female counterparts in order for women to be able to marry, particularly if the man is considered a qualified match. When a woman marries, her family may be obligated to give more dowry, and if negotiations over the dowry fail, there is a high risk that women may be subjected to violence, including physical and emotional abuse, which can even lead to death. In India, it is estimated that there are up to 7,000 dowry deaths per year (Times of India, 2022).

Violence from Community or Society

Violence against women and girls can also be perpetrated by community and social power structures that oppress women. For example, in the case of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai, political leaders attempted to kill her in order to send a message to society that women's education and deviance from traditional gender roles were unacceptable (The Global Women's Institute, N.D.). More recently, the murder of a 22-year-old Iranian woman by the moral police due to her disheveled hair received widespread media attention (BBC, Sept. 16, 2022). The media also reported on the beating and torture of a 16-year-old teenage girl who demanded justice for the deceased, leading to her death, as well as the forced disappearance of another teenage girl who spoke out about the incident (The Guardian, Oct. 7, 2022). These cases illustrate the ways in which violence against women and girls can be perpetrated by those in positions of power and influence within communities and societies.

Violence against women in political and other public roles is a serious issue that reflects the social rejection of women's leadership roles. A survey by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (cited in George, R., 2021) found that 81.8% of women in Congress had experienced emotional or psychological violence, 44.4% had been threatened with rape, kidnapping, or assault, and 25.5% had been physically assaulted. It is important to recognize and challenge the underlying biases and prejudices that contribute to such violence and to create a more supportive environment for women in leadership positions.

Survey Results: Perception Survey on Awareness of Violence Against Women and Girls

Understanding the diverse forms of violence experienced by women and girls is important due to the distinct dynamics and consequences associated with each type. For instance, physical violence and sexual violence necessitate distinct support and prevention strategies. A comprehensive comprehension of these specific manifestations of violence facilitates the development of more tailored interventions for effective mitigation and prevention. Furthermore, fostering awareness of these distinctions serves as a pivotal mechanism for challenging entrenched stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding violence, thereby fostering a more accurate comprehension of the issue. This provides a foundation for the formulation of enhanced strategies to combat and prevent violence against women and girls. To enhance the insight into societal perceptions, this section presents analysis of a secondary data derived from the survey conducted by the NIDA Poll in collaboration with the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society. The survey was conducted in November 2022, to assess the level of awareness about VAWG among the Thai population. It presented interesting data of awareness of different types of VAWG and views on what actions are considered a VAWG among diverse respondents. A total of 1,311 participants, approximately half of whom were female (51.64%) and half male (48.36%), participated in the survey. The respondents had a range of educational backgrounds, with 37.22% having completed secondary school, 25.40% holding a bachelor's degree, and 25.02% having completed elementary school. The survey included the issues of sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, cyber violence, and modern slavery.

Sexual harassment

On the issue of sexual harassment, the survey results indicated that there is generally a high level of awareness. This includes issues of: (i) experiencing unwanted touching, kissing, or sexual advances; (ii) attempting date rape; (iii) being forced to view explicit sexual photos in the workplace; and (iv) having one's private photos shared or being subject to derogatory comments.

Sexual harassment in the form of unwelcomed touching, kissing, or sexual advances can be particularly confusing and difficult to handle for young girls. In this survey, a higher

percentage of both male (66.25%) and female (76.07%) respondents agreed that this type of behavior is considered violence against women and girls (VAWG). However, there is still a significant number of people who do not view this as VAWG (male 33.75%, female 23.93%), indicating that there is a need for ongoing education and awareness efforts to challenge harmful attitudes and promote understanding of the negative impact of this type of behavior. It is also important to note that both the perpetrators of this type of harassment and society as a whole may still mistakenly view it as a loving or acceptable behavior.

In a survey on the issue of date rape, respondents were asked about their views on the attempted rape, given the power dynamic and perceived consent in situations where a girl is known to like the boy. The results showed a high level of awareness about this behavior being considered violence against women and girls (VAWG) among both male (97.48%) and female (98.23%) respondents, indicating a strong belief that rape is VAWG regardless of the perceived feelings of the victim towards the perpetrator. This is an important finding, as it shows the understanding of the importance of consent in sexual interactions and respect in the relationship.

Forced viewing of explicit sexual photos is considered a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG) because it is a way to demean and objectify women. In the workplace, sharing of sexually offensive pictures is a form of sexual harassment and can have serious psychological and emotional effects on the people who are subjected to it. Forced viewing of explicit sexual photos can also contribute to a culture of tolerance for sexual harassment. On the issue of forced viewing of explicit sexual photos in the workplace, 75.39% of male and 78.14% of female respondents considered it as VAWG.

Having one's private photos shared or being subject to derogatory comments is a form of sexual harassment, however, it is common for women who are dressed provocatively to be blamed for such behavior. In this survey, a high number of respondents agreed that this is a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG), with 75.39% of male respondents and 77.70% of female respondents viewing it as such. This indicates a good understanding of this type of sexual harassment of this behavior and the importance of not blaming the victim.

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Table 1: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Sexual Harassment

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
A young girl being unhappy with a male relative who likes to hug and kiss her (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	420	515	935
		66.25%	76.07%	71.32%
	not considered VAWG	214	162	376
		33.75%	23.93%	28.68%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
An older male student attempting to rape a younger female student who he thinks likes him. (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	618	665	1,283
		97.48%	98.23%	97.86%
	not considered VAWG	16	12	28
		2.52%	1.77%	2.14%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
An employee feeling uncomfortable by the frequent sharing of sexually explicit stories and naked pictures by management, including derogatory comments about women's appearances. (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	478	529	1,007
		75.39%	78.14%	76.81%
	not considered VAWG	156	148	304
		24.61%	21.86%	23.19%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
A woman dressing provocatively and being secretly photographed and having the pictures shared on social media and being subject to ridicule and criticism, causing her to feel humiliated. (sexual harassment)	considered VAWG	481	526	1,007
		75.87%	77.70%	76.81%
	is not considered VAWG	153	151	304
		24.13%	22.30%	23.19%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Intimate partner violence

In a survey on intimate partner violence, the issue of adultery was explored through a question about "a husband or wife being unfaithful, causing the other party to feel sad and distressed." The responses were split on whether this constituted violence against women and girls (VAWG), with 52.17% of respondents feeling that it was VAWG and 47.83% feeling that it was not. Slightly more number of male (50.47%) viewed that it was not a VAWG. This suggests that in Thai society, there is still a low understanding of this type of violence and infidelity may be viewed as a normal or acceptable behavior. These findings highlight the need for more education and awareness about the various forms of VAWG and the importance of respect in relationships.

Table 2: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Intimate Partner Violence

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
A husband or wife being unfaithful, causing the other party to feel sad and distressed *(intimate partner violence)*	considered VAWG	314	370	684
		49.53%	54.65%	52.17%
	not considered VAWG	320	307	627
		50.47%	45.35%	47.83%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
News event from the headline: "Beautiful girl killed by boyfriend, blaming on jealously " *(intimate partner violence)*	considered VAWG	514	576	1,090
		81.07%	85.08%	83.14%
	not considered VAWG	120	101	221
		18.93%	14.92%	16.86%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

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Table 2: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Intimate Partner Violence (cont.)

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
A husband forcing his wife to have sexual activities against her will. *(couple rape)*	considered VAWG	423	525	948
		66.72%	**77.55%**	72.31%
	<u>not</u> considered VAWG	211	152	363
		33.28%	22.45%	27.69%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Awareness of VAWG was, however, much higher for the physical violence such as in question about a man killing a woman due to jealousy where over 80% of male and female viewed that such incident was a VAWG.

On the issue of couple rape, the survey addressed it through question about a husband forcing his wife to engage in sexual activity against her will. The results showed that a higher percentage of respondents viewed this as a form of VAWG (66.72% of male respondents and 77.55% of female respondents). However, there are quite a significant number of respondents who do not consider this behavior as VAWG, which indicated that couple rape can be difficult to understand as VAWG, as some people may believe that spouses are expected to have sexual relations and therefore consent is not necessary. This highlights the need for education and awareness about the importance of consent in all sexual interactions and the need to challenge harmful gender norms that normalize the non-consensual sexual activity.

Cyber violence

The survey addressed the issue of cyber violence through two questions. The first question, which dealt with cyberbullying through the threat of spreading naked pictures of a woman unless she pays money, was viewed as a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG) by a high percentage of respondents (84.9%). The second question, which concerned online romance scams, elicited a more divided response, with approximately half of the respondents (48.9% of males and 52.73% of females)

viewing it as VAWG, while the other half (51.1% of males and 47.27% of females) did not. Those who did not view the online romance scam as VAWG viewed it as a scam, but not a form of gender-based violence. This indicates the need to better understand the nature of cyber violence, particularly in cases like romance scams that may be difficult to comprehend as VAWG, and to raise awareness about the ways in which such crimes can be associated with VAWG and how it can be prevented.

Table 3: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Cyber Violence

Forms of VAWG		Response		Total
		Male	Female	
Cyberbullying by threatening to spread naked pictures of a woman unless she pays money. *(cyber violence)*	considered VAWG	525	588	1,113
		82.81%	86.85%	84.90%
	not considered VAWG	109	89	198
		17.19%	13.15%	15.10%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Online scams involving the manipulation of victims into falling in love and tricking them into transferring money *(cyber violence)*	considered VAWG	310	357	667
		48.90%	52.73%	50.88%
	not considered VAWG	324	320	644
		51.10%	47.27%	49.12%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Modern slavery – forced labor

On the issue of modern slavery, the survey specifically focused on the example of a husband forcing his wife to engage in sex work, as well as the issue of economic violence, or the deprivation or refusal of financial and basic needs. The results showed that a high percentage of respondents (91.01% of male and 91.58% of female) viewed these issues as constituting violence against women and girls (VAWG). This indicates a good level of awareness about the ways in which modern slavery and economic violence can be forms of VAWG.

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Table 4: Survey Results on VAWG Awareness: Forced Labor

A husband forcing his wife (who does not have a job or income) to engage in sex work, threatening to kick her out of the house if she does not comply. *(forced labor)*	considered VAWG	577	620	1,197
		91.01%	**91.58%**	91.30%
	<u>not</u> considered VAWG	57	57	114
		8.99%	8.42%	8.70%
	Total	634	677	1,311
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Synthesis of Literature Review and Survey Results

The literature review provides valuable insights into the various forms and characteristics of violence against women and girls (VAWG) observed globally. These forms encompass intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, cyber violence, modern slavery, harmful traditional practices, and violence in the communities or society. The survey results from NIDA Poll conducted in 2022 shed light on the awareness and perceptions of VAWG within Thai society, providing a context-specific perspective on these issues. This synthesis section aims bridge the insights from the literature review with the survey findings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the forms within the specific context of Thai society and providing a foundation for enhanced strategies and interventions.

Intimate Partner Violence

The literature review highlights that intimate partner violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, and controlling behaviors within intimate relationships, and it is a pervasive issue worldwide. The survey from Thailand by Cheumchit et al. (2018) mirrors these findings, revealing that approximately 15% of Thai women have experienced various forms of domestic violence. The root cause of intimate partner violence in Thailand often lies in the desire of men to control women, manifesting in behaviors like monitoring, suspicion, and restricting social connections. The survey data from NIDA Poll (2022) aligns with this by showing that awareness about jealous-fueled violence leading to physical harm is relatively low, indicating a need for education and awareness to challenge harmful attitude and norms in Thai society.

Sexual Harassment

Both the literature review and survey results underscore the prevalence of sexual harassment as a concerning issue, with varying levels of awareness. The survey results from Thailand indicate a relatively high level of awareness regarding sexual harassment. However, the literature emphasizes that women in Thailand and globally often choose not to report such incidents due to fear, the associated stigma, and societal tolerance of such behavior. These findings highlight the significance of measures to improve reporting. While raising awareness is important, it is equally crucial to establish a safe and supportive environment for reporting. Furthermore, addressing societal attitudes that tolerate sexual harassment is important for cultivating a culture where such behavior is not condoned. This shift in attitude will encourage reporting and help to deter future incidents of sexual harassment.

Cyber Violence

Online violence and abuse have grown in significance globally as online connectivity has become more widespread. The survey conducted in Thailand specifically explores the awareness of cyber violence, encompassing cyberbullying and online romance scams. The results indicated that awareness varies among respondents, with some recognizing certain forms of cyber violence as VAWG while others perceiving them as scams. This suggests the need for increased understanding of complexities of forms of cyber violence and its association with VAWG.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses various forms of exploitation including forced labor, sex trafficking, and forced or child marriages. Gender norms often play a significant role in pushing women and girls into these exploitative situations. The literature underscores how deeply ingrained societal norms contribute to perpetuation of these practices. The survey data from Thailand indicate that awareness about forced labor and sex trafficking as forms of VAWG is relatively high, indicating that to address the issue of modern slavery the targeted measures to combat modern slavery should be focused, such as the strengthening of legal framework and law enforcement, victim support, and reporting mechanisms.

Harmful Traditional Practices

Harmful practices like female genital mutilation, honor killings, and dowry-related violence pose threats to the well-being of women and girls in some societies. Research in these areas remains limited in Thailand, possibly due to the lower prevalence of these practices within the country. However, there is a need for future research to delve into this issue within the Thai context, exploring how traditional practices may lead to violence or be interconnected to other forms of VAWG.

Violence from Community or Society

VAWG extends beyond individual acts, often manifesting as systemic oppression within broader community and social power structures. The literature review has highlighted numerous tragic cases, including instances of violence against women in leadership roles when they deviate from traditional gender norms. Effectively addressing this issue requires confronting deeply ingrained biases and prejudices to cultivate a more supportive environment for women.

Conclusion

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) can have serious and lasting consequences for victims, including physical injuries, emotional trauma, and long-term health problems. These consequences are particularly pronounced when women and girls experience multiple forms of VAWG, such as physical, emotional, and psychological abuse. In Thai society, there exists a commendable level of awareness about different types of VAWG, particularly physical violence. However, awareness is lower when it comes to violence that inflicts emotional and mental harm. Further research is needed to unravel the intricate relationship between awareness of VAWG and the factors that drive behavioral change, ultimately contributing to the elimination of VAWG.

The primary challenge in addressing violence against women lies in the established social norms, including the pervasive gender norm that defines women's status as inferior to men, leading to gender discrimination and resulting in women and girls being subjected to violence, whether within their families and as victims of abuse and sexual assault from others outside their families. This gender norm has a widespread impact on individuals, communities, and society. To eliminate violence against women and girls,

a fundamental shift is required to challenge and transform the gender norm that contributes to violence. This transformation must occur at multiple levels, encompassing changes in individual attitudes, community beliefs, and societal structures. Key components of this transformation include promoting the gender equality, challenging gender stereotypes, and changing laws and policies to protect women's rights and ensure justice for victims of violence.

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