

**Domestic violence** is defined by UNICEF (2000) as violence perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members, and is manifested through:

- Physical violence such as slapping, beating, arm-twisting, stabbing, strangling, burning, choking, kicking, threats with an object or weapon, and murder. It also includes traditional practices harmful to women such as female genital mutilation and wife inheritance (the practice of passing a widow, and her property, to her dead husband's brother).
- Sexual violence such as coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force, forcing unwanted sexual acts or forcing sex with others.
- Psychological violence which includes behaviour that is intended to intimidate and persecute and takes the form of threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation.
- Economic violence includes acts such as the denial of funds, refusal to contribute financially, denial of food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment, etc.

## DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE



**Physical**  
Violence



**Sexual**  
Violence



**Economic**  
Violence



**Psychological**  
Violence

# VIOLENCE IN THE **WORKPLACE**

**Homeworkers** are one of the most vulnerable groups of workers due to their invisibility, complete reliance on contractors for work, and lack of recognition as workers.

There are several forms of harassment that homeworkers face at the hands of their contractors, including:



- **Financial Exploitation:** The work done by homeworkers is not very different from factory workers. However, due to the informal nature of the work– invisibility, lack of written contracts and physical records of work and payment provided – they are exploited. They are paid less, irregularly, and in many cases not paid at all.



- **Verbal Abuse:** Homeworkers are subject to verbal abuse by contractors, especially when they miss deadlines, the work is faulty, or when they ask for an increase in piece rates.



- **Fear of Losing Work:** Due to unequal power relations between homeworkers and their contractors, they lack bargaining power. Often, when homeworkers organize or join a union, contractors take the work elsewhere. There is a constant fear of losing work among homeworkers.



- **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:** Homeworkers, especially migrant homeworkers, report facing sexual exploitation and abuse. Contractors ask them for sexual favours in return for work or payment.



## Laws against Violence and Harassment in South Asia

Country	Laws
Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Penal Code, 2018</li> <li>» The Elimination of Violence Against Woman (EVAW) Law, 2009</li> </ul>
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980</li> <li>» The Prevention of Oppression against Women and Children Act of 2000</li> <li>» Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act of 2010</li> </ul>
Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Penal Code of Bhutan (Sections 205 and 206) on Sexual Harassment</li> <li>» The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008 (Article 9 (17) and (18))</li> <li>» The Domestic Violence Prevention Act, enacted in 2013</li> <li>» The Criminal Law 2004- punishment for sexual offenses including rape and sexual harassment</li> </ul>
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013</li> <li>» Equal Remuneration Act, 1976</li> <li>» Maternity Benefit Act, 1961</li> <li>» Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961</li> <li>» Domestic Violence Act, 2005</li> <li>» Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986)</li> </ul>
Maldives <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Domestic Violence Act, 2012</li> <li>» The Revised Penal Code (2014)</li> <li>» The Sexual Harassment Prevention Act (2014)</li> <li>» The Sexual Offences Act (2009)</li> </ul>
Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Constitution of Nepal, 2015</li> <li>» Social Practices (Reform) Act, 1976</li> <li>» Gender Equality Act, 2006</li> <li>» Domestic Violence (Offense and Punishment) Act, 2066 (2009)</li> <li>» Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act, 2071 (2015)</li> <li>» The Country Penal (Code) Act, 2017</li> </ul>
Pakistan <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860</li> <li>» Dowry and Bridal Gifts (Restriction) Act, 1976</li> <li>» Protection for Women (Criminal Law Amendment) Act, 2006</li> <li>» The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010</li> <li>» Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2012</li> <li>» The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act, 2016</li> </ul>
Sri Lanka <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Sri Lanka Penal Code 2011</li> <li>» The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2005</li> </ul>

1 Gender Index Maldives. OECD. More information Available at: <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/MV.pdf>

2 Legislation on Violence against Women and Girls, UNWomen. More information available at: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/pakistan/evaw-pakistan/legislation-on-vaw>

3 Gender Index Sri Lanka, OECD. More Information Available at: <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/LK.pdf>

## Complaint Mechanisms Available to Women Workers in South Asian Countries:

Country	Laws
Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Elimination of Violence Against Woman (EVAW) Law (2009) allows victims or their relatives to register complaints with the police, the Department of Huqooq (civil department within the Ministry of Justice, and Department of Women Affairs).</li> </ul>
Bangladesh <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women (MSP-VAW) under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWCA) runs eight One-Stop Crisis Centers (OCCs) at the division levels and 60 One-stop Crisis Cells (OCCs) to provide information and referral services to the victims of VAW.</li> <li>» The Bangladesh Directorate of Women's Affairs has launched a 24-hour call centre open to all victims or potential victims (women, men, children) of violence. The helpline provides immediate service to victims and links them to relevant agencies: doctors, counsellors, lawyers, DNA experts, and police officers. It is accessible in all parts of Bangladesh and through any mobile network. The hotline helpline number is 10921.</li> </ul>
Bhutan <sup>5</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Women can report violence and harassment issues to the Royal Bhutan Police and the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC). They can register complaints at police stations and through calls. They can also make calls to toll free helplines.</li> <li>» Royal Bhutan Police (113) and NCWC (1098). Women can lodge complaints on sexual harassment that occur in any kind of setting (at homes, schools, institutions, shelters, public places, and work places).</li> </ul>
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2017, launched an online complaint management system for women working in both public as well as private sector organisations to lodge complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace. The online complaint management system is known as "She-Box" and a complaint can be registered by any woman.</li> <li>» Under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013, women can file complaints at district-level Local Complaints Committees.</li> </ul>
Maldives <sup>6</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Complaints can be made to the police, local leaders, community organisations or with the Ministry of Gender and Family.</li> </ul>
Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» In 2017, Nepal's National Women Commission started a 24-hour-toll free helpline for anyone who faces gender-based violence or social discrimination and for those who have been deprived from exercising women's rights. Women can register their complaints with the 1145 helpline.</li> </ul>
Pakistan <sup>7</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A Violence Against Women Center was opened in 2017 in Punjab. This is a 24-hour all-women-run centre to address the needs of female victims of violence and other aspects of women's rights. Similar centres are expected to be established in Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi.</li> <li>» The NGO Digital Rights Foundation has set up a helpline for victims of online harassment in the country. The aim of the free helpline is to offer advice to victims of online harassment, including legal advice, digital security support and psychological counselling. A team of digital security experts, counsellors and lawyers offer their services through this helpline.</li> </ul>
Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A helpline for women (1938) has been established with the objective of providing assistance and to receive complaints related to all forms of discrimination against women, defilement of the rights of women, harassment and all kinds of abuse.</li> <li>» Women in Need, an organisation that operates in 8 locations in Sri Lanka, namely, Colombo, Matara, Kandy, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Kurunegala, Batticaloa, Puttalam and Jaffna, provides shelter to women and children who are victims to violence. Their number is 011-2671411.</li> </ul>

4 Home Office, 2018. Bangladesh: Women fearing gender based violence. Country Policy and Information Note, UK. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/679719/Bangladesh-Women\\_fearing\\_GBV-CPIN\\_v2.0\\_January\\_2018\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/679719/Bangladesh-Women_fearing_GBV-CPIN_v2.0_January_2018_.pdf)

5 Royal Government of Bhutan, National Commission for Women and Children. Available at: <https://www.ncwc.gov.bt/notifications/264>

6 MoGFSS, 2014. The Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences. Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, Maldives. Available at: <https://maldives.unfpa.org/en/publications/maldives-study-women%E2%80%99s-health-and-life-experiences>

7 UNWomen, "Emergency Contacts" in Pakistan. Available at: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/pakistan/evaw-pakistan/emergency-contacts>