

Status Report: Violence against Children in Bangladesh

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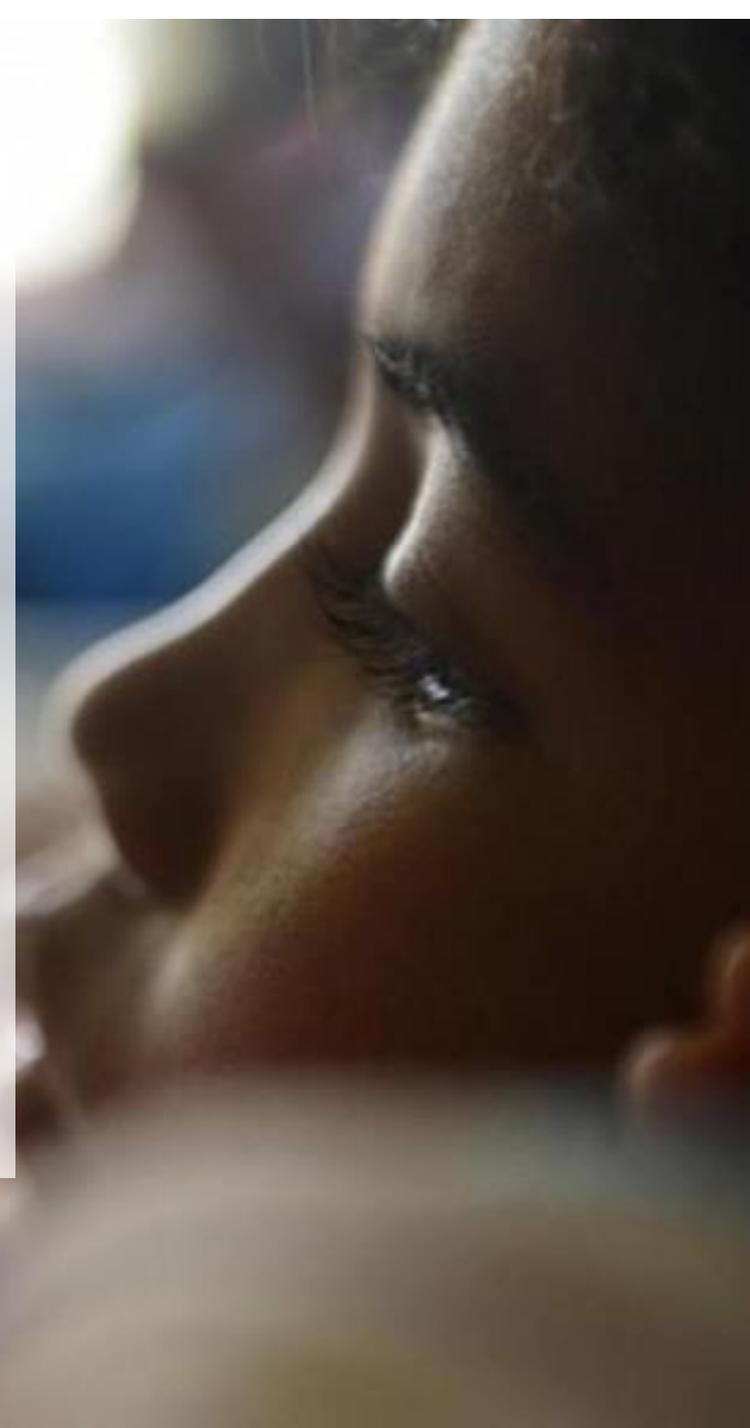
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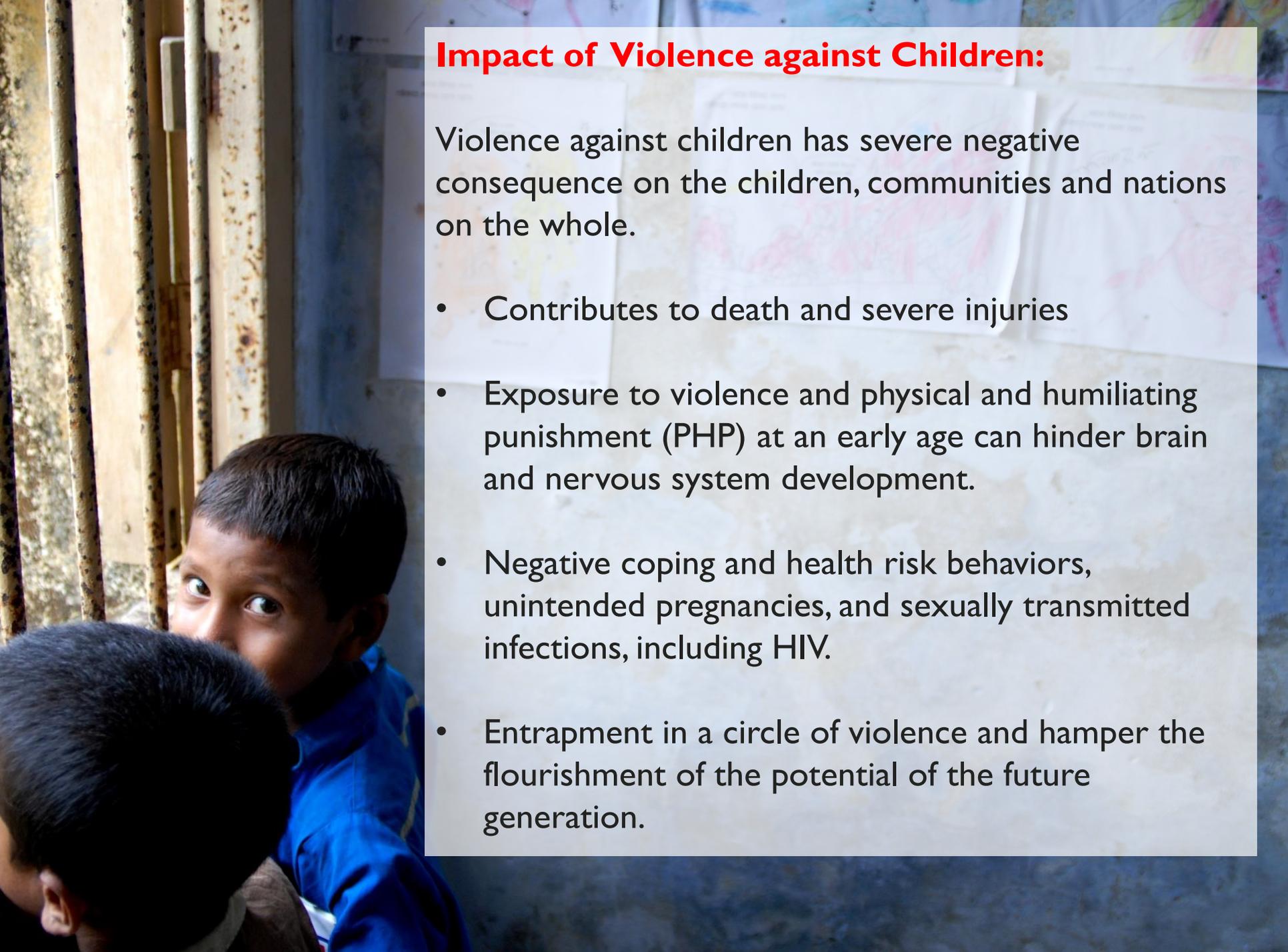


Statement of the Problematic:

In 2018, globally up to **1 billion children** aged 2-17 years have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect.

Children living in Bangladesh continue to be subjected to various forms of violence, including killings, torture and rapes in their homes, within their communities, schools, and work environments.





Impact of Violence against Children:

Violence against children has severe negative consequence on the children, communities and nations on the whole.

- Contributes to death and severe injuries
- Exposure to violence and physical and humiliating punishment (PHP) at an early age can hinder brain and nervous system development.
- Negative coping and health risk behaviors, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- Entrapment in a circle of violence and hamper the flourishing of the potential of the future generation.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



- SDG target 16.2 “**End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children**”
- Eliminating ‘**any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers**’ (16.2.1), ‘**human trafficking**’ (16.2.2) and ‘**sexual violence**’ (16.2.3) as indicators for the target.

Protecting children against all forms of violence and torture is of critical importance to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals.

Legal and Policy Framework

In alignment with UNCRC, Bangladesh has attempted to implement and apply the principles and provision in national policies and laws to prevent physical and harmful punishment (PHP), child marriage and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).

National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children, 2013-2025 has prioritized ending physical violence, sexual violence and exploitation, trafficking, and child marriage.

Bangladesh Penal Code (Section 375) and **the Prevention of Women & Children Repression Act 2000** (as amended in 2003) stipulate measures against sexual abuse and violence.

Bangladesh introduced the **Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017** forbidding early marriage under the age of 18 for women. However, it has been criticized for Section 19 which allows for child marriage under specific circumstances.

Legal and Policy Framework

Ministry of Education published a circular prohibiting corporal punishment in educational institutions.

In January 2011, the High Court issued a judgment declaring corporal punishment in educational institutions, schools and madrasas, to be unconstitutional.

Government adopted the National Children Policy 2011 referencing the duty to prevent all forms of physical and mental punishment in educational institutions.

In 2013, the Children Act has been adopted, although this does not specifically address PHP

Trend and Analysis

In 2019, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) found that a total **4,381** children experienced different forms of violence and exploitations of whom **1,383** children have been subjected to sexual violence.

The rights body's comparative scenario between 2018 and 2019 indicate that the incidents of sexual violence increased (by 70.32%) alarmingly in 2019.

The incidents of child murders also increased from **418** in 2018 to **448** in 2019.

BSAF also indicated that **365** children have been subjected to different forms violence every month on an average in the last year.



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Trend and Analysis

88.8% of children aged 1-14 years experienced some form of physical punishment and /or psychological aggression by caregivers in 2019, which is **6.5%** higher than 2012-13. (The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019)

69.62% parents and caregivers think that it is either justifiable or strongly justifiable to punish a child when they make any mistake, according to a Save the Children and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) conducted survey in 2018

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 reported **51%** marriages are child marriage in 2019 in Bangladesh

According to CRAC,B in Bangladesh, young girls are increasingly falling victim to online sexual harassment and abuse. **90%** of the victims are pre-teen and teenage girls.

SCiBD's Work on SDG 16.2:

Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP), as an alternative discipline technique and promoting positive fatherhood in five areas of (Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj and Sreemangal).

64.5% of parents who participated in PDEP training and awareness sessions showed positive changes in their behavior in disciplining their children.

Training for community-based child protection committee (CBCPC) members who are successfully responding to physical violence, child marriage & sexual harassment related cases

A 29 CSO member coalition actively engages with the government and stakeholders for legal reform to ban PHP in all settings.



Policy recommendations:



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- **Insert a provision in the Children Act 2013** which specifically and categorically prohibits the use of PHP on children in all settings in line with the directives of the High Court and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education.
- **Establish a National Child Rights Commission (NCRC)** as stipulated in the Children Policy 2011 (i.e. 'Ombudsman for the children') which shall specifically monitor the effective implementation of the UNCRC and Children Policy with a view to preventing violence against children in all settings.
- **Monitor the implementation of the Children Act** i.e. section- 13 to form child help desk and placement of dedicated police officer for the children in every police station and Probation Officer.



Policy recommendations:

- Undertake public awareness campaign led by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs through media to sensitize parents, teachers and caregivers on the negative impact of PHP on children's cognitive development.
- Define and include the new forms of cyber-crimes in existing acts e.g., The Digital Security Act 2018, Pornography Control Act 2012, The Information and Communication Technology Act 2006, The Children Act 2013 to combat online sexual exploitation.
- Ensure that child marriage prevention committees are established, functional and held accountable for all cases of child marriage





Thank you!



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