

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: STEREOTYPED OR NEW CHALLENGE OF SOCIETY

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Abstract. *Purpose* – the aim of the work is Statistical analysis of violence against women in Georgia, according to the causes, forms, revealed forms and results of violence.

Research methodology – the methods of statistical observation, grouping, and analysis were used in the research process. The graphical expression method is widely used.

Findings – violence against women is a taboo topic for Georgian society and rarely becomes disclosed. Violence against women and girls in Georgia includes sexual abuse, rape, sexual harassment, early marriages, or forced marriage. The cases of violence against women are much more common in residents of Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. It is relatively low in Adjara, Guria, Samegrelo and Imereti regions. Besides physical violence, there is frequent psychological violence, such as constant control of the wife, threatening, intimidation, etc. Violence indicators are different for age groups and nationalities

Research limitations – the survey is intended for a wide segment. In the future, it is possible to further expand the area by considering sources of financing.

Practical implications – the results of this research will help increase public awareness and the need for women's rights.

Originality/Value – since 2009, research about women's violence in Georgia has not been conducted. Therefore, the statistical data presented here is completely the most recent.

Keywords: gender, violence, family, research, analysis.

JEL Classification: C1.

Conference topic: Legal Business Environment.

Introduction

Violence against women is not a new phenomenon, nor are its consequences to women's physical, mental and reproductive health. What is new is the growing recognition that acts of violence against women are not isolated events but rather form a pattern of behavior that violates the rights of women and girls, limits their participation in society, and damages their health and well-being. When studied systematically, as was done with this report, it becomes clear that violence against women is a global public health problem that affects approximately one-third of women globally (World Health Organization, 2013).

What are the statistics of violence against women in the world? It is estimated that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner (not including sexual harassment) at some point in their lives. However, some national studies show that up to 70 percent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Evidence shows that women who have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence report higher rates of depression, having an abortion and acquiring HIV, compared to women who have not. Similar to data from other regions, in all four countries of a multi-country study from the Middle East and North Africa, men who witnessed their fathers using violence against their mothers, and men who experienced some form of violence at home as children, were significantly more likely to report perpetrating intimate partner violence in their adult relationships (World Health Organization, 2005). For example, in Lebanon, the likelihood of perpetrating physical violence was more than three times higher among men who had witnessed their fathers beating their mothers during childhood than those who did not (Promundo and UN Women, 2017). It is estimated that of the 87,000 women who were intentionally killed in 2017 globally, more than half (50,000–58 percent) were killed by intimate partners or family members, meaning that 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day. More than a third (30,000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by their current or former intimate partner (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). Adult women account for 51 percent of all human trafficking victims detected globally. Women and girls together account for 71 percent, with girls representing nearly three out of every four child trafficking victims. Nearly three out of every four trafficked women and girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It is estimated that there are 650 million women and girls in the world today who were married before age 18. During the past decade, the global rate of child marriage has declined—from one in four young women (aged 20–24) being married as children, to almost one in five. Still, in West and Central Africa—where this harmful practice is most common—over four out of 10 young women were married before their 18th child marriage often results in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupts schooling, limits the girl's opportunities and increases her risk of experiencing domestic violence. At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation in the 30 countries with representative data on prevalence. In most of these countries, the majority of girls were cut before age five. With population movement, female genital mutilation is becoming a practice with global dimensions, in particular among migrant and refugee women and girls. Approximately 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) worldwide have experienced forced sex (forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts) at some point in their life. Out of these, 9 million adolescent girls were victimized within the past year. In the vast majority of countries, adolescent girls are most at risk of forced sex by a current/former husband, partner or boyfriend. Based on data from 30 countries, only one percent ever sought professional help (UNICEF, 2017). Globally, one out of three students (aged 11 and 13 to 15 years) have been bullied by their peers at school at least on one day in the past month, with girls and boys equally likely to experience bullying. However, boys are more likely to experience physical bullying than girls, and girls are more likely to experience psychological bullying, particularly being ignored or left out or subject to nasty rumors. Girls also report being made fun of because of how their face or body looks more frequently than boys. School-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls. Twenty-three percent of female undergraduate university students reported having experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct in a survey across 27 universities in the United States in 2015. Rates of reporting to campus officials, law enforcement or others ranged from five to 28 percent, depending on the specific type of behavior. One in 10 women in the European Union report having experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15 (including having received unwanted, offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, or offensive, inappropriate advances on social networking sites). The risk is highest among young women between 18 and 29 years of age (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). In a multi-country study from the Middle East and North Africa, between 40 and 60 percent of women said they had ever experienced street-based sexual harassment (mainly sexual comments, stalking/following, or staring/ogling), and 31 percent to 64 percent of men said they had ever carried out such acts. Younger men, men with more education, and men who experienced violence as children were more likely to engage in street sexual harassment (Promundo and UN Women, 2017). Results from a national Australian survey show that almost two out of five women (39 percent) aged 15 and older who have been in the workforce in the last five years have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace during that period, compared to one out of four (26 percent) of their male counterparts. Regarding most common perpetrators, in almost 4 out of 5 cases (79 percent) one or more of the perpetrators were male. In the majority of countries with available data, less than 40 percent of the women who experience violence seek the help of any sort. Among women who do, most look to family and friends and very few look to formal institutions and mechanisms, such as police and health services. Less than 10 percent of those women seeking help for the experience of violence sought help by appealing to the police (United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, 2015).

Violence against women is one of the most important and global problems of our societies. Violence limits the involvement of women in social life and creates gender-based barriers in almost every type of activity. Women's unemployment rate is high in Georgia. Generally, unemployment amplifies social stress and political instability in the country (Abesadze & Paresashvili, 2018). The studies conducted upon the mentioned matter prove that the problem, having a negative effect not only on the victims' physical and mental well-being, but also on the children, the family, and the society, is complex in nature and can be caused by a few reasons. According to the gender stereotypes formed in our societies, women are more calm, gentle, lenient, and agreeable, always expected by the society and the family to be altruistic, whereas the more sympathetic characteristics of men tend to be the strive

towards their goals, being tough and able, being someone to be reckoned with. The creation of such stereotypes is already a violation of women's rights, providing the society with strictly set frames in which both men and women should fit, and any deviation from the traditional views are not as tolerated by the society as one might hope. It must be mentioned, that due to the structural gender inequality in society, women are often discriminated against with no grounds and are the victims of violence. In societies, such as the ones we live in, a standard of "double moral" can be found, meaning that women are more likely than men to be judged strictly. Because of this, it is of utter importance to analyze the statistics of violence against women, especially the quantitative study of domestic violence, it is one of the problems still being relative regardless of people not discussing it publicly. The cult of family is the basis of the problem with publicity of domestic violence, family being a social institute in which trust and harmony between the members of it play a huge role, making it so that what is connected to domestic conflicts, including domestic violence, is to be considered as something not to be interfered with, sometimes so-called "the family cases", so the victims of domestic violence tend not to talk about it.

Purpose of the article

The aim of the work is Statistical analysis of violence against women in Georgia, according to the causes, forms, revealed forms and results of violence, promotion of the research results for the women to become more informed about the matter.

Research methodology: The methods of statistical observation, grouping, and analysis were used in the research process. The graphical expression method is widely used. Apart from them, the methods of induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis, and selective observation were also used. Relative indicators of structure, dynamics, and comparison were calculated.

Findings: Violence and violence-based relationships were present in the primitive societies in the times when humans used to live in the caves and were learning how to start the fire (Abesadze, 2018). The roles between the weak and the strong were mainly divided based on their physical abilities. After some time, patriarchal society attached the label of "weak" to the women and the label of "strong" to the men. Because of this, only the man was considered the righteous representative of the human race for centuries, while the differences between the social roles of the men and the women were considered to be permanent and unchangeable, developing the environment for a creation of the hierarchical state for women to exist in (Abesadze, 2018). The attitude towards men established itself over time, resulting in the "development of different psychological behavior" and nature in women. Social-psychological peculiarities express themselves in behavioral peculiarities, interests, the perception of events and processes, nature of reasoning, and so on (Abesadze, 2018). Because of all of these facts, women are more often the victims of oppression and physical or verbal abuse.

Generally, there are several of the following different types of violence against women in Georgia: physical abuse, verbal abuse, trafficking, rape, involuntary prostitution, involuntary marriage, isolation, confinement, and so on. Violence against women is mostly detected in families, between the husband and the wife, when the husband abuses the wife physically, psychologically, or sexually. Domestic violence is under something of a taboo in our society, a problem that is picked up it is intensity and actuality in the last few years. The Parliament of Georgia issued the law for "The prohibition of domestic violence, the protection, and assistance for the victims of domestic violence" in the Spring of 2006, an act of admitting the existence of the problem in the country, but the relevant accurate statistics have not been available since 2009 up to this day. There has been some research done, undoubtedly, but they were only local of nature and did not produce the full image of domestic violence in Georgia and did not determine its causes.

The existing statistics are the following: one if every four women in the world is a victim of domestic violence, 1.5 million individuals are a victim of sexual harassment every year, circa 520 000 individuals die every year because of abuse, and millions suffer from the consequences following the violence. According to the research conducted by the World Health Organization in 10 countries with 24 000 female participants, 20% of Japanese, 70% of Ethiopian, more than 50% of Bangladeshi, Peruvian and Tanzanian women are victims of violence from their intimate partners. 14–32% of women in low-income countries and 4–11% of women in higher income countries admit to being abused during pregnancy. 19–48% of teenage girls in different countries admit being sexually harassed. It is interesting, what are the statistics of violence against women in the world?

Lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among ever-partnered women by WHO region. As data shows, high rates of violence are in Africa, America, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean countries (World Health Organization, 2013). High rates of violence are especially high for women aged 35–44.

What is the mood of women towards these events?

Some experts on battered women have reported evidence which supports this alternative characterization of the motives of women who remain. Gayford (1975) reports that half of his sample of battered women claimed to be satisfied with their relationships, and Dobash (1979) notes that, apart from the violence, battered women often express positive feelings toward their mates. Moreover, Ferraro and Jonson (1983) report that battered women typically believe that their mates are the only person they could love and Walker (1979) reports that battered women often describe their mates as playful, attentive, exciting, sensitive and affectionate.

The results of violence can be as heterogeneous as its causes. Violence against women is a direct or an indirect cause of their mortality, worsening the health conditions and increasing the morbidity, having severe results on the physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health (Chitashvili, Javakhishvili, Arutinov, Tsuladze, & Chachanidze, 2010).

The region of Adjara comes second to Tbilisi in the number of reported cases of domestic violence over the last four years, per The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Specialists consider the given numbers to be a poor reflection of the situation and the actual number of cases of domestic violence to be far bigger. In fact, one in every four calls to the police is to report domestic violence (Chitashvili et al., 2010).

In order to eliminate the information vacuum concerning the issues of violence against women, UN Women, with the support of the European Union and the National Statistics Office of Georgia, conducted a study on a national scale. It was, in fact, the first time for the nationwide data to have been collected about the violence against women, including the data about the spread and results of domestic violence and sexual harassment, and about the attitude of the society towards the mentioned topics.

The national study of the violence against women, conducted in 2017, is the first research in Georgia that measured the scale of the violence and determined its impact on women's health. The study was based on the internationally acclaimed practice for the studies on violence against women and is in full compliance with the international manual of ethics and safety.

The study design implied a quantitative survey in women aged 15–64 to research the spread, the causes and the results, and the level of awareness of, and the attitudes and the tendencies towards, the violence against women. 10 800 households for women and 3 630 households for men were elected to take part in the study. Accordingly, 6 006 women and 1 601 men were surveyed.

The violence against women is under a taboo in Georgian society and its cases are rarely reported. The violence against women and girls includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape, molesting, early marriage, forced marriage, and so on, increasing the importance of the study, because the national study of violence against women was conducted to evaluate the rates of abuse by an intimate or non-intimate partner, sexual harassment, violence as a child, health-affecting violence, the risk factors of violence against women, the level of information available regarding the relevant services. The results of this study made clear, that the women in Georgia are victims of violence, and the biggest risk of violence comes from their intimate partners.

As it can be seen in Diagram 1, 13.6% of respondents have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence. During the 12 months of the last year, women were the most often the victims of emotional abuse and the least often the victims of sexual abuse (see Figure 1).

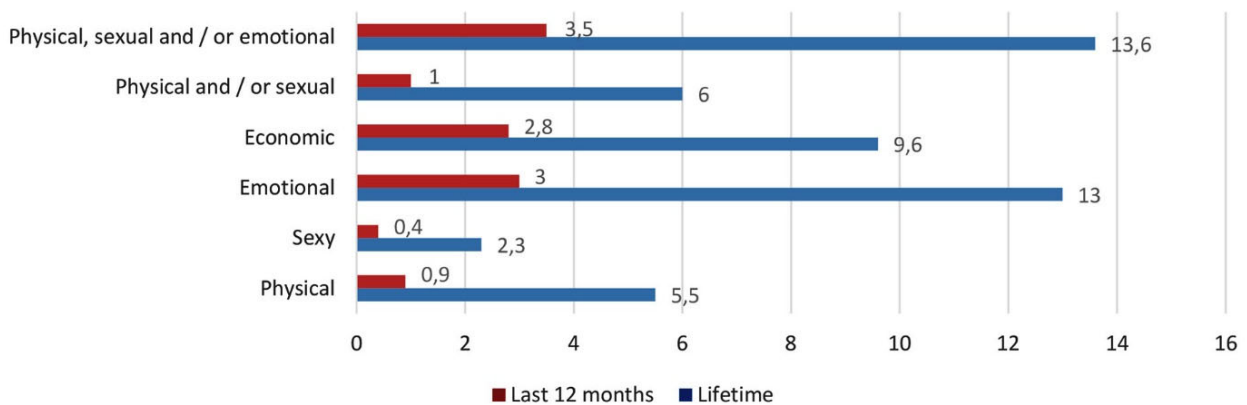


Figure 1. The data representing women aged 15–64, who have experienced different sorts of violence from their partners, in percentage points (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018)

According to the study results, 2% of women, that is circa 15.6 thousand individuals, have experienced physical violence during at least one term of pregnancy. It is an unfortunate fact, that 37% of these women have been hit on their bellies. 64% of the respondents were victims of the same kind of violence and have experienced the same behavior from their partners before pregnancy.

If we look at the regional statistics, the prevalence of the violence against women is larger among the citizens of Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, and Shida Kartli, while being relatively smaller in the regions of Adjara, Guria, Samegrelo, and Imereti (see Figure 2).

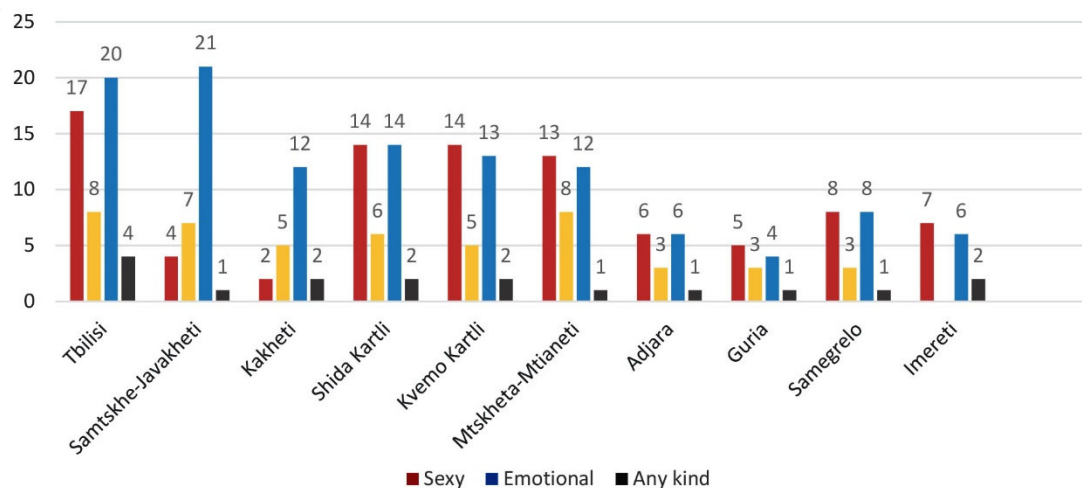


Figure 2. The data representing the women who reported the acts of violence, in percentage points (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018)

Apart from physical violence, psychological violence, such as permanent control of wife, threatening, intimidating, verbal abuse, blackmail, humiliation, and so on, also often occurs. 3.5% of the surveyed women have stated, that during their course of lifetime, they had experienced different types of stalking, 19.8% of the surveyed was subject to the sexual harassment (see Figure 3). As for 3.3% of the surveyed, offensive or threatening text messages or e-mails (2%), extraneous loitering or pursuit (1%) and offensive, threatening or muted phone calls (1%) had been the most prevalent forms of stalking in the last 12 month they had encountered. About 1 out of 4 women (27%) have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by the intimate partner, or sexual violence or sexual abuse by a non-partner, or sexual abuse as a child at some point in their lives (Abesadze, 2018).

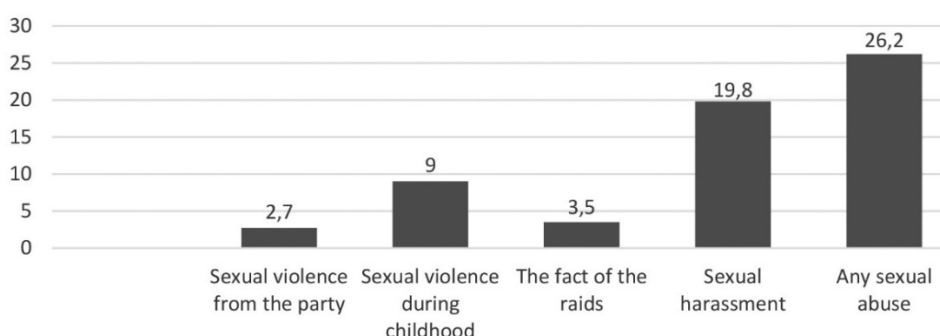


Figure 3. The data representing women aged 15–64, who have experienced violence as a child, sexual abuse, harassment, stalking, in percentage points (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018)

Quite interesting statistics were revealed when evaluating the attitudes between the husband and the wife. 33% of women think, that violence between the wife and the husband is their own personal matter and no other should interrupt. 12% of women think that they should endure being abused in order to maintain family unity. 14% of them think that if a woman becomes a rape victim, it was because of her careless actions that reaped these consequences. There seems to be a difference between the citizenries of the city and of the town in this matter. While 25% of women in the city think that domestic violence is only their personal issue and no one should interfere, the results are almost double (43%) in the villages. 7% of the city population think that women should endure being abused in order to maintain family unity (see Figure 4). The results are traditionally double in the village population. Almost the same amount of people in the city and in the villages agree that if a woman becomes a rape victim, it was because of her carelessness.

The majority of men (78%) and women (66%) agree to the notion, that the most important role for a woman is to look after the family. Almost a quarter of women (23%) and almost half of men (42%) think that the wife should obey the husband. A quarter of women (22%) and one-third of men (31%) think that beating your wife is justified in the cases of cheating or being ignorant of children.

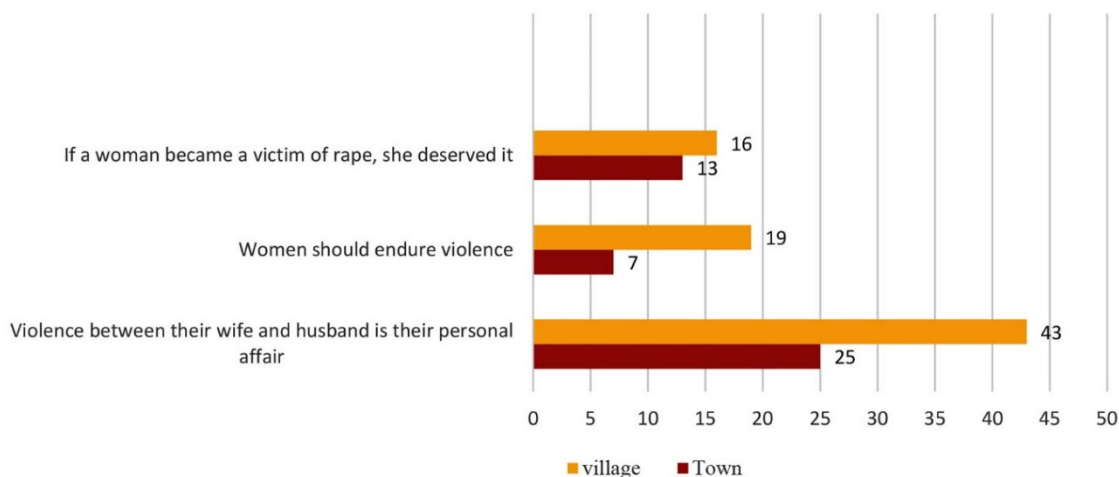


Figure 4. The data representing women, who justify the violence against women, in percentage points in terms of locations (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018)

The analysis of the age structure of the respondents shows there’s an age difference in what the attitudes are towards the violence against women. For example, while 27.3% of the respondents aged 15–24 think that domestic violence is the business of the family itself and no one should interfere, 35.7% of the respondents aged 45–54 share the same idea. Only 6.5% of the population aged 15–24 think that a woman should endure being abused, while the number is at 16.9% in the population aged 55–64 (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. The data representing women, who justify violence against women, in percentage points in terms of their age (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018)

67.4% of women know of the law for domestic violence/violence against women, 78.3% women have heard of or been a part of a campaign against the gender-based violence, 76.8% of female respondents have the information for the case of emergency, 61.7% have information about the shelter, 38% know of the crisis center. Despite the high level of awareness, only 26% of women contacted the relevant services when under the physical or sexual abuse from the partner, 18% of whom contacted the police, 8% – a hospital, and 5% – a court. The major reasons, for why the victims do not report the acts of violence, are that the family might be dishonored (19%), are afraid of even more violence/are threatened (13%), are afraid or ashamed that no one will believe them/the blame will be placed upon them (10%). The ones who contacted the relevant services, did so because of the unbearable situation they were in (80%) or because they received heavy injuries (20%).

After analyzing the expression of the violence against women based on their nationality, it turned out, that the Azerbaijani women have experienced different sorts of violence, especially: physical violence; compulsory early marriage; economic dependence, that later contributes to being abused either psychologically or physically.

In comparison to the international results, the number of women who report acts of violence is lower than that of the whole of Europe. However, the attitudes towards gender equality are more conservative in Georgia than in most of the countries in Europe.

The main reasons contributing to domestic violence are jealousy; unemployment and poverty; women being economically dependent on men; husband disrespecting the wife; the right of the husband, as the head of the family, to physically abuse his wife; alcohol addiction; the stereotype of the man of the family is the dominant, and so on.

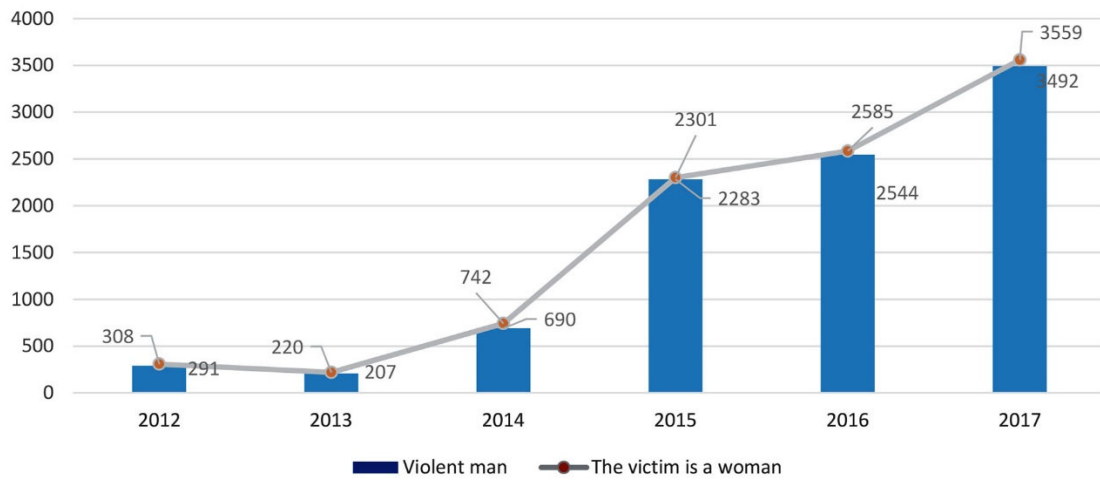


Figure 6. The dynamics of the number of abusive males and female victims (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018)

It is impossible to overlook the fact, that the tendency for the number of female victims in Georgia is to grow, which is a perilous state to be in for such a small nation that Georgia is.

Just the year 2017 saw the rise in the number of abusive men by 35% and the number of female victims by 38% (see Figure 6).

If we look at the dynamics of the processed cases, we can see that the number of acquittal verdicts in the processed cases, including the cases about violence, was on the rise until 2016, then dropping by 14% in 2017 (see Figure 7).

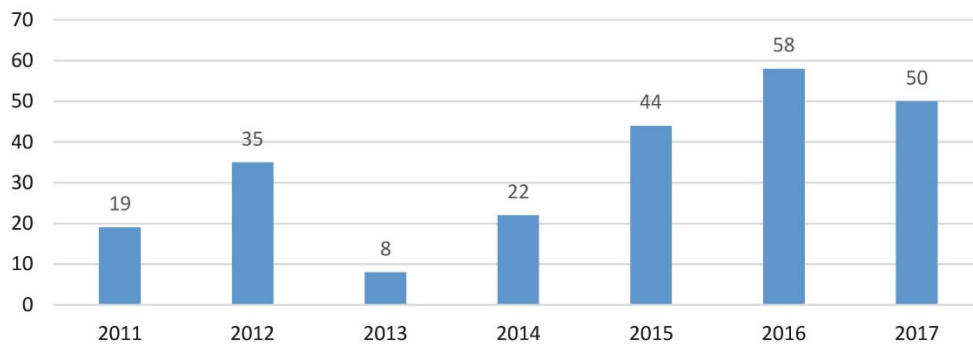


Figure 7. The number of cases tried related to the violence

The number of both the abusers and the victims is especially high in the population aged 25–44, making the problem even more topical and alarming (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018, see Figure 8).

What is the age structure of abusers and victims?

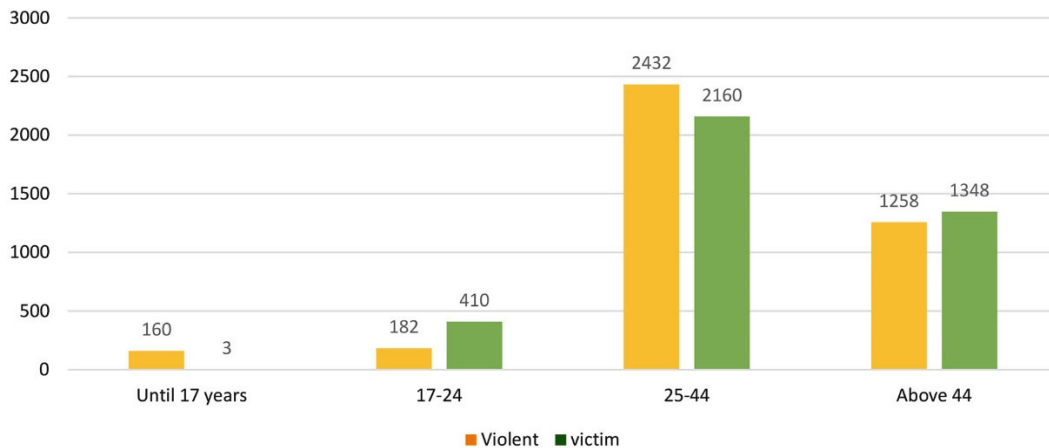


Figure 8. The numbers of the abuser and the victim in terms of their age (source: National Office of Statistics, 2018)

The life of every human being is important to a country. Unfortunately, our society is faced with the fact of increasing numbers of abusers and victims. The facts of ex-husbands killing or sexually or physically abusing their ex-wives are more prevalent. It is hard with no doubt for a country to prevent violence in a forced tempo. The more self-conscious and the more reasonable youth play a huge role in the decision-making process regarding gender equality, gender-based violence, children violence, elder violence, and so on.

Conclusions

- The violence against women is under a taboo in Georgian society and its cases are rarely reported.
- The most frequently the acts of violence against women occur in the families between the wife and the husband, when the husband abuses his wife physically, psychologically or sexually.
- The region of Adjara comes second to Tbilisi in the number of reported cases of domestic violence. The prevalence of the violence against women is larger among the citizens of Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, and Shida Kartli, while being relatively smaller in the regions of Adjara, Guria, Samegrelo, and Imereti.
- The acts of psychological violence also occur, apart from physical violence.
- In Georgia, women are the victims of violence and the biggest risks for them come from their intimate partners.
- Younger women perceive acts of violence differently than older ones.
- Mostly the Azerbaijani women have experienced different sorts of violence, especially: physical violence; compulsory early marriage; economic dependence, that later contributes to being abused either psychologically or physically.
- The attitudes towards gender-based violence are more conservative in Georgia than they are in most parts of Europe.

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