

Sri Lankan females twice more likely to have experienced physical violence by partners than by non-partners

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Findings from Sri Lanka's first dedicated National Survey on Violence against Women and Girls reveal that women in Sri Lanka are more than twice more likely to have experienced physical violence by a partner than by a non-partner.

According to the Women's Wellbeing Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department of Sri Lanka, 7.4% of all women, since age 15, experienced physical violence by a partner in their lifetime and 7.2% experienced by a non-partner.

Partner sexual violence is also more prevalent than non-partner sexual violence although the gap is not as large as for physical violence (6.2% compared to 4.1% in a lifetime).

The survey revealed that 24.9% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence and 18.8% of women who have been in a relationship have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner in their lifetime.

In 2019, the Department of Census and Statistics conducted the first dedicated national prevalence survey on violence against women and the first using the WHO methodology.

Known as the Women's Wellbeing Survey (WWS) it covered all 25 districts in Sri Lanka and interviewed more than 2,200 women aged 15 and above. Fieldwork took place between March and September 2019, collecting data through computer assisted personal interviews.

According to the report, women's wellbeing could be measured by many aspects such as the access to decent employment, economic security, equal access to resources, political participation, decision making, and health and personal safety.

Violence against Women is one of the most pervasive human rights violations that impacts the progression and wellbeing of women and girls. This report focused on that aspect.

The survey findings suggest that domestic violence against women has a considerable negative impact on children. Risk factor analysis found that if the woman or her partner lived in a violent household as a child, she had a significantly higher risk of partner violence. The strongest risk for violence was for women with partners that used alcohol, fought with other men, and had extramarital relationships.

The Sri Lankan government on a proposal by former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in 2018 decided to conduct a Women's Wellbeing Survey as the need for official statistics has arisen in order to address the gender based violence and domestic violence against women.

The Women's Wellbeing Survey report presents the main findings on violence by partners, violence by non-partners, and the risk factors and impacts that violence by partners has on women in Sri Lanka.

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